



GENDERED BATTLEFIELDS: WOMEN IN CONFLICT, HOUSEHOLD  
LIVELIHOODS AND POST-CONFLICT RESILIENCE BUILDING IN BAWKU,  
GHANA.

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*This master's thesis is carried out as a part of the education at the  
University of Agder and is therefore approved as a part of this education.  
However, this does not imply that the University answers for the methods  
that are used or the conclusions that are drawn.*

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## **Abstract**

This thesis mainly explores the gendered role of women in conflict and the livelihood implications of ethnic conflict on selected households. The USAID sustainable livelihood framework supplemented by the concepts of agency and empowerment served as the main theoretical points of discussion for this study. Further theoretical insights were drawn from Bujones et al (2013) factor analysis of resilience, in exploring opportunities for resilience building post-conflict in the study area. Using a case study of ethnic conflict between Kusasis and Mamprusis in Bawku (Ghana), responses were analysed to shed light on the perceived battle role of women in conflict, household livelihood and resilience building post-conflict, as well as barriers to women empowerment.

Primarily, the study findings indicate that some women were perceived as active agents in perpetuating ethnic conflict through various acts of rumour mongering, weapon concealment, and spurring their husbands to partake in battle. Although not conclusive, these findings raise questions on earlier narratives that considered women solely as passive victims of conflict. Further, household livelihoods were exacerbated due to the loss of lives, destruction of store of resources, forced migration and displacement, curtailed access to land and micro-credit, and limited mobility due to curfew. In terms of resilience, the study reveals that poor institutional effectiveness and performance, as well as issues related to resource availability and access debilitated post-conflict resilience building efforts. However, networks of social capital and innovative practices were deemed instrumental towards resilience. Finally, the study identified prevailing culture and belief systems, poverty and informal sector work, illiteracy, as well as ignorance and early childhood education as barriers to women empowerment. Based on the findings, the study recommends adopting a gendered approach to conflict resolution efforts; strengthening local institutions; as well as increased capacity building and information flow in addressing ethnic grievances, improving household livelihoods and resilience, and women empowerment post-conflict.

Key words: Ethnic conflict, livelihoods, resilience, empowerment.

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## **Dedication**

I dedicate this thesis to my late brother; Cedric Aboba Atinga. Your memory will forever live in our hearts.

### **Declaration by candidate**

I, Brian Nsohbono Atinga, confirm that this work

“Gendered Battlefields: Women in Conflict, Household Livelihoods and Post-Conflict Resilience Building in Bawku, Ghana.”

has not been previously submitted either in whole, or in part for a degree at this university or any other institution of higher learning. To the best of my knowledge, the thesis is original and contains no materials previously published or written by any other persons except as acknowledged in the text and reference list.

.....

Kristiansand, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016

Brian Nsohbono Atinga

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## **Abbreviations**

**BEWDA:** Belim Wusa Development Agency

**CPP:** Convention People's Party

**CRS:** Catholic Relief Services

**CSO:** Civil Society Organization

**ICTs:** Information and Communication Technologies

**NDC:** National Democratic Congress

**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organization

**NLC:** National Liberation Council

**NPP:** New Patriotic Party

**PNDC:** Provisional National Defence Council

**SLA:** Sustainable Livelihood Approach

**UNEP:** United Nations Environment Programme

**USAID:** United States Agency for International Development

**WANEP:** West Africa Network for Peacebuilding

# Chapter One

## 1. Introduction

Violent conflict, despite the recent decline in number, remains one of the most important challenges facing the world today, particularly due to its persistence and devastating effects on the livelihoods and health of almost 1.5 billion people (Themner and Wallenstein 2011; p.525). According to the World Bank (2013: p.2), more than half of all countries have been affected by internal conflicts in the last 50 years. The legacy of violence persists in many contexts, with countries recovering from conflict facing enormous challenges in terms of recovery and reconstruction.

At both the micro and macro level, women are most challenged in conflict situations compared to men (Justino et al, 2012; p.2). However, despite the tendency to view women as passive victims of conflict, evidence exist pointing to the contrary. In some contexts, women actively engage in socio-political and economic activities during episodes of armed conflict (Women and Conflict, 2007; p.5). A principal aspect of the relationship between women and conflict is women's involvement as combatant forces. In some contexts, women are found among combatants as forced participants, in supporting roles assisting fighters, as armours for combatants, as dependent disciples of fighters and as active combatants (Women and Conflict, 2007). This reflects the fact that contexts shape gender roles in instances of conflict. As a direct consequence and response to fighting and violence, the lives of women adjust dramatically in response to changes to household composition and the wider community.

Ghana is not immune to violent conflict and the devastating effects it could have on livelihoods, especially that of women. In conflict-affected communities in Ghana, the general observation is that female livelihoods, more than males, are affected in many ways due primarily to the unequal access to assets and resources, as well as marginal socio-cultural roles assigned to women by society (Awedoba, 2011). Further, Awedoba (2011) notes that women often bore the ill-effects of conflicts such as the loss of their husbands and sons in battle, or as civilian casualties. However, in the same vein, women have been found to play an increasing economic role especially when working-aged males have died or have joined (or been forced to join) fighting

units and as a consequence, families are forced to move internally or to another country.

The crux of this thesis revolved around building on existing knowledge to provide new empirical evidence on the gendered role of women in conflict and the resultant livelihood implications of conflict. The choice of topic and ethnic conflict in Bawku as the case study was motivated by the observation that current scholarly works on conflict in Ghana have mainly focused on the causes and effects, as well as role of state and traditional authorities in conflict resolution (Lund, 2003; Awedoba, 2009; Bukari, 2011). The gender dimension of conflict thus remained a much-maligned field of scholarly interest. The study therefore makes a valuable contribution to knowledge. The analyses adopt a micro-level perspective, focusing on individual, household and community-level interactions that result from ethnic conflict, which necessarily have a gender dimension.

### **1.1 Problem statement**

The effects of conflicts world over have been documented in scholarly literature. These include death, displacement, health, and education (Justino, 2007). The Bawku conflict between the Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic groups spans more than eight decades, having its source being traditional ownership of the Bawku skin. The effects and the impact of armed conflicts on the Bawku Township as well as neighboring communities have been enormous. According to Lund (2003), persistent violence in the area claimed 29 lives and 36 serious injuries in the year 2001 alone. Further, at the height of ethnic clashes in the area in 2009, the total number of deaths rose by an additional 78, with damage to property in the area immeasurable (Noaga, 2013). The period between 2001 and peace accord in 2009 was marked by sporadic and low intensity clashes.

Despite the tendency to discount the consequences of conflict in the area due to the low human casualty rate, however, of significance is the effect it had on the livelihood of emerging female-headed households. In the aftermath of the conflict, women in the area were identified as the most affected due to the loss family members especially husbands in battle, destruction of property, forced migration and displacement of settlements. Despite the vulnerability of women in conflict contexts, there are however instances of women playing supporting roles in the conflict. This behaviour

raised questions on the mind of the researcher. What roles did women play in conflict? Did women actively engage in battle or play supporting roles?

The situation of women in the Bawku conflict also raised questions marks with regards to the level of female empowerment in the area. Despite successive attempts by governments and civil society organizations to find lasting solutions to the conflict through negotiation with stakeholders, a key highlight of such participatory processes for peace in Bawku remained the marginalization of the feminine voice. According to Noaga (2013; p.4), the marginalized nature of the female voice in the Bawku conflict could be traced to the nature of Kusasi and Mamprusi social structure. With both ethnic groups being patriarchal, the likely assumption is that women are accorded very little opportunity in decision-making at the community and national level. Therefore, questions that this research sought to answer included: What level of influence did women have over decision-making at the family and community level and how this impacted peace building in the area? What constitute the barriers to women participation in conflict resolution processes and empowerment in the aftermath of the Bawku conflict?

Finally, the Bawku Municipality suffers from a development gap as a result of conflict. Following recent spates of ethnic clashes, livelihoods have been lost and families displaced due to the relative absence of economic activity and forced migration in the area. With specific regards to women, very little is known about how female-headed households were affected by conflict, and available opportunities for women empowerment for sustainable livelihoods. The study therefore represented an attempt to fill such knowledge gaps.

## **1.2 Main objective**

The main objective of the study was to assess the role of women in conflict and the effects of conflict on household livelihoods in Bawku.

### **1.2.1 Specific objectives**

Specifically, the study sought to:

- Assess the ‘gendered’ roles women played in the Bawku conflict.
- Examine the livelihood implications of ethnic conflict on households in the study area.

- Explore opportunities for building resilience against the shocks of conflict in Bawku.
- Find out the barriers to women empowerment in the aftermath of conflict in Bawku.

### **1.3 Research questions**

Based on the objectives, the study sought to find answers to the following pertinent research questions.

- What gendered roles did women play in the Bawku conflict?
- How did conflict affect the livelihood of female-headed households in the study area?
- What opportunities exist towards building resilience against the shocks of ethnic conflict?
- What constitute main challenges to women empowerment in Bawku?

### **1.4 Overview of study area**

#### **1.4.1 Geographical characteristics**

The Bawku Municipality is one of nine districts and municipalities in the Upper East Region of Ghana. It is located between latitudes 11° 11' and 10° 41' North and longitude 0° 18' W and 0° 61' E in the north-eastern corner of the region. With a total land area of about 1215.05 square kilometers, it shares boundaries with Burkina Faso, the Republic of Togo, Bawku West District and Garu-Tempene District to the north, east, west and the south respectively (Ghana Districts, 2006).

As with the whole of the Upper East Region, the Bawku municipality is part of the interior continental climatic zone of the country characterized by pronounced dry and wet seasons. The two seasons are influenced by two oscillating air masses. First is the warm, dusty and dry harmattan air mass that blows in the northeastern direction across the whole municipality from the Sahara Desert. During the period of its influence (late November-early March) rainfall is entirely absent, with relative humidity rarely exceeding 20% (Ghana Districts, 2006). May to October marks the wet season. During this period, the municipality is under the influence of a deep tropical maritime air mass, with rainfall amounts averaging 800mm per annum. A striking characteristic of the rainfall pattern worth noting is the extreme variability

and reliability both between and within seasons. Further, the unreliable nature of rainfall is indicative of how livelihoods through agriculture, may be lost in periods of prolonged absence of rainfall. Below is a map of the Upper East Region of Ghana, depicting the Bawku Municipality.

**Figure 1: A map of the Upper East Region of Ghana (Bawku Municipal in grey)**



Source: Ghana Districts (2006)

#### **1.4.2 Demography of study area**

With approximately 217,791 inhabitants, it is one of the most densely populated areas in Northern Ghana, with a population density of 169 persons per square kilometre (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). However, most of this population is concentrated in the rural areas (20% urban and 80% rural). Generally, the municipality is a patriarchal society with about 87 percent of households headed by men (Ghana Districts, 2006). This could have implications for gender equality in the area since it infers that men have more access to power and/or resources compared to women.

Like most municipalities in Ghana, Bawku East is made up of heterogeneous ethnic groups, with the predominant ethnicities being the Kusasis, Mampruis, Moshies, and Bissas. Ethnic heterogeneity has had implications for harmony in the municipality. The heterogeneous nature of population distribution in the area is often cited as a contributory factor to sporadic ethnic clashes in the municipality. Indeed, the 2010 Population and Housing Census of Ghana estimated that the main factions in conflict, the Kusasis and Mampruis, constitute about 47.6 percent and 3.7 percent of the population (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010). Despite the population dominance of the

Kusasis, ethnic clashes still pertain. A study of this nature was therefore relevant in unravelling the socio-political intricacies of ethnic conflict in Bawku.

### **1.4.3 Socio-economic features**

Despite sporadic ethnic conflict, Bawku represents a hub of commerce in the Upper East Region. According to Bombande (2007), the geographical location of the area facilitates internal trade with neighbouring cities in Ghana, as well as externally with Togo and Burkina Faso. The local economy of Bawku revolves around three major activities; agriculture, small-scale industries, and commerce (Aganah, 2008).

Agriculture, is the major economic activity and accounts for about 62% of total employment. The sector comprises mainly subsistence crop production, livestock and poultry farming. Commerce is the second important economic activity in BEM. Municipality has a three-day market cycle during which local agricultural produce as well as manufactured goods is traded. The third important economic activity includes one-man and family-run businesses. These are characterized by diverse small-scale industries such as shea butter extraction, groundnut oil extraction, and local beer (pito) brewing industries.

### **1.4.4 Political structures**

There are two-levels of political authority in Bawku. The first is the Municipal Authority instituted by the state under the Local Government Law (PNDC Law 207, 1988) to provide local administration. The second level of authority is the Traditional Authority, which encapsulates the chieftaincy institution. Though no major role is assigned to the chieftaincy institution under the municipal system of governance, its position is guaranteed in the country's constitution based on the support it wields among local indigenes of communities. This is especially so in areas like Bawku that is predominantly rural in nature, where the influence of central government and the local government structures tend to be minimal. In the study area, the chieftaincy institution plays significant roles of land allocation, dispute and conflict resolution, maintenance of law and order, as well as upholding traditional customs (Aganah, 2008).

## **1.5 Thesis organization**

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter consists of the introduction to the study, problem statement, research questions, and an overview of the study



area. In chapter two, a review and analysis of major literature pertaining to ethnic conflict, household livelihoods and resilience, as well as women empowerment is conducted. Chapter three encompasses the research methodology and discusses the rationale for the choice of sampling, data collection and analysis techniques. The fourth chapter embodies the presentation, discussion and analysis of field data, while the final chapter summarizes key findings and implications of the study.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Literature Review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This section reviews existing literature relevant to the gendered role of women in ethnic conflict, livelihood effects of conflict, resilience building, as well as issues related to women empowerment in conflict contexts. It looked into known and scientific literature on the above highlighted gender specific issues and discusses it against the background of international and national data of relevance to the study.

#### **2.2 The concept of ethnicity**

The concept of ethnicity has been variously defined. Per Tonah (2007: 5), ethnicity relates to a group of people with a common ancestry, belief system, language and culture, as well as a consciousness of belonging passed down from one generation to another through socialization. In another definition, Eriksen (1993: 12) indicates that an ethnic group as social relationship between actors who consider themselves culturally distinct from members of other groups that share minimum forms of interaction. Eriksen's definition thus introduces elements of separatism from other ethnic groups since culture and territory constitute the basis of social contact or interaction. Further, Max Weber (1968: cited in Croucher, 2004; 117) defines ethnic groups as human groups that uphold a subjective belief in their common descent because of semblances of physical type, custom, memories of colonization or migration. The above definitions of ethnicity are vital because they form the locus of the appreciation of systematic distinction between insiders and outsiders which gives a group their symbolic meaning. As indicated by Nnoli (1998: 5), such derived symbolic meaning is what makes ethnic identity conflict prone.

##### **2.2.1 Genesis of ethnic conflict in Bawku**

The Bawku conflict could best be described as a deep-seated and enduring mix of ethnic and political tensions leading to conflict between the Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic groups in the Bawku Traditional Area of Ghana. As an identity-based conflict, the crux of it revolves around ethnic claims for traditional authority (chieftaincy) and political power between the Kusasis and Mamprusis. The Bawku traditional area consisting of Bawku Municipality, Bawku West District and Garu-Tempene District is divided into Agolle (east of the White Volta) and Toende (west of the White Volta).

Recounting Kusasi claims to the Bawku area, Rattray (1932) reported that the Kusasi ethnic faction claimed first settlement in East Agolle, in current times known as the Bawku traditional area comprising all regions under the Bawku skin (Rattray, 1932). Predominantly traditional farmers, the Kusasi group claim to have resided in the area for many years without a recognized form of centralized authority (Awedoba, 2009). However, in the absence of traditional authority structures, what pertained in Kusasi custom was the Tendaana (earth priest) who was the custodian of lands and performed religious duties on behalf of the community (Tonah, 2007: 207). As such, the Kusasi only recognized the Tendaana who at best could be described as a sort of political and spiritual head in the absence of a centralized traditional authority system. With time, the Kusasi population grew in the 1900s and occupied many areas in Agolle and Toende (Hilton, 1962). Following population growth, Bawku gradually became the largest town and centre of brisk commercial activities in the area.

Conversely, the Mamprusi claim to the Bawku skin dates far back to the pre-colonial era. According to Awedoba (2009), the Mamprusi originated from Bugri, Ayua and Yauga in Burkina Faso. With their centralized traditional authority system, Mamprusi rule in Bawku was necessitated first by slave raids and subsequent invasion of vital trade routes which the Nayiri (paramount chief of Mamprusis) sought to safeguard. Thus, the Kusasi did not resist Mamprusi traditional authority since Mamprusis were better organized and equipped in terms of weaponry to resist slave raids. Further, by mounting security posts at strategic locations across the Bawku area, trade routes were secured (Bombande, 2007). This boded well for peaceful co-existence since both factions' interests were aligned.

It is worth noting that until the 1930s, Mamprusi authority did not extend to all Kusasi settlements and the whole Bawku traditional area (Bombande, 2007). Their authority was, however, consolidated to include all Kusasi areas following the introduction of British indirect rule system. In this system, local authority was often delegated to ethnic groups with organized political structures. When the British arrived in the area, they consulted with the Kusasi group asking for chiefs. However, such organized political structures were not in place since the Kusasis led acephalous lives. As such, the British appointed as chief or traditional leader one among the more institutionally organized Mamprusi who had experience with traditional authority systems (Tonah, 2007: 207). As a side note, the Mamprusi leaders that the British conferred traditional

authority on via the indirect rule system, were descendants of the Nayiri (overlord) of Nalerigu where the Mamprusi group in Bawku had migrated from, and with whom British colonial authorities had already struck an acquaintance. The Nayiri was subsequently given oversight responsibility over Bawku in terms of enskinning traditional leaders. The Kusasi faction, although without recognized authority structures opposed this move fervently, and marked the beginning of tensions between the two ethnic groups.

Tension between both ethnic groups peaked in 1950's following the death of the Mamprusi chief of Bawku (Bawkunaba). Noticing vulnerability among the Mamprusi faction, the Kusasi decided to address their grievances by enskinning their own chief, as ruler of Bawku, and in the process ignoring the Nayiri's customary installation practices. This resulted in the enskinning of two separate chiefs for the same skin: Abugrago Azoka for the Kusasi faction and Mahama Yiremia for the Mamprusi group. The violent confrontations that followed this action compelled then Governor General of the Gold Coast (present day Ghana), Lord Listowel, to institute the Opoku-Afari Committee of 1957 to investigate the causes of ethnic clashes. Among other findings, the committee reported that the Nayiri's practice of installing Mamprusis over Kusasi areas is undemocratic and dictatorial. Consequently, the position of Naba Abugrago Azoka as the legitimate chief of Bawku was restored (Opoku-Afari Committee, 1957: 13).

In the aftermath of the committee's report, Lord Listowell acknowledged Abugrago Azoka as the Bawku Naba. Aggrieved by the decision reached by the Opoku-Afari committee, leading elite of the Mamprusi faction filed a divisional court writ entreating the court to invalidate the findings and report of the committee, as well as the recognition accorded the Kusasi chief as Bawku Naba by the Governor General. Although this request was granted, a Court of Appeal decision later overturned the divisional court's ruling (Tonah, 2007: 207-208).

Till the overthrow of Kwame Nkrumah's Convention People Party (CPP) government in 1966, the Kusasi Bawku chief remained in office. From then, the conflict assumed a political dimension, with each ethnic faction supporting political parties that they perceived to be sympathetic to their claim to the Bawku skin (chieftaincy title). Following the overthrow of the CPP, the Mamprusi faction appealed to the new government of the National Liberation Council (NLC) to remedy perceived as ills

done by previous administrations. This culminated in the passing of the Chieftaincy Amendment Decree of 1966 (NLCD 112), deskinning the Kusasi Bawku chief, and in replace enskinning a Mamprusi as chief of the Bawku traditional area.

Despite frequent appeals to subsequent government by the Kusasi group, the situation persisted until the Provisional National Defense Council (PNDC) took the reins of power. The new government reversed NLCD 112 and the authority of the Mamprusi chief over Kusasi dominated areas by passing PNDC Law 75 (Bukari, 2013: 94). Further, by passing this new law, a Kusasi was reinstated as chief of the Bawku traditional area. Through this legislative act, the Mamprusi group were alienated by the PNDC administration. However, widespread support was garnered among Kusasis since their political support of the PNDC (now turned NDC) was repaid in the form of traditional authority over Mamprusis. Thus, the Mamprusi united behind the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP), estimating that an NPP led government would reinstate the Bawku traditional authority to them by revisiting PNDC Law 75 (Bombande, 2007). The expectation of the Mamprusi was however not realized as the NPP chose to maintain the status quo.

Closely related with the ethno-political conflict in Bawku are competing claims over land ownership. In Bawku, land ownership is linked to traditional authority or the right to rule (Aganah, 2008: 31). As such, the custodian of land in the area is often regarded as the custodian of the chieftaincy institution. The Kusasi entitlement to Bawku land originates from their claim of 'first-settlership'. As such, land constitutes the property of the Tendaana and since they settled in the Bawku before the Mamprusi, they are as such the custodians of all lands in the area. On the other hands, Mamprusis argue that land belongs to the Nayiri, and as such Kusasi Tendaana's represented wardens of land for the Nayiri, who ensured security by mounting security posts, secured crucial trade routes as well as allowed the acephalous Kusasi group to cultivate lands in peace (Tonah, 2007).

Following intense ethnic clashes and the failure on the part of state mediation and security apparatus to resolve the conflict, networks of civil society and non-governmental organizations were instrumental in conflict resolution and reconciliation efforts (Bukari, 2013: 93). These include international and community based NGOs such as the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), ActionAid Ghana, the Catholic Relief Services (CRS), and BEWDA. These networks were and remain

crucial in setting up roundtable discussions for peace talks and mediation between feuding parties and all other ethnic groups in the area at Damongo and Kumasi (in the Northern and Ashanti regions of Ghana) in 2001 and 2010. Other efforts have been geared towards public education and capacity building of especially women in Bawku in the aftermath of ethnic conflict (Bukari, 2013).

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

Theoretically, the accounts of hegemonic masculinity have often dominated scholarly analysis of gender and conflict (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Thus, there has been an emphasis on the patterns of practice that forged male dominance over women through culture and institutional mechanisms, thereby denying women an agency and bereft of victimhood in the gender and conflict discourse (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005, p. 832). Against this backdrop, the grievance theory and sustainable livelihood approach will be employed in explaining the gendered roles of women in conflict, as well as their empowerment for sustainable livelihoods.

### **2.2.1 Grievance theory**

To begin with, feminist theorists influenced by the theory of grievance argue that grievances are the driving factors that motivate armed conflict (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008). This implies the existence of a tolerability threshold and once that is passed, individuals will be driven to play roles in conflict. This model departs from rationalist thought, and rather focuses on feelings of deprivation, frustration and the cumulative effect of such feelings across a group in society (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008).

In applying this model, three main sources of grievance can be diffused; political, economic, and ethno-religious sources. From a political angle, the argument made for individuals, especially women, playing varying gender-specific roles in conflict revolves around unequal distribution of political power (Collier and Hoeffler, 2004; Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008). Thus, where there is a perceived grievance in terms of marginalization in accessing power, the tendency to support armed rebellion is higher. Economically, the tendency to engage in armed conflict revolves around access to and distribution of resources (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008). Further, from an ethno-religious perspective, women's investments in social relationships and

in their roles as mothers and caregivers would make them likely to mobilize in defence of their families and traditional beliefs.

In analysing the Bawku conflict, the arguments present in grievance theory explaining the multiplicity of gendered roles women may play in conflict may suffice. First off, historically the Mamprusi ethnic group although constituting the minority in terms of population, wielded traditional political power over the Kusaasi ethnic group. As such, to re-affirm political dominance, Kusaasi women may be motivated to support men in battle. In addition, a viable argument may be raised related to the unequal nature of access to resources between men and women in the study area on one hand, and between the two ethnic groups in conflict on the other hand. In a way, this could explain women playing supporting roles in conflict in Bawku. Finally, due to an intrinsic desire to established social relationships and ensure survival of their family, it could be argued that some women in Bawku were motivated to support men in conflict. However, all these represent tentative arguments that the study will seek to unravel.

### **2.2.2 Sustainable livelihood approach**

Another theoretical foundation that the study will rely on is the Sustainable Livelihood Approach (SLA) in exploring how household livelihoods are affected during and post-conflict, as well as available resources for women empowerment in Bawku. SLA provides a framework through which gender relations can recursively be studied from people's own livelihood practices. According to Kaag et al (2004; p.49), "a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (stores, resources, claims and access), and activities required for a means of living". As such, a livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and bounce back from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, and provide sustainable livelihoods opportunities, especially in conflict environments. Deducing from the above, three elements feature predominantly in explaining the extent of women empowerment for sustainable livelihoods in Bawku; livelihood assets, livelihood strategies, and livelihood outcomes.

In the aftermath of conflict, livelihood assets represent the store of resources (human, natural, physical, financial, and social) available to women for production, consumption and investment. The absence of these resources may also signify a

challenge to women empowerment in the area. Faced with limited livelihood assets due to conflict, livelihood strategies are curtailed. This is because actors adopt a given strategy depending on their asset portfolio, needs, experiences, and opportunities (Kaag et al, 2004). As such, the strategies actors adopt and adapt to result in livelihood outcomes (changes in well-being and structural outcomes). In the context of Bawku conflict, given that women are hypothetically constrained by asset portfolio, access qualifications, and strategy options, they may exhibit a weaker outcome status relative to men in the area.

### **2.3 Vulnerability and livelihood implications of conflict**

For this study, the concept of ‘vulnerability’ is defined to mean the likelihood of being affected and the significance of being affected by events and processes that threaten livelihoods and security, and thus wellbeing (Ellis, 2000). The issue of women’s vulnerability in conflict contexts is addressed through a focus on their livelihoods and level of insecurity. The study further draws on Ellis (2000) conceptualization of livelihoods. Livelihoods relate to “assets (natural, physical, human, financial, social, and political), activities, and the access to these (mediated by institutions, organizations and social relations) that together determine the living gained by individuals or households” (Ellis, 2000: 10). Taking into consideration contextual realities in Bawku, the study conceived household livelihood as comprising the ways in which women access and organize resources for the pursuit of goals necessary for survival and their long-term wellbeing, thereby reducing vulnerability created and aggravated by conflict. In this section of literature review, critical livelihood implications of violent conflict across contexts were reviewed. This provides background knowledge in relation to ethnic conflict in Bawku, Ghana.

#### **2.3.1 Loss of human lives**

The most visible livelihood implication of conflict on women is the loss of human lives. These are often young men in prime working age, though many more violent conflicts have been accompanied by violence against civilians, often children, women and the elderly (Dewhirst, 1998; Woodward, 1995). The death of household members in working age means that is households become female headed, with limited opportunities to access resources for their livelihood due to socio-cultural barriers on women’s access to resources. This has the effect of robbing vulnerable female-headed households off much needed human, financial and social capital as livelihood assets



(Justino, 2011). This is often enough to push previously vulnerable households into extreme forms of poverty, which may well become persistent if the household is unable to replace labour.

### **2.5.2 Destruction of property**

Furthermore, livelihoods are wrecked and vulnerabilities worsened during conflicts heavy fighting and looting. Verpoorten (2003) reports that 12% of all households lost assets while cattle stock decreased by 50% on average, because of the 1994 Rwandan genocide. Similarly, in Tajikistan, livelihoods of about 7% of households and property were damaged during the civil war between 1992 and 1998 (Shemyakina, 2006).

While the destruction of assets or resources impact the ability of households and communities to remain productive, women are especially challenged because they bear the bulk of is productive activity in the absence of men during conflict (Justino, 2006). Particularly, the destruction of assets by armed conflict, in addition to the unstable socio-economic and political environments significantly impact the ability of affected households to recover economic and social position in post-conflict settings. On one hand, armed conflict occurs because there is something worth fighting for, implying that some groups and individuals benefit from conflict through asset looting, reallocation of property, as well as privileged access to markets and political institutions (Wood, 2005). Consequently, household livelihood and consumption patterns of victims are often affected in the absence of alternative livelihood opportunities or store of assets or resources.

### **2.5.3 Displacement and migration**

Violent conflicts typically induce large population movements. This has the effect of increasing vulnerability since migrant communities often have limited assets and resources to rely on for livelihood in new settlements (World Bank, 2013). In 2002, about 34.8 million people across the world were forced to migrate due to violent conflicts (USCR, 2004). Over the last decade, the number of displaced people due to conflict worldwide stood at 11 million in the year 2014 (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015). In the West African sub-region, because of conflict, the migrant population stood at 1.5 million people in 2014 (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2015). These statistics raise alarming questions with regards to the extent of preparedness as well as livelihood opportunities available to displaced populations in host communities.

In Ghana, following the Bawku conflict, over 1000 residents of affected communities migrated to neighbouring Togo, and towns in Ghana in search of peace and livelihood opportunities (Amnesty International, 2011). Generally, these statistics reveal the extent to which human settlements and the capacity to access resources and device livelihood strategies are disrupted due to conflict. Specifically, by cutting off large numbers of people from economic opportunities, internal conflict can lead to a vicious cycle of displacement and household poverty from which it is difficult to escape (Justino, 2011). This is made worse by the damage of social networks and the subsequent depletion of significant elements of socio-economic and political capital of poor and vulnerable groups, especially women in conflict societies.

#### **2.5.4 Access to land**

Conflict invariably affects the availability and use of land resources for livelihood especially where land is destroyed or made unavailable through land mines (UNEP, 2013; Collingwood, 2014). Women, particularly female-headed households, are often disproportionately affected since they largely depend on land resources for their livelihoods. In other cases, women are equally responsible for acquiring and using land to meet daily household needs (Lukatela, 2012). That being said, conflict significantly disrupts existing social and cultural management systems for land (UNEP, 2013). In conflict-affected contexts, this could have acute implications for women, as their access to land typically depends on the social structures of their communities that often are patriarchal.

Critically, access to land for household livelihoods is intrinsically tied to culture, heritage, identity and community (Lukatela, 2012). It constitutes a major factor in gender inequality in especially patriarchal societies that dominate social organization in developing countries like Ghana, with women estimated to own less than 2% of land globally (UN Women, 2012). The lack or inadequate access to land by women is further exacerbated by conflict as displacement from land and the death of male family members often make women more vulnerable to economic stresses (Lukatela, 2012).

Various scholarly works indicate that land often constitutes a common pre-requisite for access to other resources such as credit and agricultural inputs (Justino, 2011; UN Women, 2012; Lukatela, 2012). In the absence of legislative frameworks providing

equal access and use of land for both men and women, critical challenges erupt especially in post-conflict peacebuilding due to the increases in female-headed households (Lukatela, 2012). This insecurity affects not only women, but also young children and other dependent family members. Indeed, in countries where women lack land ownership rights, children are 60-85% more likely to suffer from malnourishment (UN Women, 2012). However, where resources are controlled by women, they are more likely to be used to improve household consumption and welfare, and overall well-being of the family.

Furthermore, women's access to land is also a product of their relative position in the family setup, which often changes during conflict because of death, displacement or forced migration (UN Women, 2013). Kindi (2010) notes the difficulty women face in laying claim to their husbands' land and other property due to competing interests of family members in countries such as Burundi and Uganda (Kindi, 2010). Bouta (2005) goes further to note that women in these circumstances often have no statutory or customary legal protection to ensure their rights to land. It therefore remains to be examined the relationship between Bawku women, their access to land and resultant livelihood implications during and post-conflict.

### **2.5.5 Access to credit**

An important livelihood implication of violent conflict is low access to credit. Although it is recognized that both men and women need access to credit in post-conflict contexts, women are often discriminated against and conditions may make it more difficult for women to access credit than men (de Souza, 2003). Further, Greenberg and Zuckerman (2004) indicate how female-headed households living in poverty face peculiar challenges obtaining credit through conventional channels. Particularly, commercial banks set conditions on their lending that often mean women are unable to obtain loans. Likewise, commercial banks often demand that borrowers be literate or demand guarantees in countries where women lack the rights to own land or property (Greenberg and Zuckerman, 2004). As such, in contexts of pervasive illiteracy and no rights or access to resources, livelihoods of especially female-headed households may be exacerbated. According to De Souza (2003), these hurdles are exacerbated by the fact that in most conflict-affected countries, both the borrowers and the banks are mainly male dominated.

Interestingly, despite women's positive credit repayment record worldwide, gender roles still influence how banks and credit facilities work with women, both in post-conflict and normal situations (Mosse, 2001). This led to the establishment of micro-credit programs specifically targeted women. However, despite the success of microcredit programs, which have shown women to be more reliable in making credit repayments than men, commercial banks in many countries are yet to change their approach to women borrower, especially in the aftermath of conflict (De Souza, 2003). In recognition that both men and women have important roles to play in terms of livelihood 'upliftment' and support, it is necessary to guarantee that women and men have equal access to credit by ensuring that post-conflict reconstruction credit programs are targeted towards both men and women.

## **2.4 Resilience in conflict-affected communities**

In recent times, there has been an increased focus on the concept of resilience to understand the risks of conflict as well as response mechanisms to adopt (Bujones et al, 2013). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) conceptualizes resilience as "the ability of people, households, communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth" (USAID, 2012: 9). The study adapted USAID's definition of resilience by analysing household and communal response and adaptation to ethnic conflict in Bawku.

In analysing a community's resilience to conflict, it was critical to look at three factors of resilience: institutions, resources, and adaptive facilitators (Bujones et al, 2013). Basically, institutions comprise formal and informal actors that stipulate the rules and regulations governing societies. Resources encompass tangible assets accessible to households and communities in conflict contexts, whereas adaptive facilitators constitute intangible elements of social capital and patterns of behaviour (Longstaff et al, 2010). In sum, institutions, resources and adaptive facilitators are critical to resilience since they comprise the means through which households and communities can mitigate, adapt and recover from shocks and accompanying stressors related to violent conflict.

### **2.4.1 Institutions**

In every country, formal and informal institutions regulate human activities and shape social interactions (Longstaff et al, 2010). Institutions, both formal and informal, comprise of local and regional government structures that establish rules and regulations for social interaction and production, as well as those structures that regulate a society outside the government (Bujones et al, 2013). In the context of developing countries and especially conflict prone areas, institutions are crucial to household and community resilience. However, the extent of their influence hinges on perceived effectiveness or performance and legitimacy (De Weijer, 2013).

Institutional effectiveness or performance necessitate the adoption of a gendered participatory approach in peacebuilding efforts (Bujones et al, 2013). In the case of the Bawku conflict, this implies the inclusion of all stakeholders especially feuding parties in negotiation and conflict resolution consultations. A key outcome of such participatory approaches is trust building. According to Hardin, where parties in conflict feel that their interests are aligned with the collective interests of state and non-state institutions, effective response to crisis is fostered towards building resilience (Hardin, 2002). It therefore remains to be seen whether there is the possibility for trust and alignment of interests between Kusasi and Mamprusi factions, inter-ethnic peace councils and security agencies in Bawku. Likewise, peace accords are more likely to be upheld by parties in conflict since their varying interests are often integrated in such agreements (USAID, 2005).

However, the legitimacy of such institutions remains key to their performance or effectiveness. Legitimacy is a fundamentally subjective and normative concept that characterizes the belief that a rule, institution or leader has the right to govern (Tyler, 2001). In fragile contexts, state institutions often struggle for legitimacy due to unaddressed grievances related to resource allocation, perceptions of corruption, poor infrastructure and service delivery (Marc, 2012). However, the collapse of formal state-institutions in such contexts is not an indication of complete institutional void. According to Pouligny, even where the state is virtually non-existent, informal (customary) institutions often step in to fulfil basic functions (Pouligny, 2010). In some cases, informal institutions have managed to govern quite effectively in the absence of state presence. For instance, in the context of total state collapse in

Somaliland, social institutions were instrumental in filling the institutional void (Marc, 2010). Specifically, community elders and opinion leaders effectively drew significant networks across diverse ethnic groups, enforced norms against violence and contributed to peaceful elections in 2002 (Marc, 2010). However, the legitimacy of informal institutions particularly traditional authority is subject to debate particularly in ethnic heterogeneous societies where competing claims over resources and authority structures exist.

This opens a realm for civil society engagement because of ineffective institutions. In conflict contexts, networks of civil society often play a significant role in improving the quality of interactions between traditional and state institutions since they often occupy a middle ground between the two systems (Wollenbaek and Selle, 2002). Further, civil society groups could be effective agents of community organization as well as creating networks among individuals and groups across social and cultural cleavages (Varshney, 2010). In terms of resilience building, these bridging networks can act as agents of peace during outbreaks of conflict or instrumental in preventing a recurrence of conflict. However, what civil society can do is often limited due to resource capacity to mediate across groups (Schirch, 2011). Further, in their mediation and conflict resolution efforts, there is the added risk that effective civil society organizations or their leaders may be co-opted by political interests (Manea, 2010). This could dramatically reduce their legitimacy in the eyes of the communities they serve.

#### **2.4.2 Resources**

In fragile contexts, resources are critical to household and community resilience during and post-conflict (Longstaff et al, 2013). The contribution of resources is often measured in terms of its availability and performance. The availability of a resource relates to the existence and extent of its accessibility to households and communities for livelihood support (Bujones et al, 2013). On the other hand, the performance of resources indicates how effectively identified resources fulfil functions that it is designed to achieve. As such, it could be argued that high capacity and quality performance of resources contributes to resilience and reinforces a community against shocks and stressors.

Critical to building resilience in conflict affected communities is examining the extent to which available resources can withstand shocks, as well as their performance in mitigating, adapting and recovering from conflict (Norris et al, 2008). Further, the variety of resources available to households and communities, as well as its store of 'backup' resources available often constitutes useful determinants of resilience. As such, the availability of complementary and/or alternative could reduce household reliance on a specific resource. Moreover, the availability of a resource may be significant in securing access to other resources. Awedoba (2011) cites how the availability of land to households in Ghana is often key to securing micro credit due to the collateral value of land. However, what is more crucial than the mere availability of land as collateral for securing micro-credit is its tenure security. The study further explored this theme in the data analysis section.

Aside resource availability, the performance of resource base of households and communities particularly in conflict areas are crucial to building resilience. As noted by Justino (2010), a fundamental mechanism by which violent conflict may affect resilience and long-term development outcomes is through capital formation. With regards to human capital, performance is often a consequence of the level of education and skill training. Consequently, in contexts of low education and skill training, livelihood opportunities available to households are often limited since they are unable to take advantage of formal sector economic activities (Bujones et al, 2013). Further, the human capital base of households and communities often shapes the level of access to information on issues related to conflict. Access to information impacts resilience building because individuals and communities may be unable to decipher and/or communicate knowledge particularly on conflict early warning signals. Likewise, information access shapes conflict mitigation, adaptation and recovery towards building resilient communities.

Similarly, the performance of natural and physical resources is significant to resilience during and post-conflict. Particularly, resources such as farmlands and crops constitute key resources for maintaining household income and consumption patterns in many developing as well as fragile contexts. However, the seasonal nature of staple crops, soil fertility as well as price fluctuations may determine how such resources can be relied upon in building resilient communities. In the same vein, Bujones et al (2013) cite how infrastructure and road network systems could foster

resilient communities and induce positive growth post-conflict. Critically, such resources are crucial in terms of opening up access to farmlands and communities that may be cut-off as a result of conflict.

### **2.4.3 Adaptive facilitators**

In terms of resilience building, adaptive facilitators could be described as intangible elements of social capital and innovation that perform the function of creating an enabling environment for institutions and resources to mitigate shocks, recover from them and bounce back after a shock occurs (Bujones et al, 2013). It is worth noting that although social networks and patterns of behaviour are context specific, each is however important in creating post-conflict communities that are adaptable, collaborative, innovative, and responsive (Longstaff et al, 2013). They are as such essential for creating resilient institutions and resources.

Social capital constitutes the norms, values, and social relations that bond communities together as well as the bridges between communal groups and civil society and the state (Colleta and Cullen, 2000). Similarly, Putnam defined social capital as “features of social life- networks, norms and trust that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives” (Putnam, 1995a: 664). Although both definitions acknowledge the role of social capital in fostering cohesion Putnam (1995a) goes further by pointing out the role of social capital in economic development and forming democratic societies. Indeed, social capital could potentially strengthen social cohesion especially where it provides reciprocal aid and protection during conflict (Keho, 2009). This is particularly the case during community mobilization efforts where such networks work for the collective good of society. Further, scholarly evidence points to social networks being instrumental in resilience building by providing moral, financial and material support services to conflict affected communities. (Narayan, 1999; Lederman et al, 2002; Keho, 2009).

However, despite the development potential of social capital, violent conflict often weakens its social fabric. According to De Weijer (2013), it divides the population by undermining interpersonal and communal group trust, as well as destroys the norms and values that underlie cooperation and collective action for the common good. This increases the likelihood of communal strife. In terms of resilience building, damage to a nation’s social capital could impede communal and state ability to recover after



hostilities cease. This is especially the case where social capital is perverted to mobilize groups such as young people or men to instigate violence and undermine social cohesion (Keho, 2009). The challenge therefore remains promoting social development by encouraging social relationships that cut across ethnic and political affiliations.

Aside social capital, innovation has been identified as crucial to maintaining system balance and resilience. Innovation measures the ability of households or social groups to learn from their experiences and subsequently adapt behaviour to better respond to shocks and stressors in the future (Longstaff et al, 2013). Innovation allows households, institutions, and communities the occasion to think critically and challenge existing socio-economic and political structures that are in place (Longstaff et al, 2013). This is crucial to resilience because the creation of new ideas fosters systemic adaptation, reproduction and recovery (Bujones et al, 2013). A recent innovative practice adopted in conflict contexts is the use of information technology in conflict prevention. In Kenya, Mancini and O'Reilly (2013) note that various national institutions pioneered the use of innovative information communication technology particularly the mobile phone in conflict early warning. More importantly, such innovative practices enable bottom-up and collaborative approaches to mitigation, adaptation and recovery efforts since information related to conflict is often transmitted from citizens to security agencies or other government institutions.

However, lingering issues related to the credibility of information serve as a challenge to the adoption of innovative technologies particularly ICTs (Mancini and O'Reilly, 2013). Moreover, literacy levels also dictate the kind of innovative technologies that can be used towards building household and community resilience to conflict.

Awedoba (2011) especially cites how low literacy levels in conflict affected communities in northern Ghana constitutes a challenge to the adoption of innovative farming techniques and seed varieties to boost household food security. It therefore remains to be seen whether such innovative practices exist and their contribution to resilience building during and post-conflict in Bawku.

## **2.5 Women empowerment in conflict**

Historical accounts document the experiences of women in conflict environments starting from mythological times, moving to Ancient Greece and Rome, through the

Middle Ages, and during World War I and World War II (Hoffman 2004; p.2). While conflict inflicts suffering on everyone, however, its short and long-term effects particularly affect women. The United States Agency for International Development (2007; p.7) points out terrible issues affecting women during conflict such issues as sexual violence, displacement, access to health care and hygiene, food, water and shelter, access to sources of livelihood.

In general, conflicts exacerbate gender disparities, both in society at large and in families (USAID, 2007). However, in the much-published negative effects of conflict on women are some positive effects with specific regard to women empowerment. In incidences of conflict, women's socio-economic responsibilities may increase, with women indulged to assume responsibility for household livelihood. This often requires learning new skills to perform jobs previously held by men or prepare them for informal income-generating activities (USAID, 2007). Similarly, Nakamura (2004) notes that conflict has the potential of increasing the bargaining and decision-making power of women within households due to their increased socio-economic contribution to household income. More importantly, the experience and knowledge gained through women's increased engagement in economic, social and political activities helps maintain expected benefits in the long term. In that sense, conflict may potentially open a window of opportunity to transform social structures and promote greater gender equality.

Politically, there is evidence suggesting that violent conflict in some instances trigger unexpected but yet encouraging civic and political responses by women (Wood, 2003; Chen et al, 2005; Bellows and Miguel, 2009). Experiences of conflict often correlate with greater levels of community engagement, social capital building, as well as political engagement. In El Salvador, Wood (2003) argues that government instigated violence prompted victims, with specific mention of women, to support and in some instances, join opposition forces out of moral outrage. Similarly, narrating Sierra Leone's experience of civil conflict, Bellows and Miguel (2009) argue that households that experienced mortality, injury, or displacement are more likely to be politically active and to participate in local collective action, as reflected through voting during elections, attending community meetings, and engaging in community maintenance projects. Further, as survivors of conflict, the extension of women's responsibilities in post-conflict rebuilding has sprung women's organizations and

networks (World Bank 2011). Through these organizations and networks, women mobilize to incorporate a gendered viewpoint and voice into peace dialogues and during the post-conflict phase.

Finally, changes in gender roles of women due to conflict has the potential of assisting women achieve greater financial independence and forge long-term changes in the gendered division of labour. For instance, women led 4 out of every 10 households during Columbia's armed conflict (Chen et al, 2005; p.18). Unfortunately, in the Ghanaian context, not much has been documented on the experiences of women in conflict environments, with specific regard to the roles women play. This study therefore is a step towards contributing knowledge on the complexities of gender role changes in conflict areas.

## **2.6 Barriers to women empowerment**

Despite several studies pointing towards an increase in women empowerment during and in the aftermath of conflict, it is worth noting that such increase in economic responsibilities and the assumption of traditionally male activities by women can have ambivalent effects (El-Bushra et al. 2002; El-Bushra and Sahl, 2005). In this section, the study reviewed literature on the barriers to women empowerment in terms of their access to resources, economic opportunities, and participation in decision-making processes.

### **2.6.1 Women's curtailed participation**

Although women might speak positively about new socio-economic opportunities due to conflict, women's curtailed participation in political processes post-conflict remains a critical barrier to their empowerment (Calderon et al, 2011). Although it is significant that conflict has increasingly enhanced the legitimacy of women in leadership and political processes at both national and local levels (Fuest, 2008), however the level of participation and number of women involved is far from ideal. Calderon et al (2011) note that even in instances where women are included during post-conflict peace-making processes, considerable focus was on mobilizing women outside of peace processes, rather than in securing their participation within formal peace processes.

An important concern related to female participation is whether an increase in the number of women equates with an improvement in the life of ordinary women. Hunt (2005) makes a compelling argument for incorporating women in peace processes at the local level because they are by nature peacemakers. However, in conflicts in Sri Lanka and Uganda where women were involved in direct combat, there is evidence that women can also be violent. Further, increasing women's decision-making power in post-conflict governments increases the legitimacy of post-conflict institutions and promotes consultative policy-making and collaboration across ideological lines and social sector (Maina, 2012). This makes women vital stakeholders in post-conflict peacebuilding processes.

Finally, a factor that could hinder the political participation of women is the lack of solidarity between women, coupled with their failure to articulate a unified advocacy strategy (Zuckerman and Greenberg, 2004). Primarily, the difficulty in uniting women groups around common goals often undermines their level and quality of participation in political processes. Martire (2014) attributes such difficulty to the lack of support for fellow women for political positions. Moreover, social commitments weigh more heavily on women, while family obligations and time constraints have curtailed the involvement of women in political life and leadership (Maina, 2012). Tied to the economic constraints that characterize the lives of most females in post-conflict Africa, these constraints continually undermine the willingness and capacity of women to participate.

### **2.6.2 Patriarchal social structures**

A critical factor that influences the marginalization of women in decision-making in most post-conflict states has been the patriarchal structure of most of these societies (Calderon et al, 2011). With current peacebuilding processes, critical questions remain over whether traditional justice and leadership systems should be strengthened as a judicial and leadership oversight over some post-conflict communities. For instance, in the Karamoja region of Uganda, Maina (2012) makes the argument that strengthening traditional structures of governance would lead to better governance. However, these traditional systems are based on the very patriarchal cultures that regard women as those to be governed and not those to govern. This highlights the need to further investigate how strengthening traditional structures of governance will

impact on women, and make suggestions as to how these structures can embody the participation of women.

### **2.6.3 Access to and type of jobs**

Further, empowerment can be inhibited by the type of jobs that women can access during and after conflict (Pollack, 2005). There is the tendency to associate the increased involvement of women in economic activities during and post-conflict with an increase in women empowerment. However, such economic activities are often limited to low-skilled and less-paid work and as such, may not result in marked improvements in women's economic empowerment (Anderson and Eswaran, 2009). Moreover, informal sector jobs that characterize much of new female jobs in conflict contexts may not yield marked improvements in women's empowerment due to the level of education and skill training (Badu-Nyarko et al, 2014). As such, without the requisite formal education or employable skills, access to public and private spheres of the economy are often curtailed. Likewise, the participation of women in decision-making processes owes much to literacy levels which dictate access to empowering opportunities (Pollack, 2005).

## **Chapter Three**

### **Research Methodology**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, the study outlines the methods employed in eliciting the views of respondents to answer research questions formulated. It consists of the research design, sampling methods and procedure, methods and tools for data collection and analysis, as well as the limitations and ethical considerations of the study.

#### **3.2 Research strategy**

The nature of the study necessitated the use of a qualitative approach. A qualitative design epitomizes the analysis of words and images rather than numbers, observation rather than experiment, meaning, behaviour and hypothesis-generating research rather than hypothesis testing (Bryman, 2012; p.36). The case study design was adopted as the empirical approach to finding answers to the research questions. This choice was influenced by the researcher's quest to "see through the eyes of the people being studied" and access their local knowledge on the motivation, role, livelihood effects, and challenges to women empowerment in conflict areas, with specific focus on Bawku (Bryman, 2012; p.68). In addition, the selection of case study design was particularly good for examining the "why" "how" and "what" questions which are particularly typical of this study (Yin, 2003). Case studies also offer an opportunity to understand the attitudes, behaviour and experiences of women within their local setting.

#### **3.3 Sampling**

For this study, sample size was justified based on when no new data was found. According to Francis et al (2010), a larger than necessary sample constitutes an ethical issue since it not only drains funding available for research but time allocated for field data collection. Likewise, the use of a small sample size represents both an ethical and methodical issue in that it generates peculiar results thus not transferable across contexts. On this basis, the study sampled forty-two (42) women across Natinga, Gingande and Zongo communities in Bawku, that constituted members of six (6) focus groups; with each group consisting of seven (7) members. Out of this population, the study purposively drew twelve (12) women (two from each group) for face-to-face interviews in order gain insights into the perceived roles some women

played in perpetuating violence in the study area. The study considered this a necessary technique for two main reasons: the selected women offered rich insights during FGDs, and due to difficulty in gaining access to women who directly participated in conflict for the purpose of interviews.

Additionally, the study relied on information given during semi-structured interviews conducted with programme managers of Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA) and ActionAid Ghana as well as an opinion leader in the area. ActionAid Ghana and BEWDA actively engaged in grassroots and female empowerment post-conflict, they constitute valuable target groups for information to satisfy the study's objectives. It was on this basis that purposive sampling was done. In a nutshell, the table below illustrates the main respondents and methods of data collection.

**Table 1 Summary of respondents and methods of data collection**

<i>Category</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>Data collection method</i>
Primary (women groups)	42 (6 groups for FGD and 12 women drawn out of the total for interviews)	FGD and semi-structured interviews
Secondary (ActionAid Ghana)	1	Semi-structured interview
Secondary (Belim Wusa)	3	Semi-structured interview
Secondary (Opinion leaders)	5	Semi-structured interview

**(Source: Field Work, 2016)**

### **3.3.1 Sampling techniques**

In terms of sampling techniques, the purposive, critical case and snowball sampling techniques were employed. As is the case with most qualitative studies, the purposive sampling technique is used where subjects are selected based on their relationship with the research question (Bryman, 2012). This study was no exception in this regard. As such, the purposive sampling technique was used to establish contact with two local NGO's with operational zones in Bawku; Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA) and ActionAid Ghana. It is worth noting that in the face of

conflict, BEWDA and ActionAid Ghana provided economic support to women groups as well as advocates for gender equality in the study area. As such, it was stimulating to gain useful insights from the organization in satisfying the study's objectives.

Furthermore, the study purposively sampled women groups across three communities (Gingande, Natinga and Zongo) in the Bawku Municipality that had their livelihoods disrupted because of conflict. More importantly, the selection of women groups in the area was based on the premise that they have relevant information and knowledge due to their experience of conflict in Bawku. In determining the focus communities for the study, critical case sampling was employed. Critical case sampling represents a process of selecting a small number of important cases that are likely to "yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge" (Patton, 2001: p. 236). As such, the selection of Gingande, Natinga and Zongo was because these areas constituted key sites of intense ethnic clashes. As such, sampling respondents from these three communities yielded information that satisfied the research questions.

Finally, the snowball sampling technique was used to establish contact with opinion leaders in Bawku who championed the peace process, acting as peace advocates, community mobilizers and facilitators. Secondary information accessed from opinion leaders complimented primary data, as well as revealed new knowledge with regards to the study objectives. The use of snowballing was necessary due to the inability to readily identify opinion leaders in the study area. As such, contact with one opinion leader led to the identification of others.

### **3.4 Data collection**

The study employed both primary and secondary sources of data. For primary data, the study relied on focus group discussions, and semi-structured (personal) interviews. Secondary data consisted of text and document analysis as data collection methods. As Bryman (2012: 470) rightly indicated, the choice of these instruments allowed the researcher to isolate themes for further probing during interviewing respondents.

#### **3.4.1 Focus group discussions (FGDs)**

Focus group discussions were employed in group contexts, in interactions with identified women groups across the three communities in focus. FGDs enabled the



researcher to identify the joint construction of meaning and relative experiences of women in the face and aftermath of ethnic clashes in Bawku. Also, FGD's were useful as an effective instrument of data collection in establishing the collective implications of conflict on household livelihood in Gingande, Natinga, and Zongo communities. On this basis, a comparative approach was subsequently adopted in analysing livelihood implications across the areas captured above.

### **3.4.2 Semi-structured interviews**

The use of semi-structured interviews conducted with officials of BEWDA and ActionAid Ghana, selected women and opinion leaders allowed the researcher to observe and evaluate respondents' non-verbal behaviour and cues. More importantly, semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to probe further on topics raised by respondents that were of significance to the study. Further, the study deemed it a necessary technique due to the added advantage of corroborating information gathered from focus group discussions. In so doing, it was possible to establish the validity of the study findings as data gathered from semi-structured interviews were triangulated with FGDs.

### **3.5.3 Participant observation**

Like most qualitative studies, participant observation was deemed an important data collection technique necessary for this study. This was due to the possibility of drawing a close relationship between the researcher and the subjects under investigation. According to Bryman (2012: p.432), in employing participant observation, the researcher, "immerses him or herself in a group for an extended period of time, observing behaviour, listening to what is said in conversations both between others and with the fieldworkers and asking questions". In this study, the researcher assumed the role of a 'non-participating observer', where he was mainly an interviewer but did not participate in the group's core activities (Bryman, 2012). This role was very useful in having a first-hand impression of how patriarchal social values shaped male-female interactions in Bawku and gender roles in the face of conflict. For BEWDA and ActionAid Ghana, it was used to discern the strengths and weaknesses of their empowerment and resilience building programs and activities post-conflict.

### **3.5.4 Text and document analysis**

Finally, through document analysis, the study gained useful insights from reports, articles, books and peer-review publications relevant to gender and livelihood implications of conflict on households. Through this, the researcher could identify and associate the study with established theoretical perspectives. Also, during field data collection exercise, annual reports gathered from the offices of Belim Wusa Development Agency and ActionAid Ghana proved useful in establishing the activities of those NGO's as partners for development, as well as the level of progress made with regards to issues of women livelihood and/or empowerment post-conflict in Bawku.

### **3.5 Data analysis**

In contemporary studies, there exists a possibility for current qualitative research to test rather than to deduce theories (Bryman, 2012). Silverman (1993; p.24) notes that a depiction of qualitative research strategy as one that only produces theory is “out of tune with the greater sophistication of contemporary field research design ... born out of greater concern with issues of reliability and validity”. Therefore, the study sought to test theories raised in the literature review and theoretical framework. Qualitative data gathered from semi-structured interviews and focused groups were anchored in the research questions and subsequently transcribed and triangulated to identify theory related material, as well as recurring themes (Bryman, 2012). A theme denotes a set of indicators built on coded notes and transcripts from interviews, identified through data and anchored in research questions, that provide the researcher with a theoretical appreciation of data (Bryman, 2013). On this basis, key themes the study elicited during data analysis included ‘ethnic conflict and the role of women’, ‘empowerment’, ‘resilience’, and ‘livelihood opportunities’. From these themes, the researcher engaged in a critical reflection and description of findings.

### **3.6 Limitations and ethical considerations**

To begin with, the most glaring challenge faced during the study period was the fact that the researcher is a male conducting a study on the experiences of females in conflict. Naturally, this generated instances where respondents had reservations in expressing their views. However, this challenge did not significantly affect the study findings since an objective approach devoid of pre-conceived ideas was adopted in interactions with respondents.

Furthermore, the researcher faced difficulties communicating in the local dialects of the two ethnic factions (Kusaal and Mampruli). In overcoming this challenge, the researcher adopted two measures. First off, during field interviews, a common ground was established in using a neutral language ('Hausa') for interviews. This was necessary to defuse tensions that may have resulted from using either Kusaal or Mampruli as the language for interviews. Significantly, it is a dialect that both researcher and respondents were adept in. As such, knowledge generated from research participants was not lost during the process of transcribing interviews.

Additionally, a challenge, doubling as an ethical issue, faced during field data collection related to the unwillingness of some women groups to participate in interviews. Primarily, due to the sensitive nature of the topic, some women expressed fear of being targeted or harmed because of information given to satisfy the study objectives. For instance, while facilitating a FGD in the Natinga community, this brief exchange, as captured below, between the researcher and an interviewee highlighted a pervasive concern of fellow group members:

Researcher: Good morning! (*goes on to introduce himself and the purpose of convening them for the discussion*).

Interviewee 1: *My son, you are welcome. Honestly, I wish I could help you with the information you want. But in this area, even though the fighting has stopped, we still live in fear because sometimes they (referring to Kusaasi faction) still attack us. How do I know that you are not part of them and if I talk, it won't get me in trouble?*

As captured above, the initial hesitation on the part of interviewees to participate in discussions stemmed from a combination of factors; fear, the purpose of the study, and trustworthiness related to the ethnic origin of the researcher. In overcoming initial fear of being harmed expressed by respondents, the researcher assured interviewees of utmost anonymity and confidentiality. For instance, respondents were assigned labels in place of their names and contact details in the process of data collection and analysis.

Further, issues related to the intended purpose of the study and trustworthiness of the researcher were dealt with by informing respondents that the study was conducted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the award of an MSc in Global Development and Planning, and as such served purely academic purposes. Also, it helped that the

researcher's ethnicity was a neutral party to conflict, since he is a '*frafra*' by ethnic origin. It is only when the above finer details were established that respondents willingly engaged in insightful discussions with the researcher.

## Chapter Four

### Data Analysis and Discussion

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of an extensive six-week period of field data collection across three communities (Natinga, Gingande, and Zongo) in Bawku, Ghana. These communities represent sites of heated ethnic conflict and as such, the researcher tapped into valuable insights provided by respondents in satisfying research questions. A qualitative approach is adopted in presenting data gathered. As such, the findings necessitate a descriptive presentation of responses gathered from focused group discussions conducted with women groups in relation to the gendered experiences of women in battle and the resultant livelihood implications on households therein. The results also include relevant transcripts from personal interview sessions with opinion leaders and programme officers of Belim Wusa Development Agency as well as ActionAid Ghana as they relate to the objectives of the study. The results are presented in line with the overarching research questions that are highlighted below:

- What perceived roles did women play in the Bawku conflict?
- How did ethnic conflict affect household livelihoods in the area?
- What opportunities exist towards resilience building against the shocks of conflict?
- What constitute the challenges to women empowerment post-conflict?

Going by the above-mentioned research questions, the findings are divided into four parts. It begins with the presentation of the demographic characteristics of focus group participants (women groups) across the three communities that constituted key informants of the study. In the second section, the researcher presents findings on the perceived role women played in ethnic conflict. In line with this, the study relied on the opinion of selected women in satisfying the above research objective. This is followed by a discussion and presentation of results based on established research questions. In the third section, the study provides valuable insights on the livelihood implications of ethnic conflict on households, as well as the opportunities that exist towards building resilience in the aftermath of ethnic conflict in Bawku. In the final section, the researcher presents the views of respondents with regard to the barriers to

women empowerment post-conflict in Bawku. The concept of empowerment is defined in relation to women’s access to land, economic opportunities, as well as participation in decision making processes.

## **4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents**

This section of the study covers the socio-demographic characteristics (age, marital status, religious background, and educational level) of women groups sampled from the Natinga, Gingande, and Zongo communities in Bawku, that constituted research participants. It was necessary to investigate the demographic features of respondents since they not only influence individual and group perceptions and actions but equally informs the reader of the sort of people from whom primary data was collected.

### **4.2.1 Age distribution**

To begin with, the researcher found it necessary to explore the age distribution of respondents. The age distribution of a population could likely give an indication of how conflict affects different age groups and the response mechanisms adopted with regards to household livelihood support. In this regard, the age groupings were put into four categories, in the intervals 20-29 years, 30-39 years, 40-49 years, and above 50 years.

*Table 1. Age distribution of respondents*

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
20-29 years	10	23.8%
30-39 years	18	42.9%
40-49 years	14	33.3%
Total	42	100%

(Source: Field work, 2016)

From the table above, the results show that 10 respondents sampled for the study were between 20-29 years, 18 respondents were between 30-39 years, while the remaining 14 respondents were between 40-49 years old. It can therefore be deduced that the population distribution of women in Bawku is ‘youthful’, since cumulatively 66.67% of total respondents were between 20-39 years. As a point of departure, it is important to clarify what constitutes the definition of a youthful population. The United Nations uses a range of 15-24 years to classify youth (United Nations, 2001). Although this appears to be universally accepted, it does not consider differences in national policies

regarding age classifications. Further, the United Nation’s categorization fails to acknowledge variations in context or societies, with regards to the inter-play of socio-cultural, economic and political factors that remain critical in defining the concept of youth.

Taking into consideration the inherent pitfalls of the United Nation’s definition, the concept of ‘youth’ is adapted from the National Youth Policy of Ghana, for this study. Per this policy framework, all persons 15-35 years are classified to constitute the youth of the country (National Youth Policy, 2010). Generally, the youthful nature of the study population reflects national population dynamics, with data obtained from Ghana’s 2010 population and housing census pointing out that persons aged between 20-35 years constitute about a third of the population of Ghana (Ghana Statistical Service, 2013). The youthful nature of the population could thus represent both positive and negative outcomes in terms of peacebuilding, empowerment and development in the study area.

#### **4.2.2 Educational background**

The study also sought to find out the level of education of respondents. It was necessary to ascertain the level of education of respondents due to the possibility of education acting as an empowerment tool post-conflict, as well as reducing the risk of renewed ethnic clashes in Bawku. The findings show that out of a total of 42 respondents sampled, 13 of them had no formal education, with 19 respondents indicating that they had basic level education (primary and junior high school). Furthermore, 7 respondents had secondary education (senior high school), while the remaining three respondents had tertiary level education (university and polytechnic). The table below summarizes the educational level of respondents.

*Table 2. Educational distribution of respondents*

Level of education	Frequency	Percent
No formal education	13	31.0%
Basic education	19	45.2%
Secondary education	7	16.7%
Tertiary education	3	7.1%
Total	42	100%

(Field work, 2016)

From the table, a low level of education pertains among respondents sampled for the study. Generally, these findings reflect the broader picture in the Bawku Municipality in terms of education. In the Bawku, 44.3% of people have never attended school. Out of this figure, more females (51.4%) than males (36.6%) have had no formal education (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014: 32). On further probing, two factors accounted for low literacy among women sampled. First, respondents attributed low formal education to persistent ethnic clashes in the area, that curtailed school attendance rates in the area. Additionally, due to the patriarchal nature of social organization, male education was favoured over that of the girl child, per respondents.

Low levels of educational attainment among women could have negative implication for empowerment in the study area. Going by Kabeer (2005) conceptualization of empowerment, education remains critical in furthering people's ability to make and act on their own life choices. In this regard, low level of education could represent negative returns in terms of agency, as women's ability to make strategic life choices may be curtailed. Further, low educational levels among women sampled may increase the risk of ethnic conflict since uneducated women have lower income-earning opportunities than the educated (Collier, 2000). This is because they have less to lose in conflict situations and hence, are more likely to join armed rebellion. However, this is not always the case. Evidence equally exists indicating that expanding higher education could equally spur conflict particularly in contexts of high unemployment and market failures (Goldstone, 2001; Lia, 2005). It is therefore key to expand opportunities for education and skill training while at the same time, increasing the absorptive capacity of labour markets in conflict contexts.

### **4.2.3 Occupation of respondents**

In this section, the study considered the occupation of respondents. It was necessary to determine the occupational background of respondents because a strong correlation exists between access to income and employment, and conflict prevention and peacebuilding (World Bank, 2010b). From data gathered, soap making and trading represented viable business opportunities and sources of income post-conflict in Bawku. Out of a total of 42 respondents sampled, 16 of them were engaged in soap making as a source of income, while 14 respondents were engaged in market trading for household livelihood support. A further 7 respondents were engaged in hair dressing business, with one respondent engaged in teaching at the basic education



level. The remaining four respondents sampled were reportedly unemployed. The findings are summarized in table 3 below.

*Table 3 Occupational background of respondents*

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Hair dressing	7	16.7%
Soap making	16	38.1%
Teaching	1	2.4%
Trading	14	33.3%
Unemployed	4	9.5
Total	42	100%

(Field work, 2016)

From the table above, it can be deduced that majority of women sampled for the purpose of the study were engaged in the informal sector of the local economy for livelihood. These findings corroborate earlier studies related to women’s involvement in the active labour force in conflict environments. According to Allden (2008), with the obvious lack of formal sector skills due to low levels of education and training, the surge in women employment in post-conflict contexts is often curtailed, with women particularly active in low skilled jobs and the informal sector. However, it must be emphasized that the proportionately high involvement of women in the informal sector is not an exclusive characteristic of post-conflict contexts, but a general trend in developing countries (Justino et al, 2012).

#### **4.2.4 Marital status**

Violent conflicts have the potential of altering marriage and childbearing patterns to minimize the disruptive effects on household economies (Buvinic et al, 2012: 18). As such, households that experience decreases in income often defer marital expenditures and childbearing. Further, because of excess morbidity of men, violent conflicts create widows, who in most cases are especially vulnerable due to limited livelihood opportunities (Brück and Schindler, 2009). Against this backdrop, the study sought to determine the marital status of respondents, as well as how ethnic conflict in Bawku affects marriage and childbearing patterns. The findings are summarized in the table below.

*Table 4 Marital status of respondents*

Marital status	Frequency	Percent
Never married	4	9.5%
Married	29	69.1%
Divorced	3	7.1%
Widowed	6	14.3%
Total	42	100%

(Field work, 2016)

From table above, it can be deduced that marriage represented an avenue for women to secure livelihoods and cater for their offspring during conflict, since majority of women sampled were married. As highlighted in the table above, out of a total of 42 respondents sampled, 29 of them were married, 6 respondents were widowed, 4 respondents were never married, with the remaining 3 respondents being divorced. Additionally, the findings also indicate that despite the onset of conflict in Bawku, the marriage institution was not significantly affected. This could be attributed to the low casualty rate in the study area, since relatively few lives, particularly that of men, were lost due to violent clashes between the Mamprusis and Kusasi ethnic factions.

#### **4.2.5 Length of stay**

The study also sought to find out how long respondents had resided in Bawku. Information obtained from the field work indicates that out of a total of 42 respondents, 31 of them had since birth resided in the Gingande, Natinga and Zongo communities of Bawku that the study targeted. Further, 5 respondents had resided in the study area for less than a year, four respondents were resident between 6 to 10 years, with the remaining two respondents having resided in Bawku for between 1 to 5 years. The findings are summarized in table 5 below.

*Table 5 Length of stay in Bawku*

Duration	Frequency	Percent
Since birth	31	73.8%
Less than a year	5	11.9%
1-5 years	2	4.8%
6-10 years	4	9.5%
Total	42	100%

(Field work, 2016)

As deduced from the table above, majority of women sampled for the study were long-time dwellers in Bawku, as they had resided there since birth, with a relatively low number of respondents having resided in the Natinga, Gingande and Zongo communities of Bawku for less than five (5) years. These findings were particularly helpful to the researcher since it was possible for most women sampled for the study to relate their experiences over time, regarding the varied roles women played in conflict, livelihood implications, as well as the pre-and post-conflict situation regarding women empowerment in Bawku.

### **4.3 Assessing the perceived role of women during conflict**

Although often viewed as passive victims of violent conflict, empirical evidence show that women can play multiple roles in perpetuating violence or efforts geared towards peacebuilding (Poloni-Staudinger and Ortballs, 2014). However, how drivers of violent conflict affect or are affected by women remains a knowledge gap for many policymakers. It is worth noting that women may play active or supporting roles in conflict for a multiplicity of reasons, some of which may have little to do with gender (Women and Conflict, 2007). Although the role of women as conflict perpetrators remains relatively unexplored, studies suggest that women are mostly driven by the same motives that prompt men into aggression: perceived economic benefits; grievance about socio-political conditions, grief over the death of loved ones (Sutton, 2009).

Further, in many developing countries, the customary roles ascribed to women may serve to empower them to become guardians of socio-cultural and religious values (Chowdury et al, 2013: 4). As such, women are positioned to diffuse these ideals among generations, and can therefore glorify and urge family members and children to perpetuate violence. Conversely, the unique position of women within traditional household settings could see them act as positive agents during violent episodes of conflict. According to Poloni-Staudinger and Ortballs (2014), by participating in innovative efforts to inform and implement policies to mitigate the effects of conflict, the role of women in conflict has the potential of yielding positive outcomes. Even in societies where women are not empowered and restricted by patriarchal social values, they may still wield emotive influence within families and communities (Chowdury et al, 2013). Consequently, their voices may be especially compelling when they speak out as victims or survivors of violent attacks.

Against this backdrop, this section of data analysis sought to explore further the themes highlighted above. An attempt was made at filling identified gaps in knowledge related to women's level of participation and perceived role in battle, based on evidence gathered from respondents in Bawku, Ghana. Furthermore, valuable insights were drawn from respondents concerning the drivers of women's participation in ethnic clashes in Bawku. The results of these enquiries are discussed under the following sub-headings.

#### **4.3.1 Level of participation and roles in conflict**

The primary questions the study sought answers to relates to women's perceived participation in conflict between the Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic groups, and the extent or level of their participation therein. Using an open-ended question approach, the study first asked respondents if they perceived and/or bore witness to women perpetuating ethnic conflict in the Natinga, Gingande and Zongo communities. Based on first-hand information gathered during semi-structured interviews, most respondents confirmed the view that some women contributed in diverse ways in perpetuating violence, although the level of participation was mostly limited to supporting roles, and not as active combatants. In a discussion, a respondent remarked the following;

*“Honestly, some women played roles in the conflict. In some instances, women pretend they are carrying drums to go and fetch water from the riverside but in actually fact it is guns that they are carrying into the bush to hide”* (Personal interview: 20.01.2016).

Another respondent added that: *“...some women hide weapons for their husbands because they know that if there is violence and they suspect that there are arms somewhere, they will go to the man's room to search”* (Personal interview: 20.01.2016)

From the narratives presented above, it can be deduced that women's socially constructed perception as being the 'weaker sex' or non-aggressors allowed some women to effectively play supporting roles in battle. As indicated by Cunningham (2003: 172), women have the ability to use their gender stereotypes to avoid detection as their non-threatening nature may prevent in-depth scrutiny. As such, under the

guise of fetching water, some women were thus able to aid men in transporting weapons for safe keeping, and in so doing, perpetuated ethnic conflict in Bawku.

In addition, the study established that some women perpetuated ethnic clashes through rumour mongering. Generally, respondents answered in the affirmative when asked if rumours had the potential of renewing ethnic clashes in Bawku. On the issue of how women perpetuated conflict through rumour mongering, the researcher gathered that the primary engagement of women as petty traders and small business owners exposed them to diverse groups of people across ethnic divides. In their daily activities, such women had information of potential attacks, attacks or acts of retaliation from opposing factions. In the absence of verified sources of information, they reported what they heard in such discussions to their husbands and family who in some instances, acted on such information to perpetuate violence. To an extent, it could thus be argued that the recurrent nature of ethnic clashes in the study area owes much to rumour mongering due to the absence of verification.

The study further revealed that some women indeed perpetuated ethnic conflict by talking their husbands, brothers and other male members of their families into violent confrontations with the opposing faction. It could be argued that women who perpetuated ethnic clashes generally fed into the existing patriarchal social values of Bawku by encouraging their husbands and close relatives to fight. In the study area, men are typically stereotyped as strong and aggressive. Consequently, men who did not exhibit these tendencies are perceived as 'weak'. To an extent, this could compel men into engaging in ethnic violence in order to maintain socially constructed perspectives of masculinity. Similarly, the findings could be an indication of the internalization of social norms of male dominance by women in the study area. As such, by coaxing their husbands to fight, women inadvertently accept a relegated position in Bawku.

In sum, by supporting armed rebellion, such women failed to grasp the wider implications of ethnic conflict since in the absence of the male figurehead, household livelihoods opportunities may be curtailed. In isolation, it is quite unfathomable that although in conflict contexts, women often bear the brunt and livelihood consequences, some women actually supported ethnic clashes in Bawku.

### **4.3.2 Motives for supporting armed rebellion**

The study further sought to establish the motives behind the involvement of women in conflict. In so doing, much insights are borrowed from the theory of grievance. As earlier indicated by Sutton (2009), women are equally likely to be driven by the same motives as men to engage in conflict. As such, from grievance theory, conflict is a product of frustration and the cumulative effect of such feelings across a particular group in society (Humphreys and Weinstein, 2008: 440). In applying this theory, three main sources of grievance were taken into account: ethnic hatred, political exclusion, and access to resources and economic opportunities. The study therefore sought to establish whether such identified sources of grievances culminated into female support for armed rebellion.

#### **4.3.2.1 Power differentials and exclusion**

In this section, the study conceptualized power differential as perceived discrepancies in terms of access and participation in political decision making processes, both at the local (chieftaincy institution) and national level (local and central government) between the Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic groups of Bawku. In operationalizing this definition, the study focused on how the dynamics of traditional authority and social exclusion triggered support for armed rebellion in the case of Bawku.

The first strand of argument elicited from field interviews was that perceived discrepancies in accessing and participating in political life generated support from some women to perpetuate ethnic clashes. However, the issue of power differential in the study area goes beyond access and participation in decision-making. Indeed, as indicated by some respondents, the perceived dominance of Mamprusi traditional authority over the Kusasi faction explains power differentials in Bawku. In seeking redress, violence confrontations often manifested between ethnic factions.

These findings reflect those of earlier studies pointing out linkages between unequal power distribution and support for ethnic conflict (Lund, 2003; Longi and Abubakari, 2014). According to Longi and Abubakari (2014), ethnic conflict in Bawku is partly traceable to the introduction of British colonial political authority in an area that hitherto to colonialism, was described as stateless or acephalous. This saw a restructuring of traditional political institutions where acephalous states were amalgamated with centralized political systems (Lund, 2003). In the case of Bawku,

the restructuring created a subordinate-master relationship between the two factions, as the Kusasi were subsumed under Mamprusi traditional political authority and decision-making processes. As such, this fuelled support for armed rebellion in order to address power imbalances in the study area.

Another strand of argument the study produced related to the emergence and contribution of national political parties in not only deepening perceived power differentials, but also fuelling ethnic conflict in Bawku. These sentiments were echoed succinctly by a respondent in Natinga:

*“During election campaign, politicians sometimes promise things just to win elections with little regard for how it may cause conflict in the area. In Bawku for instance, the two major political parties have infiltrated into the Kusasi and the Mamprusi factions where one group supports one party (NPP) and the other group supports a different party in elections (NDC)”* (Personal interview: 24.01.2016).

As highlighted above, the polarization of Bawku on political party lines further deepened ethnic tensions due to assurances of socio-economic and political favours or positions given by political parties during election periods. Based on this premise, the support of ethnic clashes was motivated partially by the desire for inclusiveness and public goods that political party leadership made.

#### **4.3.2.2 Unequal access and distribution of resources**

Closely linked to power differentials across Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic divides, is the issue of unequal access and distribution of resources in the study area. According to Sen (1973), *the relation between inequality and rebellion is indeed a close one*. As such, the poor may rebel to induce redistribution of public goods. The study sought the views of respondents regarding how access to land and micro credit served to trigger clashes between both factions. With regards to access to micro credit, some respondents felt that some micro credit officers denied them loans based on their ethnic background especially in cases where they were identified to belong to the opposing party in ethnic conflict. In other instances, micro-credit institutions associated the ethnic background of respondents with their credit worthiness or ability payback loans due to on-going clashes. This often generated support for ethnic conflict in an attempt to address identified grievances related to unequal access to micro-credit. Likewise, with Bawku characterized as an agrarian society, access to

land is deemed critical to household livelihoods. Respondents largely concurred that support for ethnic conflict was partly fuelled by perceived inequalities in accessing land for farming activities. During a personal interview with an opinion leader in the Bawku traditional area, he remarked:

*“A few years ago when the rains began, some of the Mamprusi communities had their land seized by the Kusasis and their newly (re) enskinned village chiefs. They sowed the fields and prevented the Mamprusis from accessing their property to enable them engage in farming or even as collateral for loans. Even in some cases, Kusasis also had their lands confiscated if they were hitherto found to pledge loyalty to the Mamprusi chiefs”* (Personal interview: 22:01.2016).

In a separate interview, a respondent shared her experience:

*“In this area, land is family owned. So for a long time, we had access to it for farming activities and when necessary, we could sell it to earn income for family support. But one day, we woke up to find some people [opposing faction in conflict] declaring ownership of our land. In the end, we had to fight, because if we sit back and let them take it, what are we going to feed our families with?”* (Personal interview: 26.01.2016).

From the responses, it is evident that grievances expressed largely revolved around perceived unequal access, distribution, and forced land reclamation efforts initiated by opposing factions in conflict. Evidently, the seeming lack of alternative livelihood opportunities in the face of conflict induced a stronger desire to engage in violence based on the increasing frustration. It is little surprising therefore that some women supported ethnic clashes in a bid to address grievances pertaining to land and micro-credit access and distribution in Bawku.

#### **4.3.2.3 Ethnicity**

In assessing ethnicity as a motive for supporting armed rebellion, the study sought to establish whether long-standing cultural practices distinguish Kusasis and Mamprusis, and whether a history of animosity existed between both groups, and subsequently how this could generate support for armed rebellion.

During field interviews, it was revealed that although both Mamprusi and Kusasi ethnic groups have co-existed for a long time, however, their sense of identity and



origin has been maintained. Cultural diversity in Bawku is evident in the different languages and dialects, beliefs, customs, and festivals. Historically, such differences in culture and practices united both factions (Mamprusi and Kusasi) as they partook in accompanying activities. Furthermore, a point of convergence the study established was the institution of marriage, where inter-marriage between both factions sought to unite both divides. However, over time, cracks emerged as cultural practices such as festivals were used as avenues to champion “*ethnicist*” undertones. This created a certain “*us vs them*” message and attitude across both divides, and as such generated support for ethnic conflict in the study area.

In addition, the findings indicate that indeed a history of animosity existed between Mamprusis and Kusasis prior to such clashes becoming violent. Most respondents confirmed that, at the heart of the Kusasi-Mamprusi conflict is an accumulation of litigations over allodial rights and chieftaincy. Both ethnic factions claim allodial ownership of Bawku, claims which are shrouded in their narrative histories of origin and derived from claims of ‘first-comership’. However, answers to the question of first settlers were quite inconclusive and remain a matter of controversy in Bawku. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that such historical animosities have been transmitted across generations and often degenerated into violent clashes. Supporting the above findings, the Alhassan Committee which investigated land ownership in Northern Ghana in 1978 identified issues of ‘first-comership’ as the basis for land ownership, and subsequent violent clashes between aggrieved ethnic groups in Bawku (Longi, 2015).

#### **4.4 Effect of ethnic conflict on households**

Across contexts, ethnic conflicts have been documented to carry various direct and indirect costs which strongly affect the living conditions of households at the time of conflict and post-conflict. In this section, the study explores the welfare and/or livelihood implications of the Kusasi-Mamprusi conflict, based on data gathered from sampled women groups in the Gingande, Natinga and Zongo communities of Bawku, as well as networks of civil society (BEWDA and ActionAid Ghana). The responses from the fieldwork indicate that the effects of ethnic conflict on household welfare can be categorized into six (6) main factors. These are:

- Loss of lives

- Destruction of property
- Forced displacement
- Curtailed access to land and credit
- Implication of curfew hours on households and businesses
- Gender role changes

#### 4.4.1 Loss of lives

Based on interviews conducted in the study area, the livelihood effects of death could be categorized into two main parts: direct/immediate (familial), and long-term/communal effects. To begin with, due to the patriarchal nature of both Kusasi and Mamprusi social organization, the loss of men had consequences for immediate household necessities such as income, food supply, health and education since men were considered breadwinners and responsible for family upkeep. As such, in the event of death of men due to ethnic clashes in the study area, newly created widows had to assume the role of family head and provider. A focus group participant in the Natinga area of Bawku narrates her experience below:

*“Hmmm...in my case, my husband was killed on his way back from work because he was identified as a Mamprusi....after his death I struggled to take care of myself and our children because I was not working at the time and relied on my husband for support”* (FGD: 21.01.2016).

When pushed further for clarification as to why she was economically active and had to rely on her husband for livelihood support, she noted:

*“I was not working because I dropped out of secondary school due to financial difficulty. Because of that I don't have the knowledge or skills to get office work [formal sector employment]. So when my husband died, I had to learn how to bake bread and pastries in order to be able to take care of my family”* (FGD: 23.01.2016).

Similarly, some respondents in the Gingande area of Bawku indicated that ethnic clashes in the area had telling effects on their livelihoods due to the loss of men. According to one respondent:

*“We cannot begin to quantify the lives that were lost because we really lost a lot. In my family alone, I lost my husband together with four of his brothers in battle. Most of our deceased family members were breadwinners and used to support us with*

*money... so their death released that burden to us. Look at us...we are just women. What can we do? We don't have anything now that our men are gone"* (FGD: 19.01.2016).

In a separate interview conducted with the Head of Programmes at ActionAid Ghana (Zebilla Area Development Programmes (ADP)), he corroborated the view that the loss of men in conflict exacerbated already existing household livelihood challenges. He further documented how the loss of men due to conflict left women bereft of agency mainly due to the prevailing patrilineal system of inheritance of land and other valuable property. Aside that, he noted the psychological trauma that usually accompany violent confrontations often leave women scared and bereft of agency to overcome challenges. He remarked:

*"One of the women I work with in Bawku lost her husband. He was shot and killed because he belonged to a different tribe. The woman was traumatized. When I went there and she was speaking to me, she was even weeping. So definitely, it will affect her livelihood but I did not delve deep into how it affected her livelihood. But so far as she was traumatized, her business or work would have been affected as well"*

(Personal interview: 27.01.2016).

From the above, it is evident that lives lost in the study area were not solely limited to active combatants as innocent lives were equally claimed. Additionally, although the loss of lives had significant negative returns to household livelihood, it also had wider communal livelihood implications due to the loss of trade or businesses. The findings also reveal feelings of helplessness on the part of some women in exploring livelihood opportunities following the loss of their husbands and close relatives. It could thus be argued that the patriarchal nature of social organization has created a 'dependency syndrome' and an over-reliance on men for personal and household livelihood support. The findings further elicit strands of evidence reflecting Nakamura (2004) assertion that, the loss of men in battle opens avenues for female engagement in socio-economic activities for livelihood support. Indeed, the very composition of focus groups for primary data in the study area was predominantly based on their membership and participation in group projects for livelihood support such as dress making, trading, soap making, among others.

#### 4.4.2 Destruction of property

According to Verpooten (2003), physical capital/assets when destroyed or lost, seriously impacts on the capacity of households to remain productive, and especially that of women, who bear the bulk of productive activity in the absence of men during conflict. Personal interviews and focus group discussions elicited responses indicating that ethnic clashes significantly led to the destruction of personal and family property. In a separate interview with an opinion leader who doubled as a community mobilization officer, she recounted how family lands were lost, houses and market stalls were often targeted and set ablaze by opposing factions. Similarly, in focus group discussions, participants narrated in varying scales how livelihoods were significantly affected following the loss of household property. Narrating her experience of how the loss of property affected household livelihood, one participant noted:

*“The loss of property led to a lot of struggle just to make ends meet. When my first shop was destroyed because of fighting, I couldn’t buy foodstuff for my family or even pay for my children school fees or hospital bills. In the end, I had to rely on my meagre savings which also run out in no time”* (FGD: 24.01.2016).

Another participant added that:

*“...most of us had our crops destroyed and farmlands abandoned due to fear during the conflict. Because of that, market business was bad as very few people were able to grow crops...we could not also buy foodstuff because of the high costs since it was brought from outside towns like Bolga. So my brother, if not for God, I won’t be sitting here talking to you today”* (FGD: 22.01.2016).

From the narrative above, it is evident that the shocks (destruction of crops and livestock assets, houses, market stalls) that came with conflict in Bawku had a primary effect on livelihoods and coping strategies that ranged from relying on personal savings to divine intervention (God). Besides assets lost and properties destroyed, the study established that while land as a form of natural capital in post-conflict is often of high value in terms of food security and productive system recovery, this was not the case in Bawku. Most respondents reported that land in the area is largely unfertile and as such, contributes little to household food security and livelihoods in the absence of alternative sources of livelihood or store of resources.

#### 4.4.3 Forced displacement

In this study, the issue of forced displacement was limited solely to forced migration mainly due to the low scale of ethnic conflict and casualties recorded in Bawku. As such, the following discussion focuses on how forced migration due to ethnic conflict, shaped household livelihoods. Field interviews and FDGs elicited data pointing to significant out-migration of family and friends to neighbouring towns and cities. Migration represented an immediate survival option due to the fear of being attacked, loss of assets, inability to generate new sources of income, and the collapse of social support systems. In the end, migrant households were not only uprooted from their places of origin but more importantly had to explore and secure alternative livelihood opportunities, as well as deal with the challenge of integration in new environments. In the words of a respondent;

*“I left for 9 months to Zebilla because of the fighting. Life was hard and I couldn’t start a new trade because I did not know much about the place or have extended family support there”* (FGD: 27.01.2016).

Deducing from the narrative above, the unpredictable and sporadic nature of ethnic clashes in Bawku left little room for manoeuvre in terms of preparedness to move, available livelihood opportunities, and social support systems in new contexts. Despite the obvious challenges in new environments, the findings also reveal that in the face of conflict, survival took precedence over any other considerations.

Furthermore, the study demonstrated that challenges migrants faced in terms of securing livelihoods in new contexts were either ameliorated or exacerbated by their educational background and employable skills. These sentiments were echoed succinctly by a focus group participant; *“some of us ran away during the fighting only to end up stranded. But for those who were educated, they were able to take transfers to different towns with their families to continue work there”* (FGD: 24.01.2016). These findings reflect Justino (2009) view that education generates opportunities where migrants with desirable employable skills are able to sustain household livelihoods by finding jobs with relative ease, compared to migrants with lower levels of education or training.

With regards to migrant integration in new contexts, the findings show that migrants faced language barriers, which compounded their ability to interact in new

communities, get jobs or engage in trade to sustain livelihoods. In addition, personal interviews and FGDs revealed that migrant integration in new contexts proved challenging due to “ostracization” and ridicule. In the words of a Zongo community leader; “...because of ethnic clashes in Bawku, migrants of Kasasi and Mamprusi ethnic origin particularly were perceived as violent people and nobody wanted to have anything to do with them” (Personal interview: 29.01.2016). Although the study’s findings related to migrant integration do not insinuate that all new communities proved hostile grounds to migrants, however, a pattern of welfare fragility and high socio-economic vulnerability among displaced populations is established. This could affect the ability of such migrant populations to sustain household consumption needs.

In the absence of livelihood opportunities and migrant integration in new contexts, the study revealed that majority of migrants had to return to their places of origin. The decision to return home was often informed by three main factors; the absence of security fears post-conflict, access to appropriated lands and properties, as well as lingering social networks in communities of origin. These findings echo Justino (2009) assertion that households tend to be less willing to return if security concerns still linger and where communal and familial resources, as well as institutional and social networks for livelihood support are non-existent or destroyed because of violent conflict.

#### **4.4.3 Curtailed access to land and micro-credit**

The study established that the loss of lands as well as curtailed access to existing family and community lands further exacerbated household welfare. As an agriculture and livestock driven economy, land proved a critical resource towards household financial security. However, in the face of conflict, a significant number of land owners had their lands seized or abandoned lands because of the fear of violence and fled to safer areas. The vacuum created because of abandonment of land led to scuffle for ownership of such land mainly by opposing factions in conflict. In turn, some residents in safer areas outside Bawku such as Zebilla and Bolgatanga reportedly lost access to land due to the arrival of displaced persons. This had wide ranging consequences on the livelihoods of both displaced and host communities. The arrival of displaced persons pushed up the prices of foodstuff, living costs and also increased security concerns, with similar household welfare effects being felt in conflict zones.

However, unlike host communities, conflict-affected areas in Bawku were mostly challenged in terms of exploring alternative livelihood opportunities due to loss or curtailed access to lands.

Furthermore, curtailed access to land and ownership disputes had negative consequences on agriculture production. The inability of Kusasi and Mamprusi factions to reach an amicable solution over contested farmland deprived many farmers of their livelihood. In other cases, farmers were unable to visit their farms not only due to violence but also because previously owned land were seized by opposing factions. Even in instances where land owners or farmers could cultivate crops, the disruption of road networks during violent clashes made it difficult for farmers to transport their foodstuff to the market places. This resulted in perishable foodstuff such as tomato and onion getting rotten on the farms.

Moreover, the study found that men and women have different opportunities in terms of access to land. In various interviews and FGDs conducted with officials of BEWDA and ActionAid Ghana as well as selected women groups, it was established that access to land by women was particularly difficult due to the prevailing customary land tenure system in Bawku. Land in the Bawku traditional area is held under different tenure arrangements but largely on individual and family basis (Akudugu and Issahaku, 2013). This arrangement allows families to determine who gains access to land as well as the ability to undertake long term investment on lands. In the event of death of male figure-heads, the patriarchal social structures accorded limited opportunity to women to access and utilize land for household livelihood. This potentially could drive such households into extreme forms of poverty.

In terms of access to micro-credit schemes, land proved a crucial resource in the form of collateral. However, issues related to land ownership and access by women made it difficult to access loans from banks and micro-credit institutions. Moreover, due to the inability of land owners to assert tenure security in the face of conflict, financial institutions were mostly reluctant to grant loans. Even in instances where tenure security was assured, the conditions attached to loans and long waiting periods before securing micro-credit could potentially degenerate household livelihoods. Moreover, most micro-credit schemes in the area mainly processed loan applications of organized groups and declined those of individual clients. These sentiments were captured succinctly by a focus group participant below;

*“...when we go they don't give us loans because they think we will run away with their money because of the fighting. So, it was only when we formed Noriyinga Women's group that we managed to get loans to start our businesses and even with that we only got the money after six (6) months” (FGD: 24.01.2016).*

From the narrative, due to the volatile nature of Bawku, it was difficult on the part of micro-credit institutions to establish ties of trust with individual clients, which necessitated an increased focus on group borrowers due to added security. In terms of livelihood implications, the inability or curtailed access to micro-credit further limited the capacity of households to explore other livelihood opportunities following the death of men, loss of farmlands, properties, and jobs. As such, the study revealed common household livelihood outcomes to consist of increased vulnerability, reduced incomes and food security.

#### **4.4.4 Effect of curfew on households**

The findings indicate that although the imposition of curfew hours in Bawku largely contributed to curbing ethnic clashes, it also introduced untold socio-economic hardships in the area. Interviews conducted with women groups and officials of BEWDA and ActionAid Ghana in the study area established that in the heat of ethnic clashes, a 21-hour curfew (lasting 7 days) later replaced with a 12-hour schedule (6pm-6am) over a period of three (3) months, was enforced by the Upper East Regional Peace Council in joint consultation with the Bawku Inter Ethnic Peace Committee. Following this action, productive activity in the public, private and informal sectors of the local economy of Bawku came to a halt. As such, livelihoods were severely affected since individuals and households could not earn incomes, access quality education, healthcare and transport services.

Particularly, the imposition of curfew hours contributed to the closure or relocation of many private investments in Bawku. It is worth noting that prior to conflict, Bawku characterised a regional hub for commerce with its prime location as a border town to neighbouring Burkina Faso and Togo. As such, many small-scale industries took advantage of available resources in the area and engaged in activities such as shea butter and groundnut oil extraction, pito brewing<sup>1</sup>, and millet grinding, with fiscal

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<sup>1</sup> Pito is a type of local beer made from fermented millet or sorghum in many parts of northern Ghana.



support from microfinance institutions and banks. However, following the imposition of curfew hours, the inability to freely move coupled with the threat to personal security and investments saw the collapse or relocation of such industries, and in the process depriving households of income generating activities.

In the informal sector, the cut off public transport systems due to imposition of curfew hours, equally had devastating livelihood consequences on local trade and markets in Bawku. Focus group discussions with selected women groups across the Gingande, Natinga and Zongo communities revealed that local traders were cut off from their market supplies and in some cases had their stores destroyed by military personnel when found engaging in trade during curfew hours. It also meant that traders from nearby towns could not access markets in Bawku because of curfew enforcement.

In a nutshell, despite acknowledging that the imposition of curfew represented a necessary measure towards curbing ethnic violence in the area, immense negative returns to household livelihoods and the local economy of Bawku were registered, as discussed above. Also, a sticking point pertained to the level of local participation in decision making regarding curfew hours. A wider scope of stakeholders taking into consideration local opinions and needs regarding introducing more appropriate curfew schedules that reflect the economy of Bawku may have steadied household livelihoods in the face of conflict.

#### **4.4.5 Gender role changes**

The study uncovered that conflict indeed played a role in shaping household gender roles particularly during episodes of ethnic clashes. In various FDG and personal interviews with sampled respondents, it was reported that women assumed increased responsibility in terms of household income and necessities such as food, water, shelter, education and health needs of children. This was particularly the case in female-headed households that sprung up due to the loss of husbands, brothers or close relatives who previously performed such roles. Additionally, household gender role changes were necessitated by the perceived vulnerability and disinterest of women in perpetuating ethnic violence. As such, during violent outbreaks of conflict it was relatively more convenient for women to engage in income generating activities for livelihood support than men.

However, the in-roads made in terms of gender role changes during conflict were not consolidated in the aftermath of conflict. This is because although women gained increased household responsibilities and access to new employment, such benefits remained marginal and curtailed by the prevailing socio-cultural (patriarchal) system. Further, in the absence of male figure-heads, the nature of family set-up (extended family system) in Bawku yielded negative returns in terms of women participation in household decision-making and access to resources since such powers and resources were taken over by male family members.

Indeed, Bouta et al (2005) reveals that although gender roles can become blurred during conflict, however, prevalent stereotypes of gender-appropriate behaviour may be more strictly enforced after conflict. In the case of Bawku particularly, the study found that the increased economic opportunities women gained were not accompanied with increased participation in household decision-making and power in the study area. Referencing Bouta et al (2002), this meant that *de facto* gains in terms of empowerment were often not translated into *de jure* changes in women's status based on insights gained from respondents. This is because although women reported being involved in informal sectors such as petty trading, dressmaking and farming for household livelihood support during conflict, they were however maligned by men from household decision making processes regarding how incomes should be used, household consumption and security.

#### **4.5 Resilience building post-conflict**

For this study, the concept of resilience was adapted from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) definition. According to Bujones et al (2013), the USAID definition of resilience relates to the ability of people, households, and communities, countries and systems to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses in a manner that reduces chronic vulnerability and facilitates inclusive growth. As the study primarily focused on ethnic conflict in Bawku, the concept of resilience was modified to denote the ability of households and communities in Bawku to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses, and in the process reducing chronic vulnerability and facilitating participatory growth among the various factions.

In assessing violent clashes between the Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic groups, it is worth noting that ethnic conflict both represented a shock and an underlying source of stress that made households vulnerable to other shocks when they manifested. Over the course of field interviews, it came to fore that shocks and stresses due to ethnic clashes in Bawku included the loss of family members, jobs, property and assets such as land, as well as inflation in prices of foodstuff. The combined effect of these shocks and stresses has the potential of exacerbating household livelihoods in the absence of resources, institutional capacity, and networks of social support (USAID, 2012: 10).

In analysing the opportunities for resilience building post-conflict in Bawku, it was fitting that the researcher adapted Bujones et al (2013: 6) factor analysis of resilience within three (3) broad categories: institutions, resources, and adaptive facilitators. This approach was adopted due to the peculiar case of ethnic clashes in Bawku where the combined effect of institutions, resources and networks of social capital perpetuated and/or curbed violence in the area. These factors of resilience building are discussed in detail in the following sub-sections.

#### **4.5.1 Institutions**

In analysing the role of institutions in resilience building post-conflict, the study took into consideration the contribution of both formal institutions comprising central and local government bodies, as well as informal institutions and structures that regulate society outside government. More critically, the study sought to establish how the interplay of both formal and informal institutions in terms of their legitimacy and effectiveness, helped individuals and households in Bawku to mitigate, adapt to and recover from the shocks and stresses of ethnic conflict. Particularly, the study focused more on the legitimacy and effectiveness of informal institutions specifically the chieftaincy institution and civil society organizations (NGOs) in resilience building post-conflict. This is because informal institutions are especially important in fragile contexts as they often replace or coexist with formal institutions (De Weijer, 2013).

It is worth noting that the concept of effectiveness was measured by looking at the degree to which identified formal and informal institutions fulfilled their respective functions in mitigation, adaptation and recovering from the shock of conflict.

Institutional legitimacy constitutes a measure of acceptance by communities of both

formal and informal institutions in fulfilling their mandate, manifested in the level of inclusiveness of different groups or stakeholders. As such, the study asked questions regarding the extent to which formal institutions (local and regional peace committees, and security agencies) and informal institutions (NGOs such as ActionAid Ghana and BEWDA, and the Bawku chieftaincy institution), were perceived in terms of fulfilling their mandate, and responsiveness to community needs towards building post-conflict resilience.

#### **4.5.1.1 Formal institutions and resilience**

First off, findings indicate that respondents generally perceived formal governmental institutions to be ineffective particularly those tasked with restoring peace in Bawku. Per majority of respondents, the position of inter-ethnic peace committee was often compromised, which contributed to the perpetuation of violence in the study area. During field interviews, opinion leaders across ethnic divides noted that regional and local peace committees did not constitute neutral parties in conflict resolution processes. A case in point highlighted by a Mamprusi opinion leader was the withdrawal of the Mamprusi faction from inter-ethnic peace committee primarily due to perceived lack of honesty, commitment and fairness in the approach to attaining peace in Bawku. These findings reveal the vested interests of parties involved in efforts towards peacebuilding and as such, call into question the effectiveness of regional and local peace committees in fulfilling their mandate.

Moreover, the seeming lack of synergy and trust between ethnic groups and formal institutions tasked with conflict resolution largely wrought negative returns in terms of resilience building since it only decreased the willingness of feuding parties to dialogue towards finding lasting peace for development. As indicated by Kendie and Akudugu (2006; p.6), conflict resolution towards building resilience is the outcome of cooperation, negotiation and the elimination of suspicion through transparent negotiation where all actors in conflict are seen as equal partners.

Similarly, the Kusasi faction failed to acknowledge the contribution of Mamprusis in peace negotiations due to general mistrust of their true intentions as well as perceived support from the opposition New Patriotic Party (NPP) during outbreaks of violence in the area, according to a Kusasi opinion leader interviewed. These findings equally disclose a political dimension to the Bawku conflict, with the two main political

parties (NPP and NDC) pledging allegiance to specific ethnic factions. This echoes Lund (2003) assertion that there is a covert political influence in the Bawku conflict that makes efforts geared towards conflict mitigation and recovery futile.

Furthermore, findings point towards a seeming lack of neutrality and bias by security agencies (police and military forces) in their operations. The security agencies according to respondents were often biased towards one faction- arresting them while members of the other factions who were known to have killed others walked about freely. In the words of a Mamprusi respondent, “...*They [Kusasis] kill, loot, even burn down houses without getting any form of punishment. They even boast about how others die in the conflict...we can't do the same because they arrest and take us to Navrongo prison without trial, while the others are walking about town free*” (Personal interview: 27.01.2016).

Kusasi respondents rebutted this also claiming that it was the Mamprusis who were favoured by security agencies. It could be argued that the perceived lack of neutrality and bias of security agencies stemmed from the absence of information flow and civic engagement in their operations. According to Evans (1996a: 1034), ‘civic engagement strengthens institutions and effective institutions create an environment in which civic engagement is more likely to thrive’. As such, the actions of security agencies could forge ties of trust and civic engagement among ethnic factions in conflict, and in the process yielding positive returns particularly in mitigating the occurrence of ethnic clashes. However, in the case of Bawku, the absence of civic engagement in the operations of security agencies not only further strained relationships between both factions but also contributed to the proliferation of weapons in Bawku, in attempts at self-defence by both Kusasi and Mamprusi factions.

#### **4.5.1.2 Informal institutions and resilience**

With regards to informal institutions, the study analysed the contribution of the chieftaincy institution as well as networks of NGOs in terms of their perceived legitimacy and effectiveness in fulfilling their mandate towards resilience building post-conflict in the study area. Generally, FGDs and personal interviews across both Kusasi and Mamprusi dominated communities elicited information pointing towards non-acceptance of respective chieftaincy authorities. It is worth noting that claims of allodial rights or ‘first-comership’ saw both factions seek to establish dominion over

the Bawku traditional area fuelled by legislative instruments put in place by successive governments.

Historically, the Bawku traditional area was under the *Nayiri* (Mamprusi chief/overseer) who had the authority to install the Bawku chief as well as chiefs in neighbouring Binduri and Teshie communities (Bombande, 2007). This authority did not extend to all the Kusasi settlements and the whole traditional area. However, their authority was consolidated to include all Kusasi areas following consultations with the colonial district commissioner in 1931 which made the Bawku Naba the chief of the Bawku Traditional Area, with only Mamprusi ascending the Bawku skin. This irked the Kusasi faction, and subsequently saw the installation of two different chiefs for the same skin: Abugrago Azoka for the Kusasi group and Mahamia Yiremia for the Mamprusi group (Opoku-Afari Committee, 1957; cited in Bukari, 2013; 92). This practice of installing two different chiefs has persisted into present day.

In light of the above, the entrenched positions taken by both factions with regards to the legitimate occupant of the Bawku skin made efforts geared towards resilience building post-conflict futile. Kusasi respondents were mostly of the view that the right to enskin a Bawku chief rests with Kusasi traditions because they are the owners of Bawku, which traces back to the issue of 'first comership'. As such, the position of the *Nayiri* (Mamprusi chief) was deemed illegitimate by Kusasis, with Mamprusis equally failing to acknowledge the authority of the Bawku Naba (a kusasi).

With legitimacy being critical to the ability of institutions to be effective (Bujones et al, 2013), the non-acceptance and disregard of the authority of the Bawku Naba by the Mamprusi faction may weaken the capacity of the chieftaincy institution to lead processes to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from the shocks of ethnic clashes. As a result of its vested interest in the conflict, the capacity of the Bawku Naba to act as a unifier and peace educator may be compromised; yielding negative outcomes in terms of resilience building post-conflict. The issue of legitimacy of traditional authority may also have developmental implications. In the absence of traditional authority acclaimed by both factions in conflict, efforts geared at youth mobilization, planning, and implementation of community projects may prove futile.

Following the limited capacity of inter-ethnic peace committees, security agencies and the chieftaincy institution of Bawku to foster resilience post-conflict, networks of

civil society (NGOs) presented opportunities for households and communities to reduce their vulnerability to the shocks of conflict and in the process build resilience. Data gathered from field interviews indicated that community based organizations and NGOs generally proved a positive influence in peacebuilding efforts through mediation. Particularly, a consortium of NGOs made up of ActionAid Ghana, West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), IBIS Ghana, the Catholic Relief Services, Christian Council of Ghana, and Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA) were critical in reaching the Bawku Peace Agreement between stakeholders in the conflict (Noagah, 2013). However, these efforts yielded mixed outcomes in peace building primary due to the lack of commitment from feuding parties to fulfil the peace agreement. Further, a section of respondents perceived some NGOs as acting in the interest of either Kusasi or Mamprusi groups which made their position as mediators untenable. Nevertheless, by initiating and facilitating peace talks, their contribution towards restoring calm and post-conflict recovery efforts cannot be discounted.

In addition, in terms of conflict mitigation towards resilience building, the study uncovered that networks of civil society in the study area were pivotal particularly in community awareness of conflict early warning signals, peace education, and the adoption of an inclusive approach in the planning and implementation of livelihood support schemes post-conflict. In an interview with the Head of Programs of ActionAid Ghana (Zebilla Office), he noted that the organization seeks to build resilience by first considering the triggers of conflict in order to identify possible areas of compromise between feuding factions. Subsequently, in collaboration with networks of NGOs in the study area, a people-centred approach is adopted in conflict mitigation through public sensitization on early warning signals, as well as how to react and adapt in the face of conflict with regards to personal and household security.

In a separate interview with a field officer working with BEWDA, he reported that the organization sought to build resilience through capacity building programs focused on entrepreneurial development of women. When the question of why women constitute the target of such capacity building programs he noted that, *“our women tend to contribute a lot more to family food supply. You and I as men, sorry to say, most often when we have money we spend it elsewhere and it is the women who provide support in our homes”* (Personal interview: 23.01.2016). It could thus be argued that due to

their capacity as primary caregivers before, during and aftermath of ethnic clashes, civil society investment in women for household livelihood support is justified. Focus group discussions with selected women groups in the area confirmed that indeed NGOs facilitated their access to credit, improved seed varieties and livestock for livelihood support during conflict. Deducing from the above, a holistic approach was adopted by civil society networks where immediate (mediation, relief support) and long-term goals (capacity building programs) were targeted towards resilience building.

#### **4.5.2 Resources**

In this section, the study explored opportunities for resilience building post-conflict in Bawku with specific regards to household and community resources or assets.

According to Longstaff et al (2010), to be resilient, it is imperative that households and/or communities have resources available as well as the ability to apply or reorganize them in such a way to ensure essential functionality during and after a disturbance. In this regard, the study looked into the contribution of resources or assets to resilience building post-conflict in Bawku with regards to the availability of household resources, and the performance and diversity of resources.

##### **4.5.2.1 Availability of household resources**

In conflict affected communities, resource availability and access are often pivotal in securing livelihoods and building resilience post-conflict. Over the course of field interviews, questions about types of resources available to households and the contribution of such resources as coping mechanisms during conflict and resilience building post-conflict were posed to respondents.

Generally, the study produced ‘mixed’ results when the question of household resource availability during and post-conflict was posed to respondents. On one hand, a fair section of respondents reported that farmlands, food barns (storage rooms), livestock, human capital and savings constituted the store of resources that they fell on for livelihood support during and aftermath of ethnic conflict. Consequently, households that were economically better-off in terms of resource availability were able to use such resources to secure their access to food, credit and also replace lost assets due to ethnic clashes in Bawku. Nevertheless, the possession of economic wealth in the face of conflict did not necessarily yield positive outcomes in terms of



household livelihoods and resilience. According to some respondents, resource availability during conflict often made some household easy targets by opposing factions in conflict. As such, they had their homes burnt down, food barns looted, farmlands and livestock appropriated due to either being a Kusasi, Mamprusi, or loyalist of an ethnic faction in conflict.

On the other hand, respondents with relatively little store of primary resources such as land, food storage, livestock and livestock at the start of ethnic clashes adopted coping mechanisms ranging from household labour redistribution including child labour, migration, remittances, and engagement in informal markets (petty trading). In addition, it is worth noting that while the adoption of the above-mentioned coping mechanisms was not exclusive to poorer households, it was more likely that resource deprived households did, with supposedly resource-rich households mostly adopting these strategies following resource depletion or loss due to conflict.

#### **4.5.2.2 Performance and diversity of resources**

At this point, it is worth reiterating the fact that the mere availability of resources does not necessary yield positive outcomes in terms of building resilience. The key questions remain how well such resources perform the function of livelihood support during and post-conflict, how diverse such resources are, as well as what makes such resources vulnerable to collapse. The study therefore asked questions related to the above. On first note, field interviews with selected women groups revealed that despite the availability of varied household resources particularly farmlands, savings, investments, and human capital during and post-conflict, the capacity of households to remain resilient by maximizing such resources yielded mixed results.

With agriculture constituting the main occupation of Bawku (Bawku Municipality, 2010), the performance of land as a resource is vital to securing livelihoods and resilience. Despite the dominance of agriculture, respondents were of the view that land as a resource yielded limited outcomes in building resilience during and post-conflict. They argued that a complexity of factors make land vulnerable to collapse in Bawku. First off, the poor nutrient quality of soil influenced the types of crops and farming systems adopted. Through subsistence agriculture, household farming activities were mostly thus reduced to the cultivation of grains, cereals and vegetables.

Additionally, respondents argued that the sporadic rainfall pattern (3-4 months of rainy season) often interspersed with long periods of drought negates any potential gains households derived from tilling farmlands due to low crop yield. This limited the capacity of households to earn income through the sale of food produce. Deducing from the above, it could therefore be argued that despite the poor performance of land as a resource, the dominance of agriculture in the study area represents a necessary, albeit short-term livelihood scheme, in a context of conflict.

With regards to the contribution of personal savings and investment towards livelihood and resilience, the study revealed that households generally exhibited a low culture of savings. Interestingly, this was attributed to the volatile economic climate that conflict created. Accordingly, most respondents reported a dip in trade and commerce which not only affected the profit margins of their businesses but also the ability to save and/or invest. Consequently, incomes earned were often utilized for immediate household consumption by securing and rationing food and water supplies, as well as meeting the health and educational needs of children; with little left for savings and investment.

In terms of resilience building, the low level of savings among respondents implies that in the short-term, individuals and households may be able to cope with the reality of ethnic clashes typically by adapting their consumption patterns. However, such changes may prove unsustainable in the long run in the absence of alternative resources serving as a buffer. As such, the ability of households to recover from the shocks and stress of ethnic conflict was curtailed.

Following the limited performance of primary resources in the study area, human capital increasingly became a vital household resource for livelihood support and resilience during and post-conflict. As noted by Justino (2010: 3), a fundamental mechanism by which violent conflict may affect resilience and long-term development outcomes is through human capital formation. As such, the study sought to ascertain the security and subsequent influence of human capital on resilience building among respondents by focusing specifically on two dimensions of human capital formation; education, and health of respondents as well as their households.

On the question of education, the study generally established that the low level of education and skill training of respondents yielded little returns in terms of human

capital formation towards building resilience during and post-conflict. More specifically, respondents noted that the recurrent nature of ethnic clashes in the area not only disrupted the academic calendar of basic and secondary educational institutions but also served as a disincentive for child education due to fear of being attacked.

Furthermore, findings indicate that in the heat of ethnic clashes, education constituted an afterthought due to the desire of some households to maintain current consumption (often food) levels. Discussions and interviews with women groups and civil society networks (BEWDA and ActionAid Ghana) in the study area revealed that some households generally sought to replace dead, injured or disabled adult workers with children to compensate for the unexpected decline in financial resources available to households during ethnic clashes. Hence, children were not able to go to school.

In terms of resilience, the depletion of human capital implied that respondents were largely not able to sustain livelihoods by taking advantage of available formal sector economic opportunities. Further, the underdeveloped nature of human capital in the study area could lend support for ethnic violence in the absence of complementary and alternative sources of livelihood during and post-conflict period. However, this study makes no such inference in the absence of conclusive data.

With regards to health as a dimension of human capital formation, the study revealed that generally the ability of households to recover from the shocks and stresses of ethnic conflict was further curtailed due to the diminished quality and quantity of available human capital in Bawku. Significantly, a host of respondents suggested that the loss of human lives and poorly equipped and inaccessible healthcare centres during conflict diminished the ability of households to sustain livelihoods due to a dearth of economic labour. However, by way of adaptation, some households were equipped with first-aid kits while others resorted to traditional healers (herbalists) for emergency treatment. Nevertheless, the immediate period of incapacitation or poor health denotes negative gains in terms of resilience since such human capital cannot be applied towards securing short and long-term household consumption needs.

### **4.5.3 Adaptive facilitators**

According to Longstaff et al (2013), a community's adaptive capacity is a function of the ability of individuals and groups to store and remember experiences; use that

memory and experience to learn, innovate and reorganize resources to adapt to the reality of conflict; and to connect with other households and communities for livelihood support and resilience. Based on this premise, the study sought to establish the existence and subsequent contribution of social capital (social networks and cohesion), institutional memory (educational programs, festivals, and cultural observances), and innovative learning towards resilience building during and post-conflict in Bawku. Data gathered from respondents with respect to the above identified adaptive facilitators are presented and discussed further below.

#### **4.5.3.1 Social networks and cohesion**

Recent studies on violent conflict in developing contexts indicate that social networks and cohesion provide a formidable force towards building resilience during and post-conflict. Consequently, the study sought to unravel the existence and contribution of social support systems in Bawku. Further, questions concerning social cohesion between and among ethnic factions were posed to stimulate appropriate responses with regards to efforts towards trust and consensus building for post-conflict recovery.

The consensus among respondents was that social networks played a pivotal role towards resilience building in the study area. In Bawku, social networks mainly consisted of youth groups, prayer groups, local savings and farmer networks. During focus group discussions with selected women groups, it came to fore that in the immediate period of ethnic clashes, households and ethnic communities often sought emotional, moral, financial and material support from their social networks. In the immediate aftermath of conflict, youth groups played varying roles ranging from organizing communal cleaning exercises, peace campaigns, and sports. Through these youth activities, a sense of togetherness and message of peaceful coexistence was often conveyed among respective ethnic factions.

Additionally, prayer groups provided individuals and communities with much needed spiritual strength to go on despite the challenges they still had to face because of ethnic conflict. During interviews, a section of respondents suggested that the same God who permitted such violence in the area will surely provide a possibility for sustained peace through prayers and implorations. As such, they remained hopeful their prayers will be heard since God had ultimate power and control over the universe. Here, it is important to note the general sentiment of helplessness among

respondents. It could thus be argued that prayer constituted both a viable complementary and alternative source of resilience following institutional failure and poor performance of resources during and post-conflict. Also, the power of social unity derived through prayer groups cannot be overemphasized. By pulling together individuals and communities, prayer groups not only gave birth to group strength but also fostered solidarity among respective factions.

Likewise, local savings and farmer networks provided individuals and households with much needed financial and human capital support for livelihood during and post-conflict. Following the challenges encountered in accessing micro in the face of conflict, respondents indicated that some individuals and households developed innovative practices by pooling their limited finances to form lending groups where members take turns to receive monetary support. In so doing, households remained resilient since they were able to accumulate wealth to boost their trade as well as explore new investments for livelihood support. In the same way, the study demonstrated that resilience was forged through farmer networks in the study area. Through this initiative, farmers were able to solicit the assistance of fellow farmers in tilling their farmlands as well as collectively securing farm inputs and implements.

Despite the giant strides made by youth groups, prayer groups, local savings and farmer networks in terms of livelihood support and resilience post-conflict, it is worth noting that a key element of such networks is the ties of trust and consensus that bind them. It was therefore not surprising when respondents indicated that social networks and initiatives for livelihood support during and post-conflict were limited within ethnic factions due to the inability to establish trust between Kusasis and Mamprusis. Such pervasive distrust ultimately discouraged cooperation and encouraged self-interested behaviour which, although yielded benefits to respective ethnic groups in the short term, was in contradiction with the society's good in the long run in terms of building inter-ethnic consensus and resilience post-conflict.

#### **4.5.3.2 Institutional memory**

In terms of institutional memory, the study generally established that the sequence of events leading up to ethnic clashes saw the gradual erosion of accumulated positive experiences and local knowledge between Mamprusi and Kusasi groups. As indicated in preceding sections of this chapter, both ethnic factions historically co-existed

peacefully despite differences in language, culture, and traditional authority structure (centralized vs acephalous systems). Through shared positive experiences and knowledge derived from inter-ethnic marriages, festivals, and cultural observances, respondents largely concurred that lines of division between Kusasi and Mamprusi factions were in effect non-existent prior to conflict. However, the onset of chieftaincy, land disputes and the ensuing involvement of political parties in the internal affairs of the Bawku traditional area led to accumulated positive experiences and local knowledge being replaced with negative ones. As such, occasions such as festivals and ritual observances served the latent function as avenues to perpetuate hate speech against ethnic factions.

Further, a section of respondents noted how early childhood education and upbringing practices sought to instil children with a sense of superiority of their ethnicity over other groups. A Kusasi respondent noted that;

*“...from childhood, our parents always told us that we are the owners of Bawku and that Mamprusi people are outsiders. They taught us not to obey their chief or even recognize them as our equals. We grew up thinking that is the right thing and even now some of our children have picked up from us and started behaving like that”*  
(Personal interview: 29.01.2016).

It is worth noting that the above quoted sentiment was not exclusive among the Kusasi faction, with Mamprusi socialization equally characterized by resentment for Kusasi culture, traditional observances and authority systems. Nevertheless, such poor institutional memory could have negative outcomes in terms of building resilience since households and communities were largely unable to form or adapt to the present circumstances of ethnic conflict by recalling previously shared positive knowledge and experiences. Further, it could be argued that the intergenerational transmission of undesirable perceptions, experiences and knowledge of other ethnicities accounts for the deep-seated and recurrent nature of ethnic clashes in Bawku despite numerous mediation and resolution efforts.

#### **4.5.3.3 Innovation and learning**

In this section, the researcher investigated the capacity of households to adopt innovative and learning practices as a mechanism for building resilience in light of ethnic conflict in the study area. Innovation allows individuals and communities to

think critically and challenge existing structures that are in place and in the process, create new ideas to recover from shocks (Bujones et al, 2013). In this regard, respondents were first asked as to whether prior to ethnic conflict, households were predisposed to adopting innovative practices for livelihood support as well as how ethnic conflict shaped innovation and learning in Bawku.

Results from this probe showed that almost all respondents noted that although not exclusive, ethnic conflict stimulated the innovative capacity of their households and communities. Prior to conflict, the availability and diversity of resources as well as institutional performance ensured that innovation and learning were not critical to household livelihood. However, respondents were of the view that the collapse of such resources and institutions during and in the immediate aftermath of conflict challenged individuals and households to think critically by applying new knowledge and ideas to maximize the potential of limited resources for their livelihood.

In so doing, the study uncovered that because of the poor yield of farmlands, a critical innovative practice adopted by households was the introduction of nitrogen fixing crops. According to respondents interviewed, they were initiated to such knowledge during capacity building programs organized by networks of NGOs in the study area. Consequently, the practice of soya bean cultivation as a nitrogen fixing crop increased among households, satisfying the dual purpose of consumption needs and soil fertility. Furthermore, officials of BEWDA and ActionAid Ghana indicated that because of limited available land resources, subsistence households often adopted to mixed crop practices. Through this innovation, households not only remained resilient by withholding already limited income but more importantly, it restricted their exposure to violent conflict from engaging in trade to maintain household consumption patterns.

In addition, field interviews unravelled the use of mobile phone technology to disseminate early warning signals as a critical innovation because ethnic violence in the study area. Using mobile text messaging (SMS), residents of conflict prone zones in Bawku who could read were thus able to report any signs of looming ethnic clashes to youth, community and opinion leaders for onward transmission to security agencies for appropriate response.

Despite the contribution of this innovation towards building resilience, there were however drawbacks. Particularly, a fair section of respondents reported isolated cases of misinformation, rumours or false alarms that heightened anxiety levels and in some instances, renewed ethnic clashes between Kusasi and Mamprusi groups. Deducing from the above, critical to resilience is the trustworthiness of the sources of information with regards to conflict warning signals. Further, it is crucial to maintain open channels of communication between whistle-blowers, community and opinion leaders, and security agencies for the sake of verification and subsequent action to forestall a recurrence of ethnic clashes in the study area.

#### **4.6 Barriers to women empowerment post-conflict**

Despite several studies (El-Bushra and Sahl, 2005; Stories and Petesch, 2011; Justino, 2012) reporting upsurges in women's access to agency and resources during conflict, preceding sections of this study largely reported that the peculiar case of ethnic conflict in Bawku had no significant influence in this regard. This section of data analysis sought to unravel the barriers to women empowerment post-conflict in Bawku. The following sub-sections present primary findings of women's own interpretation of existing constraints in terms of household decision-making, economic opportunities, and political participation in the study area.

##### **4.6.1 Culture and belief system**

The empowerment of women has long been a goal of development work and it results from the respect of women's rights and because women's participation in decision-making, socio-economic status, their education, health and welfare are intricately linked with household livelihood. However, in pushing the agenda of women towards increased socio-economic and political inclusion, various studies have established that prevailing culture and belief systems act as a barrier, particularly in post-conflict settings. This study adopts Geertz (1973: 44) definition of culture. According to him, "culture is a set of control mechanisms consisting of plans, recipes, rules and instruments for governing behaviour". Implicit in this definition of culture is the assumption that human thought is basically the product of social and public interaction. In applying Geertz (1973) notion of culture, the researcher sought to unravel power and control mechanisms embedded in Kusasi and Mamprusi cultures act as constraining force against women empowerment post-conflict in Bawku.



Generally, findings indicate that cultural norms and belief systems of both ethnic factions constricted opportunities for women first in terms of access to resources at the community level. On first note, respondents reported that prevailing culturally established patrilineal inheritance system restricted their access to family resources and wealth. In the patrilineal system, land and property inheritance is mainly through the male lineage. This custom inherently bestowed family resources to Kusasi and Mamprusi men since women could only gain access to land and other inheritable property through their husbands and sons. Respondents further noted that even in instances where they inherited property, it was mostly in a caretaker capacity to be later bequeathed to their male children on attaining adulthood. However, in instances where a man has no male heir to property, then his male relatives take control over land and other property.

Moreover, the prevailing cultural practice of dowry system among both Kusasi and Mamprusi factions meant that the contribution and input of men in terms of agency (community decision-making) was relatively more valued. In this system, women are considered as the property of their husbands. Thus, women were considered subordinates to men, and relegated to performing household duties that afforded little empowering avenues. Interestingly, at the household level, respondents indicated varying levels of agency or decision-making power. On further probing with regards to the contrasting levels of agency at the household and community level, a respondent opined that her husband tended to adopt an inclusive approach to decision-making and was willing to grant her access to land for household income and livelihood support. However, at the community level, it was difficult to attain similar opportunities mainly because men did not want to be perceived as weak, yielding power or control to women.

In a separate interview with an opinion leader, she noted that despite culture constraining opportunities for women, it was relatively easier for women to take part in decision-making and have access to resources at the household level mainly because the survival of households during ethnic clashes owed much to the contribution of women as it did with men. As such, male figure-heads were more willing to cede farmland as well as other assets to the women to engage in economic activities for livelihood support. Deducing from the separate accounts presented above, it is obvious that perception plays a pivotal role in shaping the dominant

patriarchal social values. Thus, it was more likely for men to project the cultural image of power, dominance and control over decision-making and resources at the community level as compared to household level. Further, the findings give an indication that empowering opportunities accorded women at the household level were more conflict induced or borne out of necessity.

#### **4.5.1 Ignorance and early childhood education**

The study findings revealed that ignorance of empowering opportunities coupled with a lack of self-worth on the part of women constituted the second most important barrier to women empowerment post-conflict. According to respondents, a lot of women had no idea that opportunities for accessing resources existed in the first place. On micro credit as an empowering tool, while many respondents were oblivious of available micro credit schemes specifically targeted at women towards bridging gender inequalities, a consensus existed among respondents stating that such ignorance was largely the product of inadequate access to information on existing opportunities. It could be argued that such ignorance owed much to the low educational level of women, as captured in previous section of data analysis. However, it is worth noting that ignorance of empowering opportunities was not exclusive to women. A fair section respondents indicated that some men were equally oblivious of the potential of women to contribute to livelihood upliftment when given the opportunity. This resulted in negative outcomes in terms of empowerment since resources available to women remained largely untapped.

Furthermore, the study revealed ignorance on the part of women of existing human rights and freedoms enshrined in the 4<sup>th</sup> Republican constitution of Ghana that guarantee the participation of women in governance and decision-making processes. As such, women hardly took initiative to challenge established patriarchal social values or power imbalances at both the household and community level. Even in instances where some women participated in public decision-making processes, it was often limited to women advocacy groups championed by networks of NGOs in the study area.

Aside ignorance, early childhood patterns of socialization resulted in girls and women accepting domestic and unpaid care work. According to the Head of Programs at ActionAid Ghana (Zebilla ADP), this curtailed opportunity in terms of agency

because domestic and childcare commitments limited women to domestic settings, with less time to attend community meetings or assume leadership positions. In terms household livelihood, respondents highlighted the possibility that domestic roles women played could increase household income and asset portfolio, since it allowed their men to focus exclusively on productive activities such as agriculture and trading. Besides, it also ensured women essentially remained unexposed to ethnic violence in the study area. However, due to the difficulty in quantifying such work in monetary terms, the contribution of such domestic and unpaid care work to household livelihood remains fundamentally unknown.

### **4.6.3 Illiteracy**

On first note, the study elicited data indicating that the low level of educational attainment among women limited their ability to effectively participate in decision-making processes where such opportunities were accorded them. When the question of why lower levels of education are recorded compared to men, respondents predominantly cited ethnic conflict, child marriage practices and stereotyping of female education as factors that accounted for this. Accordingly, some women reported that due to their limited intellectual capacity, they found it difficult to comprehend technical details discussed during capacity building programs or advocacy group meetings. This sentiment was corroborated during interviews with selected officials of Belim Wusa Development Agency (BEWDA) in the study area. They noted that in their capacity building programs, illiteracy among women proved a challenge. In the view of an official of BEWDA, he noted that;

*“...it is very difficult to assist some of the women during our training programs for sustainable livelihoods because illiteracy limits the sectors of the local economy they can be engaged in. Most of our capacity building programs focus on craftsmanship and financial support for petty trading based on their preferences”* (Personal interview: 28.01.2016).

From the narrative, it could be argued that illiteracy curtailed the mobility of women into higher economic positions, with informal sector work providing little in the form of income for sustainable livelihoods and influence in decision-making. This is discussed in detail in the next sub-section.

Furthermore, due to illiteracy, most of the women reportedly had very little knowledge of conflict early warning signals. Knowledge on early warning signals is often predicated on access to information. However, such access to information on conflict is often dependent on literacy levels (Badu-Nyarko et al, 2014). As such, the inability of some women to access to information related to the triggers of conflict due to illiteracy negatively impacted their ability to adopt appropriate response mechanisms to reduce their vulnerability. Further, little knowledge of early warning signals meant that respondents with low levels of education were often cut off from deliberations related to conflict mitigation and response strategies.

#### **4.6.4 Poverty and informal sector work**

The study demonstrated that poverty and limited economic opportunities represent barriers to women empowerment. Generally, there was a consensus among respondents that poverty limits women's agency and potential resource access.

According to a respondent, *“the moment a woman is poor, they (men) do not regard her in society, how much more contribute to decision making”* (FGD: 27.01.2016).

This establishes a relationship between income and assets, and the capacity of women to be engaged in decision-making at both the household and community levels. As Kabeer (2005; 14) notes, poverty and disempowerment generally go hand in hand. This is because the inability to meet one's basic needs and the resulting dependence on powerful others to do so, often rules out the capacity to make meaningful choice. Thus, poverty not only denied respondents (women) the voice or power to effectively engage men in decision making but also reinforced patterns of male dominance in the study area due to female reliance on men for their livelihood needs.

Furthermore, findings indicate that the concentration of women in informal sector jobs constituted a barrier to women empowerment post-conflict. Respondents principally indicated that due to the relatively low educational status of women in the study area, access to formal sector work was curtailed. Moreover, in instances where some women were productively employed in the formal sector having attained the requisite knowledge and skills, the volatile nature of Bawku meant that several formal sector jobs especially in the banking, education, and hospitality industry were lost.

The collapse of the formal sector of the local economy meant that households faced limited opportunities to earn incomes outside formal sector wages. It is not surprising

therefore that the informal sector consisting mostly of petty trading, basket weaving, dressmaking, and agriculture expanded due to previously formal sector employees converging in this economy. This study does not discount the possibility of informal sector work to meet household consumption needs. However, issues of income and livelihood sustainability and the unpredictable nature of informal markets may curtail any gains in terms of empowerment especially for women. This is because it is difficult to see how earnings generated from low-income jobs will do much to improve women's subordinate status at the household and community level.

#### **4.7 Summary**

The chapter presented and analyzed data gathered in satisfying the study's research objectives. The findings reflect the shifting narrative and perception of women of women as passive victims in conflict contexts, with some women having played varying supporting roles such as rumour mongering, weapon concealment, and goading their husbands to partake in ethnic clashes. The motives for supporting conflict were based on ethnic origin, power differentials and social exclusion, inadequate access and distribution of resources. A sustainable livelihood approach was adopted in discussing the livelihood implications of conflict on households. In analyzing and discussing post-conflict resilience in Bawku, the study adapted Bujones et al (2013; 6) factor analysis of resilience, in eliciting the role of institutions, resources and adaptive facilitators in resilience building. The chapter concludes with findings on the barriers to women empowerment in the study area along the lines of household decision-making, economic opportunities, and political participation.

## **Chapter Five**

### **Conclusion and Implications of Study**

#### **5. Introduction**

This chapter presents a summary of the research findings and discusses how they satisfy the study's objectives. It raises critical questions with the aim of drawing out a complexity of issues related to ethnic conflict, household livelihoods and empowerment, as well as resilience building post-conflict in the Natinga, Gingande and Zongo communities of Bawku, Ghana. This chapter is presented considering the study's objectives and reviewed literature related to the topic under investigation as pointed out in the theoretical framework. It further communicates the implications of key research findings towards peacebuilding, sustaining livelihoods, and building resilience communities post-conflict. The chapter concludes with recommendations and areas for further research on issues of ethnic conflict in the study area.

#### **5.1 A recap of major findings**

The study revolved around the experiences and roles of women in conflict, issues of empowerment, curtailed livelihoods, and resilience building post-conflict. The first research question emphasized on identifying the perceived roles some women played in perpetuating ethnic clashes as well as their motivation for supporting armed rebellion in Bawku, Ghana. In the next set of research questions, a sustainable livelihood approach was adopted in underlining the livelihood implications of conflict on selected households, whilst Bujones et al (2013) factor analysis of resilience proved useful in exploring opportunities for building resilience post-conflict in the study area. The final research question highlighted the challenges to women empowerment in terms of household decision-making, economic opportunities, and political participation. The findings of the study are summarized below.

##### **5.1.1 What perceived roles did women play in the Bawku conflict?**

The findings reflect the shifting narrative and perception of women of women as passive victims in conflict contexts by pointing to some form of female support for armed rebellion in the study area. Generally, respondents sampled across the Gingande, Natinga and Zongo communities of Bawku perceived some women to have played varying supporting roles in perpetuating ethnic clashes ranging from rumour mongering, weapon concealment, and goading their husbands to partake in ethnic

clashes. In the absence of verifiable sources of information, some women reported stories of potential attacks, attacks or acts of retaliation from opposing factions to their husbands and brothers who in some instances acted on such information to perpetuate violence. Further, through various acts of weapon concealment, such women served as effective perpetrators of ethnic violence by taking advantage of their socially constructed perception as non-aggressors. Conversely, the study established that ideals of masculinity equally served as a basis for the perpetuation of ethnic conflict since such women often stereotyped men in battle as strong and non-aggressors as weak.

In exploring the motivation behind female support for ethnic conflict, the study found that female perpetrators of ethnic violence were mostly driven by similar motives that prompt men into aggression: the ethnic factor, perceived power differentials and social exclusion, and unequal access and distribution of resources.

With regards to ethnicity, the findings indicate that long-standing cultural practices and a history of animosity distinguished Mamprusi and Kusasi groups. Historically, cultural diversity and practices united both factions. However, over time such occasions served as avenues to communicate 'ethnacist' undertones. Moreover, the study traced a history of animosity between ethnic factions was traced to litigations over allodial rights and chieftaincy. Although answers to the question of 'first settlement' were quite inconclusive and remains a matter of controversy in Bawku, it was however quite revealing however, that such historical animosities have been transmitted across generations and often generated female support for violent clashes between Kusasi and Mamprusi groups.

Furthermore, perceived power differentials and social exclusion generated some female support for ethnic conflict in Bawku. Power differentials and social exclusion often related to perceived discrepancies in terms of access and participation in decision-making processes at both the local and national levels. Critically, the study uncovered that an interplay of political interference and policy frameworks contributed to such pervasive perceptions of power differentials and social exclusion. The polarized nature of Bawku based on party affiliation further deepened ethnic tensions since political mandate was often traded for political support in chieftaincy and land disputes. With regards to how policy frameworks shaped perceptions of power differentials and social exclusion, the study revealed that erstwhile colonial

policy of indirect rule led to a restructuring of traditional political institutions where acephalous states were amalgamated with centralized political systems. This meant that the Kusasi were subsumed under Mamprusi traditional authority and subsequently excluded from decision-making processes at the local level. This fuelled support for armed rebellion to address power imbalances in the study area.

Finally, the study suggests that perceived inequalities in access and distribution of resources engendered some female support for armed rebellion. Grievances expressed often revolved around perceived unequal access, distribution, and forced land reclamation efforts initiated by opposing factions in conflict. Evidently, the seeming lack of alternative livelihood opportunities in the face of conflict may have induced a strong desire on the part of some women to support ethnic violence in a bid to address perceived grievances.

### **5.1.2 How did ethnic conflict affect household livelihoods in Bawku?**

Generally, the study established diverse household livelihood implications of ethnic conflict in Bawku during and post-conflict. Primarily, respondents intimated that household livelihood effects associated with ethnic conflict in Bawku related to the loss of lives, destruction of property, forced displacement, curtailed access to land and micro credit, the effect of curfew hours on households and businesses, as well as gender role changes.

With regards to how deaths associated with ethnic conflict impacted household livelihoods, the study revealed that due to the patriarchal nature of both Kusasi and Mamprusi social organization, the loss of men in battle had negative outcomes in terms of immediate household necessities such as income, food supply, health and education since men were mostly considered breadwinners and responsible for family upkeep. More importantly, the loss of men due to conflict left women bereft of agency mainly due to the prevailing patrilineal system of inheritance of land and other valuable property. Moreover, the capacity of female-headed households to sustain household livelihoods by assuming duties previously performed by men was further exacerbated due to low levels of education and skill training.

Further, the findings indicate that household properties and assets such as farmlands, houses, market stalls and trucks were often targeted and destroyed by opposing factions in conflict. This cut income streams available to households and significantly



affected the capacity of households to satisfy household consumption needs. Likewise, while land as a form of natural capital in post-conflict is of high value in terms of food security since land in the study area is generally unfertile for agricultural production and as such could not sustain household consumption or income needs.

Also, findings suggest that although the imposition of curfew hours contributed to curbing ethnic clashes, it also introduced socio-economic hardships in the area since productive or income generating activities in both formal and informal sectors of the local economy of Bawku ground to a halt. In the formal sector, the imposition of curfew hours meant that local government institutions, schools, hospitals, banks, public transport systems, among other public services were either cut off or rendered unproductive in the heat of conflict. In the informal sphere, the imposition of curfew led to the closure or relocation of some small-scale industries in Bawku. Similarly, local traders were cut off from their market supplies and traders from nearby towns could not access markets in Bawku.

Finally, the study revealed that conflict marginally shaped household gender roles. It was more likely for women to assume increased responsibility in terms of household income and necessities particularly during periods of intense ethnic clashes. It is worth noting that such gender role changes were necessitated by perceived vulnerability and disinterest of women in perpetuating ethnic violence. As such, during violent outbreaks of conflict it was relatively more convenient for women to engage in income generating activities for livelihood support than men. However, such economic gains were largely not consolidated in the post-conflict period. This was mainly due to prevailing patriarchal socio-cultural structures and belief systems that curtailed women's participation in household and community decision-making processes and structures.

### **5.1.3 What opportunities exist towards resilience building against the shocks of conflict?**

The study conceptualized resilience to denote the ability of households and communities in Bawku to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from shocks and stresses, and in the process reducing chronic vulnerability and facilitating participatory growth among the various factions. In analysing the opportunities for resilience building post-

conflict in Bawku, the study generally found that institutions, resources and networks of social capital were pivotal to household resilience during and post-conflict. In terms of institutional effectiveness and legitimacy, the study highlighted perceptions of ineffectiveness of formal governmental institutions particularly the Bawku inter-ethnic peace committee and security agencies due to their vested interests in the peace process. The resultant lack of openness, commitment and fairness in conflict resolution approaches had implications for building trust which is pivotal in resilience building.

With regards to informal institutions, the study findings generally elicited non-acceptance of respective Kusasi and Mamprusi chieftaincy authorities due to competing claims of allodial rights or first-comership, fuelled by legislative instruments established by successive governments. With legitimacy being critical to institutional effectiveness, the non-acceptance and disregard of the authority of the Bawku Naba weakened the capacity of the chieftaincy institution to lead processes to mitigate, adapt to, and recover from the shocks of ethnic clashes. The presence of networks of civil society in the study area however represented a ray of hope in terms of resilience building post-conflict. Despite initial scepticism with regards to their motives and role in the peace process, NGOs such as ActionAid Ghana, BEWDA, Catholic Relief Services among others were considered pivotal in relief efforts and household resilience.

In addition, the study investigated the contribution of resources to resilience building along the lines of resource availability, their performance and diversity. The question related to household resource availability produced mixed results: “the haves” and the “have nots”. Interestingly, although households that were economically better-off in terms of resource availability could use such resources to secure their access to food, credit and replace lost assets, the study discovered that the possession of land and assets did not necessarily yield positive outcomes in terms of livelihood and resilience. This connects to questions the researcher posed concerning resource performance and diversity. Particularly, respondents noted that due to low soil fertility and erratic rainfall patterns in Bawku, the value of land for purposes of agriculture diminished.

Moreover, micro credit and personal savings as alternative resources proved unsustainable in securing household livelihoods and resilience due to the volatile

economic climate that accompanied ethnic conflict. Likewise, the study established the potential and impact of human capital in asserting household resilience during and post-conflict period as negligible. This owed much to low educational and skill training levels in the study area, particularly women. Further probing uncovered that in the heat of ethnic clashes, education constituted an afterthought, due to issues related to safety and the need to maintain current consumption (often food) levels. In terms of resilience, the unavailability, the depletion, and/or poor performance of resources implied that respondents were largely not able to sustain livelihoods and build resilience by taking advantage of available formal sector, and economic opportunities.

Finally, the findings from the study pointed towards the fact that networks of social capital and cohesion, as well as innovation and learning fostered household resilience during and post-conflict in Bawku. Respondents generally indicated that social networks consisting were pivotal to resilience since households drew emotional, moral, financial and material support from them. Social networks thus constituted both a viable complementary and alternative source of livelihood following institutional failure and poor performance of resources. Despite the positive contribution of social networks in building resilience, it is however worth noting that social networks and initiatives for livelihood support during and post-conflict were often limited within ethnic factions due to issues related to trust between Kusasis and Mamprusis.

With regards to innovation and learning as adaptive facilitators, the study demonstrated that the poor performance of resources and institutions during and post-conflict challenged individuals and households to applying new knowledge and ideas in order maximize the potential of limited resources for their livelihoods. An important innovative practice adopted by households in overcoming the challenge of poor soil fertility and crop yield was the introduction of nitrogen fixing crops particularly soybean and mixed cropping. Furthermore, the use of mobile phone technology to disseminate early warning signals constituted a significant innovation owing to ethnic violence in the study area. The use of short message services (SMS) enabled some respondents, particularly those who could read to report signs of looming ethnic clashes to security agencies for appropriate response.

#### **5.1.4 What constitute the barriers to women empowerment post-conflict?**

The findings show that prevailing culture and belief systems constitute the main challenge to women empowerment in terms of their involvement in household decision-making, access to resources and economic opportunities, and political participation. With regards to accessing resources and economic opportunities, prevailing culturally established patrilineal inheritance system was identified as a constraint to women empowerment. Moreover, the practice of bridal dowry among both ethnic factions meant that input of men in terms of agency was relatively more valued since women were considered subordinates and the property of their husbands. As such, it was relatively difficult for women to engage in household decision-making and have access to resources.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that ignorance and early childhood education constituted barriers to women empowerment. A significant number of women sampled were oblivious to existing opportunities in accessing resources such as micro credit as well as initiatives and legislative instruments targeted at bridging gender inequalities in the study area. This owed much to high illiteracy levels among respondents, which debilitated their access to information. Illiteracy further curtailed empowerment since the preoccupation of women with informal sector work provided little in the form of capital formation and influence in decision-making. Aside ignorance and illiteracy, early childhood patterns of socialization resulted in girls and women accepting domestic and unpaid care work. This curtailed opportunity in terms of resource access and agency because in their roles as domestic caretakers, women were often limited to domestic settings, with less time to attend community meetings or assume leadership positions.

Finally, poverty constituted an underlying challenge to women empowerment in the study area. There was consensus among respondents that poverty limited women's agency and access to resources. This established a relationship between income and assets, and the capacity of women to be engaged in decision-making at both the household and community levels. As such, the inability of women to meet basic needs due to poverty and the resulting dependence on men for livelihoods often ruled out their capacity to make meaningful choice or influence decision-making processes. More importantly, poverty not only denied respondents (women) the voice or power

to effectively engage men in decision-making but reinforced patterns of male dominance in the study area.

## **5.2 Implications of the study findings**

To prevent future recurrence of conflict between Kusasi and Mamprusi ethnic groups or among other minority groups in the study area, some measures should be put in place to consolidate peace, secure household livelihoods and resilience.

### **5.2.1 Managing ethnic grievances**

It is evident from the study findings that ethnic grievances related to power differentials, social exclusion, and access to resources have often degenerated into violent confrontations between Kusasi and Mamprusi groups. There is therefore the need for effective management of identified grievances in ethnic communities to consolidate peace for socio-economic development. To effectively resolve grievances related to allodial claims, it is imperative that both ethnic sides are accorded equal opportunity to stake their claim in future deliberations or legislative processes aimed at settling land disputes. In this way, trust, a key element in conflict mediation and resolution processes may be established towards resolving grievances related to land ownership.

Moreover, in managing grievances related to power differentials, there is the need to address perceptions of unequal access and distribution of resources, and exclusion from decision making processes. This necessitates that ethnic factions attain representation at both local and regional levels of governance. Through this, ethnic communities are afforded avenues to address perceived power differentials by asserting influence over local planning and decision-making processes through their representatives (chiefs, community and opinion leaders). Further, a key aspect of such ethnic representations is that communities are able to communicate ethnic-specific needs or challenges ethnic conflict induced. Critically, this ensures that community resources are not just distributed equitably, but more importantly channelled where needed most.

Likewise, managing ethnic grievances requires effective information flow particularly on issues related to ethnic conflict. The study suggests there is lack of information available and less consultation with residents particularly on appropriate mitigation and response measures. To curb this, local access to credible information by conflict

response and relief agencies is key. In the same vein, adequate avenues should be provided for feedback from residents regarding the effectiveness of conflict prevention, mitigation and/or response measures. Further, since there was a low level of education among respondents, it is also imperative that such information is translated and understood by local people through frequent dialogue and meetings. This also makes local media such as radio stations key component in information dissemination and translation efforts.

### **5.2.2 Adopting a gendered approach to conflict resolution**

Having identified the livelihood implications of ethnic conflict particularly on female-headed households as well as challenges related to resilience building post-conflict, it is therefore imperative that any efforts geared towards peacebuilding and sustainable development should adopt a gendered approach. Significantly, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 affirms the importance of women's participation and involvement at all levels of the peace and security agenda due to their peculiar experiences during and post-conflict situations (Beever, 2001). It was noted in the study that some women played varying supporting roles in ethnic conflict. As such, a gendered approach will unravel underlying issues regarding their motives for supporting armed rebellion. By incorporating the female voice, effective conflict resolution may be attained since the interests of all parties are incorporated in peace deliberations.

Furthermore, the adoption of a gendered approach to peacebuilding is necessitated by women's role in conflict prevention. As the study revealed, women particularly play a positive role in thwarting recurrence of ethnic clashes in Bawku by gathering early warning signals. In terms of early warning signals, the study reported that in their day-to-day market activities, women often had information about signs of potential conflict or escalating attacks. Thus, where women are not active participants in conflict resolution efforts, such deliberations are not only devoid of invaluable insights and knowledge women gather during their daily interaction, but more importantly, ethnic clashes may resurface.

However, a gendered approach to conflict resolution necessitates overcoming socio-cultural barriers that curtail empowering opportunities available to women as highlighted in the study. More importantly, it requires women to have sufficient

education and training in order to fully participate in decision-making processes (Alberti, 2010). The study therefore suggests that more efforts should be channelled towards uplifting female literacy levels through community sensitization on the importance of girl-child and adult education, as well as adopting an incentive based model to stimulate school attendance rates of girls. Consequently, the marginalized position of women in terms of household and community decision-making processes as well as access to resources may be overcome since women who gain knowledge and skill training are put in a position to be active participants and key decision-makers in economic, social and political spheres.

### **5.2.3 The need to address institutional failures**

Finally, there is the need to address institutional deficiencies to prevent a reoccurrence of ethnic clashes and build resilient communities. As shown in the study, although formal institutions particularly the inter-ethnic peace committee and security agencies were considered legitimate by both factions, they however failed in their respective mandates due to perceived lack of trust and ethnic exclusion from peacebuilding processes. In addressing such institutional deficiencies, there is the need for the adoption of a neutral and inclusive approach by the Bawku inter-ethnic peace committee as well as civil society organizations such as BEWDA and ActionAid Ghana in mediation and conflict resolution efforts. This is because effective institutions create an environment where civic engagement is likely to thrive (Evans, 1996). In so doing, it is more likely that synergetic relations and trust between institutions and ethnic groups in the peace process will be established.

Moreover, building effective institutions towards peacebuilding implies that principles of justice and fairness are upheld by security and law enforcement agencies in their operations. As such, identical sanctions should be meted out to law offenders irrespective of their ethnic background. In the same way, individuals who uphold established sanctions should be commended or rewarded for their actions in maintaining peace. To an extent, this could act as a form of positive reinforcement that will inspire other people to follow suit, rather than instigating rebellion against laws.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

Generally, the study's findings are relevant to international and national discourses on the gendered roles of women in conflict, household livelihoods and resilience during and post-conflict implications of conflict on women. Specifically, findings on the various supporting roles played by some women in conflict, as well as the motivations behind such support, affirms the growing body of knowledge that position women not solely as passive victims but equally as perpetrators of conflict. Critically, this calls for a gendered and participatory approach in deliberations geared towards mitigation, adaptation and post-conflict recovery since both men and women may both perpetuate or assume peacebuilding roles during ethnic conflict. Besides building on existing scholarly knowledge, these findings also introduce new contextual perspectives and the reality of women in Bawku by highlighting challenges related to post-conflict capacity building and empowerment. Moreover, findings on the livelihood implications of conflict particularly on female-headed households serve as a platform to review and/or formulate pragmatic and gendered policy frameworks towards sustainable household livelihoods and resilience during and post-conflict. Finally, a study of this nature satisfies the quest for knowledge on issues related to gender and conflict, household livelihoods and women empowerment during and post-conflict in Bawku, Ghana.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Interview guide (Women Groups)

This focused group discussion seeks your critical assessment of the role of women in conflict, and the effects of conflict on female livelihoods in Bawku, Ghana. Please note that this study does not constitute an investigation aimed at reprimanding or stirring your emotions as participants and/or victims of ethnic conflict. The study is purely academic and any responses obtained will be treated with uttermost confidentiality. Kindly respond truthfully. Thank you.

#### Section A: Demographic data

1. Age group
  - a. 16-25 ( )
  - b. 26-35 ( )
  - c. 36-45 ( )
  - d. Above 45 years ( )
2. Duration of stay in community
  - a. Since birth ( )
  - b. 1-5 years ( )
  - c. 6-10 years ( )
  - d. 11-15 years ( )
  - e. 16-20 years ( )
  - f. Above 20 years ( )
3. Religion
  - a. Christianity ( )
  - b. Islam ( )
  - c. Other (specify) .....
- 4a. Marital status
  - a. Never married ( )
  - b. Married ( )
  - c. Divorced ( )
  - d. Separated ( )
  - e. Widowed ( )

4b. Number of children

a. No children ( )

b. 1-3 ( )

c. 4-6 ( )

d. More than 6 ( )

5. Level of education

a. No formal education ( )

b. Primary level ( )

c. Secondary level ( )

d. Tertiary level ( )

6. Occupation .....

### **Section B: Gendered roles of women in conflict**

5. What is your understanding of the conflict and how would you describe the Bawku conflict?
6. Do you support ethnic violence in your community? If yes, how justified is violence?
7. Did you play any role during conflict? If yes, how would you describe your role as a woman in battle?
8. Do you consider your participation in battle as justified? If yes, how?
9. What role(s) did you play during conflict?
10. Did you face any form of socio-cultural resistance in performing your battle roles? If yes, what resistance did you face in performing your roles?
11. How do you reconcile your battle roles with that of household duties as a wife, sister and/or mother?

### **Section C: Livelihood implications of conflict**

12. Did conflict significantly affect your source of income? If yes, how?
13. Did the imposition of a curfew affect household livelihood activities? If yes, how?
14. Do you think the imposition of curfew hours contributed to reducing violence in your community? If yes, how?

15. Did your household suffer loss of lives or property due to ethnic conflict? If yes, how did it impact on your livelihood?
16. Has your household suffered displacement or forced migration due to conflict? If yes, how did it affect household livelihood?
17. To what extent did ethnic clashes affect your access to land as a livelihood strategy?
18. What type of assistance does BEWDA give in support of your livelihood?
19. Do you think that BEWDA could offer more livelihood support? How?
20. Do you consider social capital a livelihood strategy? If yes, how significant is social capital for household livelihood?

#### **Section D: Building resilience against shocks of conflict**

21. How important were family and community networks in building resilience?
22. Are there mechanisms in place to mitigate the shocks of conflict? If yes, what mechanisms are in place?
23. How influential has the chieftaincy institution and government been in the recovery process in the aftermath of conflict?
24. What role(s) did BEWDA play in resilience building and conflict recovery?
25. How did conflict affect your access to resources and agency?
26. What store of resources did you draw on in building resilience?

#### **Section E: Barriers to women empowerment**

27. In your view, do you consider women more empowered post-conflict or pre-conflict? Explain your answer?
28. What are the barriers to women empowerment post-conflict?
29. In what ways can such barriers be overcome?



## **Appendix 2: Interview Guide (BEWDA)**

This semi-structured interview seeks your critical assessment of the role of women in conflict, and the effects of conflict on female livelihoods in Bawku, Ghana. Please note that this study does not constitute an investigation aimed at reprimanding or stirring your emotions as participants and/or victims of ethnic conflict. The study is purely academic and any responses obtained will be treated with uttermost confidentiality. Kindly respond truthfully. Thank you.

### **Section A: Livelihood Implications of Conflict**

1. In your opinion, do you think ethnic conflict in the area significantly affected the livelihood of women? If yes, how?
2. What opportunities exist for women towards uplifting their livelihoods?
3. What is BEWDA's contribution towards uplifting women livelihoods post-conflict?
4. To what degree is the organization's post-conflict livelihood strategy successful in resolving household income deficiencies?
5. What barriers exist in BEWDA's activities geared towards female empowerment?
6. In your opinion, do you think the organization can do more to support women livelihoods? If yes, what focus areas do you suggest?

### **Section B: Building Resilience against shocks of conflict**

7. How does BEWDA conceptualize resilience in the face of conflict?
8. Does the organization have a conflict resilience model? If yes, what constitutes BEWDA's resilience model?
9. How effective is this model in building the resilience of women?
10. What organizational mechanisms exist to mitigate the shocks of conflict?
11. What roles does BEWDA play in resilience building post-conflict?
12. What community resources exist for conflict affected communities towards building resilience?

### **Section C: Barriers to women empowerment**

13. In your opinion, what constitute the barriers to women empowerment BEWDA's operational zones?
14. What is your organization's strategy to overcome such barriers?
15. How effective is this strategy?
16. In your personal view, what more can be done to overcome identified barriers?

### **Appendix 3: Interview Guide (ActionAid Ghana)**

This semi-structured interview seeks your critical assessment of the role of women in conflict, and the effects of conflict on female livelihoods in Bawku, Ghana. Please note that this study does not constitute an investigation aimed at reprimanding or stirring your emotions as participants and/or victims of ethnic conflict. The study is purely academic and any responses obtained will be treated with uttermost confidentiality. Kindly respond truthfully. Thank you.

#### **Section A: Livelihood Implications of Conflict**

1. In your opinion, do you think ethnic conflict in the area significantly affected the livelihood of women? If yes, how?
2. What opportunities exist for women towards uplifting their livelihoods?
3. What is ActionAid's contribution towards uplifting women livelihoods post-conflict?
4. To what degree is the organization's post-conflict livelihood strategy successful in resolving household income deficiencies?
5. What barriers exist in ActionAid's activities geared towards female empowerment?
6. In your opinion, do you think the organization can do more to support women livelihoods? If yes, what focus areas do you suggest?

#### **Section B: Building Resilience against shocks of conflict**

7. How does ActionAid conceptualize resilience in the face of conflict?
8. Does the organization have a conflict resilience model? If yes, what constitutes ActionAid's resilience model?
9. How effective is this model in building the resilience of women?
10. What organizational mechanisms exist to mitigate the shocks of conflict?
11. What roles does ActionAid play in resilience building post-conflict?
12. What community resources exist for conflict affected communities towards building resilience?

### **Section C: Barriers to women empowerment**

13. In your opinion, what constitute the barriers to women empowerment  
ActionAid's operational zones?
14. What is your organization's strategy to overcome such barriers?
15. How effective is this strategy?
16. In your personal view, what more can be done to overcome identified barriers?

## Appendix 4: Consent Letter



Date: 30 Nov 2015

Visiting Address:  
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### CONFIRMATION BRIAN NSOHBONO ATINGA

I can hereby confirm that Brian Nsohbono Atinga (born 04 Aug 91) is a student in the Master programme in Development Management at the University of Agder, Norway. The master programme is a two year full time programme comprising 120 ECTS.

In connection with his master thesis, Mr. Atinga is planning to do a fieldwork in Ghana. The topic for his research is "Gendered Battlefields: The Role and Effects of Conflict on Women's Livelihoods in Bawku, Ghana".

Mr. Atinga will conduct his research in the period of January – March 2016.

Yours sincerely

  
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