When Haste Shakes the Scholar's Pen: Some Scholarly Works on Dagbon after the Regicide of Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani II, King of Dagbon, Ghana

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Abstract

Until the regicide of Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani II, the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict – which has been intractable since the colonial era – was largely understudied. Nevertheless, the gruesome "murder" of the king provoked some scholarly interest in the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. This article reviews significant scholarly works on the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict after the regicide. Also, it explores and interrogates the diverse perspectives which scholars have employed to explain the complexities of the conflict. Furthermore, it critiques some scholars' uncritical acceptance that the rotational system of succession between the Abudu and Andani has been the tradition and presents the extent of its operation in Dagbon dynastic politics. Additionally, this article unearths some misrepresentations of historical facts and personalities and important dates. This article concludes that since historical truths play crucial roles in prosecuting intractable conflicts, it is necessary to get the historical facts right in documenting them for posterity.
Keywords: *Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, rotational system, Committee of Eminent Chiefs, Abudu royal gate, Andani royal gate*

Résumé

Jusqu'au régicide de Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani II, le conflit de la chefferie de Dagbon – insoluble depuis l'ère coloniale – était largement sous-étudié. Néanmoins, l'horrible « meurtre » du roi a suscité un certain intérêt chez les érudits pour le conflit de la chefferie de Dagbon. Cet article passe en revue d'importants travaux universitaires sur le conflit de la chefferie de Dagbon après le régicide. En outre, il explore et interroge les diverses perspectives que les chercheurs ont utilisées pour expliquer les complexités du conflit. En outre, il critique l'acceptation sans critique de certains chercheurs selon laquelle le système de succession par rotation entre les Abudu et les Andani a été la tradition et présente l'étendue de son fonctionnement dans la politique dynastique de Dagbon. De plus, cet article met au jour certaines fausses représentations de faits et de personnalités historiques et de dates

importantes. Cet article conclut que puisque les vérités historiques jouent un rôle crucial dans la poursuite des conflits insolubles, il est nécessaire de bien comprendre les faits historiques pour les documenter pour la postérité.
Mots-clés : *conflit de chefferie de Dagbon, système de rotation, Comité des chefs éminents, porte royale d'Abudu, porte royale d'Andani*

Introduction

The Dagbamba people have one of the most ancient and sophisticated political systems in Northern Ghana. The Dagomba people have a vibrant culture whose communal spirit is woven around the chieftaincy institution and which political modernity has found very resilient in suppressing. Since colonial times, an intra-ethnic chieftaincy conflict – in which two royal gates have been contesting dynastic power – has engulfed the Dagbon kingdom. At the heart of this conflict is whether a system of rotation between the two royal gates has been the practice of ascension to the throne. At one point or another, the prosecution of the conflict has also questioned the legitimacy of the traditional non-royal kingmakers empowered by the 1930 Dagomba Succession Constitution. The committee of traditional kingmakers was annulled and replaced with a committee of divisional chiefs in the 1848 Amended Constitution. In 1954, the Andani royal gate that thought it had been denied its rightful ascension to the skin and could face extinction from dynastic politics complained to the Nkrumah government. It was then that dynastic politics within Dagbon became an issue at the state level. Nkrumah's centralist intervention opened a Pandora Box for politicians to intervene in a local chieftaincy conflict for various reasons (MacGaffey 2006). The twists and turns that Dagbon experienced led to the regicide of Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani II on March 27 2002. Nonetheless, until the 2002 horrific murder of the king, scholars have primarily understudied the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

While the regicide of Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani II set a dark cloud over the cultural territory and questioned the state's role in managing its constituent parts, scholarly interest in Dagbon soared, and scholars began to write. Since then, the Dagbon case has attracted academic interest in diverse themes to explain the various dimensions of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, including its intractability that defied resolution for many decades. The primary motivation of this review article is to explore and interrogate the various themes that some significant works on Dagbon after regicide expounded. Also, while it will assess the strengths and weaknesses of their works, it will unearth some of the misrepresentations of historical facts and personalities that have come up in some works. The paper is divided into seven main sections. After the introductory notes, the second section explores the theoretical issues regarding African states and kingdoms' partnership in governance by investigating where they complement each other, where they venture into each others' jurisdiction, and the implications of the partnership for citizenship.

The third section interrogates the diverse perspectives which scholars have employed in explaining the complexities of the conflict. In the fourth section, the article critiques some scholars' uncritical acceptance that the rotational system of succession between the Abudu and Andani has been the tradition and presents the extent of its operation in Dagbon dynastic politics. The fifth section unearths some serious misrepresentations of historical facts, personalities, and important dates. The sixth section addresses how the scholarly works viewed the CEC's assignment while it encountered a cultural deadlock. Having expressed the poverty of some recommendations on how to resolve the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, it unearths the constitutional issues that CEC had left unaddressed. The last section concludes that since historical truths play crucial roles in the prosecution of intractable conflicts, it is imperative to get historical truths right in documenting the Dagbon intractable conflicts.

Post-Colonial Bedfellowship in Governance: the African States and Kingdoms

Generally, the colonial enterprise undermined the chieftaincy institutions when African societies experienced political modernity through colonialism beginning from the last half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. Unlike the French's direct rule, the British were strategically friendlier to the chieftaincy institutions. Through their indirect rule, the British ruled their African colonies through the agency of the traditional rulers. In societies – which the earliest anthropological work termed acephalous because they had no central authority – the British created chieftaincies called warrant chiefs (Njoku 2005). With all these initiatives, the general British attitude toward the chieftaincy institutions was to make them amenable to their expansionist interests, thereby undermining them (Lee and Schultz 2012). That the traditional authorities largely dined with the colonial powers antagonised the emerging nationalist politicians who were campaigning to dislodge the colonial enterprise (Albert 2008). Adding to this background was the modernist scholarship that reigned during the early postcolonial period had predicted an eventual death of primordial structures, including chieftaincy institutions. By design or accident, some of the first crops of African leaders attempted to control and tame the chieftaincy institutions. For instance, Nkrumah's policies were mainly antagonistic to the chieftaincy institutions (Knierzinger 2011).

Despite the preceding point, the chieftaincy institutions have demonstrated resilience against the centralist onslaught. It is imperative to state that certain developments in the postcolonial era have strengthened the chieftaincy institutions. Prominent among these developments is the lack of the central government's presence in terms of infrastructure and social services at many local levels. This lack has not only delegitimized the state but has also rekindled the spirit of what is nearest is what is dearest, thereby reinvigorating

the respect for the chieftaincy institutions (Cheka 2008; Morapedi 2010). Second, when military regimes lacked broad-based support and legitimacy, they depended on the chieftaincy institutions to boost their democratic credentials (Nolte 2002; Owusu-Mensah 2013; Omagu 2013). Third, when global politics brought grassroots governance to the forefront, the chieftaincy institutions were worthy partners. For instance, the Otumfuo Osei Tutu II has demonstrated how modern chiefs can bring developments to their subjects through his numerous projects (Bob-Milliar 2009). Furthermore, the deepening of capitalist structures and the commercialisation of land in Africa have boosted the institutions' image since the chiefs were the custodians of the land in trust for their subjects. Moreover, the widening scope of candidature for the chieftaincy institutions that were initially thought to be pagan institutions to include Christians, Muslims, and civil servants has raised the stake of the institutions. These have brought some glory back to the chieftaincy institutions (Bolaji 2016).

These preceding factors have compelled some African countries to give certain constitutional backing to the chieftaincy institutions. In Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, Togo, and Ghana, the chieftaincy institutions enjoy constitutional recognition. In the case of Ghana, Article 270 of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana stipulates that "[t]he institution of chieftaincy, together with its traditional councils as established by customary law and usage, is hereby guaranteed. in any way detracts or derogates from the honour and dignity of the institution of chieftaincy." Beyond constitutional recognition, a National House of Chiefs in Ghana serves as an intermediary between the government and chieftaincy institutions. Nigeria, Cameroon, Zambia, Nambia, Botswana, and South Africa have similar bodies. In fact, Lesotho and Swaziland are constitutional monarchies where the chieftaincy institutions are immersed with state although with limited authority. In Ghana, for example, the institutions' affairs have called for a Ministry, known as the Ministry of Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs (Englebert 2002 and Bolaji 2016). So what is the nature of the fellowship between the chieftaincy institutions and the African states? At one level, the African states and kingdoms complement each other. First, African states have been using the institutions to disseminate and implement government policies and programmes. Second, the institutions are media for political engagement to the extent that some hitherto marginalised or minority groups have used the institutions to access political power (Notse 2002). Also, as the custodians of customs and traditions and their interpretations, the chieftaincy institutions resolve conflicts in their chieftaincies and kingdoms. For some time now, the chieftaincy institutions have been addressing the slow court system in many African countries by providing platforms for alternative dispute resolution (ADR) (Uwazie 2011). It is essential to indicate that this complementarity works so well that each appears to legitimise the other.

It is crucial to state that African states and kingdoms have ventured into each other's jurisdiction at another level. In Mobutu Zaire, the ancient Kongo kingdom created many anti-state structures that challenged the central authority. Also, the Barotse kingdom

tried to secede from the Zambian state. In Sierra Leone, Cameroon, and Tanzania, some chieftaincies have ventured into activities reserved for the central authorities by creating militias that took up policing and arms stocking. Consequently, these chieftaincies witnessed many conflicts they could not control. On the part of the state, some African states have also disreputably invaded the chieftaincy institutions and ignored traditions and customs, thereby enthroning their cronies and dethroning their adversaries. Some examples were Gnassigbe Eyadema's Togo and Sanni Abacha's Nigeria (Englebert 2002; Nolte 2002; Albert 2008; Bolaji 2016).

The incursion of the political class coupled with the fact that the political class also takes heredity and honouric titles from the chieftaincy institutions has not only increased the stakes in the chieftaincy institutions, but has also created platforms for contestations that go beyond the traditional chieftaincies. From the traditional, commercial, and political arenas, diverse actors characterise these platforms to seek political power and/or boost their political constituencies or economic base through networking and building alliances (Bolaji 2016). The sociological implications of networking and building alliances are so productive for power-seeking individuals because of the social ties and capital prevalent at these platforms. These platforms' mutual gains have strengthened what scholars call the patron-client relationship in African politics. This patronage has not only furthered the patrimonial type of distributive politics but has also engendered winner-takes-all, despotism, nepotism, and discriminatory politics. Thus, these contestations and the associated politics threaten good governance and democracy (Moti 2019).

The partnership of African states and kingdoms in governance after decolonisation means that African states continue to be "bifurcated states" which has implications for citizenship and democracy. In his seminal contribution to the sociological reconfiguration of African states in the postcolonial era, Mamdani observed that the partnership had divided the people into citizens and subjects. Using some dualities to explain the dichotomy in power distribution between citizens/subjects, which roughly equate with urban/rural, civil society/ethnic community, modernity/tradition, Mamdani noticed that all had not enjoyed the dividends of democracy. What this means in terms of citizenship is that those in the urban enjoy some appreciable degree of citizenship because of the prevalence of modernity and civil society. However, the implication of the attachment to the kingdoms is that it renders people as subjects instead of citizens because the attachment comes with some degree of de-citizenisation. The de-citizenisation results from the fact that some customs and traditions are antithetical to the uniform citizenship that the state promotes. Given that the power distributed at the local level is used to enforce customs and traditions that may limit the rights of the people, it is described as "decentralised despotism" (Idahosa 1998; Keita 1997; Shaw 1998). Thus, these theoretical considerations will serve as a foundation for comprehending the sociological implications of the review of scholarly works on the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict that follows.

Interpretations of the Dagbon Chieftaincy Conflict

One of the most publicised thesis on the Dagbon conflict is the politicisation of the conflict. One of the analysts who put forward the politicisation thesis is Tonah (2010). He anchors his analysis on elitism and how the privileged traditional elite have transformed the chieftaincy institutions. The emergence of a new crop of elite coupled with the growth of the capitalist orientation and consciousness has increased the stake for chieftaincy. What was hitherto preserved for the traditional elites has also attracted civil and public servants, raising the stakes in traditional chieftaincy titles. The intrusion of political elites has primarily changed the rules of the game. The traditional norms and customs are jettisoned for the choice of highly connected individuals who can network and bring development to their people. He explained how the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict had a prominent space in the electioneering campaigns that ushered in the 2004 and 2008 general elections. He particularly cited how the National Democratic Congress (NDC) promised to bring the killers of the Yaa-Naa and his elders to book if voted into power and how the National Patriotic Party (NPP) also pledged to allow the final funeral rites of the deposed Naa Mahammadu Abudulai IV to be performed at the Gbewah palace. While the conflict was essentially cultural, he explained how politics defined and shaped the conflict. Tracing the root of the conflict to the colonial period, he explained how the rise of Tamale as a capital city for the Northern Protectorate and the appointment of some Dagomba royals to public positions starting from the last stage of colonial administration to post-colonial state-building contributed to the politicisation of the conflict. These royals made maximum opportunities that these positions offered to secure political patronage to maintain their positions or improve their chances in the competition for power in the traditional sector. He stressed that the politicisation was mutually beneficial since the politicians also relied on the traditional rulers to increase their electoral base and support their parties.

In furthering the politicisation thesis, Albert (2008) traced the manipulation of the traditional institution to the British indirect rule. The indirect rule catalysed political intrusion. The British bastardised the traditional governance system by scrapping the honourific titles and reducing the institutions to puppetry for their political expediency. Albert (2008) juxtaposed the Owo chieftaincy crisis with the Dagbon chieftaincy dispute in several ways. He did this as a foundation for his analysis of the postcolonial interferences of the political class in the traditional governance structure. At the level of political manipulation, the two chieftaincies or kingdoms looked similar in how both military and civilian politicians played crucial roles in escalating the conflicts.

Albert (2008) concentrated on the similarities of the two kingdoms to explain his politicisation thesis. However, it is crucial to stress some stark dissimilarities, particularly how the political class prosecuted them for their constituency building. While the Owo

crisis witnessed what can be described as a raw political power by both the civilian and military regimes, the political influence in the Dagbon chieftaincy disputes was subtle through the use of one commission after another. Also, the narrative of the Owo crisis indicates that the use of political power was the cause of the crisis. In contrast, in the Dagbon crisis, the royals in waiting (the Andani gate) appealed to political power to solve a problem that the colonial government could not resolve. Therefore, while the involvement of political power was top-down in the case of the Owo crisis, it was bottom-up in the case of the Dagbon crisis. In the former case, the Action Group (AC) experienced an intra-party conflict between Obafemi Awolowo and Samuel Akintola that descended on the Owo people because their king allied with the Akintola faction (Albert 2008). In the latter case, the inability of the Dagbon royals to resolve their conflict made the Andani royals invite Nkrumah's government to intervene. Moreover, whereas his narratives claimed fundamental contestations between the Abudu and Andani gates during the colonial era, particularly in 1938, 1948, 1953, the Owo crisis started in 1962 in a postcolonial state-building experiment when Action Group (AG), a Yoruba dominated party, encountered internal leadership struggles between Obafemi Awolowo and Samuel Akintola (Albert, 2008).

Furthermore, Albert (2010) did not consider how the political structure of both Nigeria as a federal system and Ghana as a unitary system also shaped the ways the Owo crisis and Dagbon chieftaincy conflict were prosecuted, respectively. The contending candidates in the Owo crisis simultaneously enjoyed political patronage in the same regime, which made the federal and state governments' interests clash. Nonetheless, the various governments in Ghana resulting from the unitary system either supported or opposed a gate almost unanimously. The regimes, especially the National Liberation Council (NLC), whose leadership was divided on the conflict, managed their intra-regime differences in support of or opposition against a particular royal gate (Bolaji 2016).

Albert (2010) was concerned about the future of "dual authority", which the incorporation of the traditional governance with the state system promotes. As far as the political class uses politics to intrude the traditional system to destabilise their opponents at the local level, the politicisation and manipulation will continue. It is imperative to recognise that since the traditional rulers are citizens and have the right to have a political affiliation, they will continue to employ politics to achieve their ambitions.

Awedoba (2009), in his study that examined communal conflicts in Northern Ghana, also devoted some space to explore the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. This work also expounded on the politicisation thesis. Awedoba and his research team explained that the conflict had depended on "party allegiance and patronage" (2009: 195) for its prosecution and escalation since the 1950s. The victory of the NPP in the 2000 general elections and the subsequent support the NPP gave the Abudus to set up a shadow traditional governance to challenge the authority of Naa Yakubu II were responsible for the 2002 resurgence of the conflict leading to "the murder of Yakubu Andani IV,

overload of Dagbon" (Awedoba 2009). However, the reference to the murdered king as "Yakubu Andani IV" is incorrect. He was Naa Yakubu Andani II not the IV.

Like those scholars who promote the politicisation thesis, Ahorzu and Gebe (2011) – who were concerned about the adverse effects of Dagbon conflict on governance and security – highlighted some of the interplays between dynastic succession politics and national politics. They stress that the way chiefs and royals employ politics to actualise their dynastic ambitions, the way the politicians intrude traditional governance for enhancing their political constituencies and the refusal to transform structures that perpetuate poverty reinforce the conflict and escalate it beyond conflict resolution. They also explored how the loopholes in the national security machinery allowed people who had stakes in the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict to fill the security machines without raising an eyebrow to cause such a huge miscalculation in national security. Their alleged involvement paralysed the security apparatus with inertia. In examining the general effects of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, they stated that "such conflicts undermine the sustainable development, governance and security (Ahorzu and Gebe 2011:7)." To overcome intractable conflict to conflict resolution, they proffered that there should be a transformation of approaches to conflict resolution, jettisoning traditions and customs that justify violence, and adopting Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms.

The scholars who employed the politicisation thesis in explaining the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict made a robust intellectual case. However, their position would have been enriched if they had identified the constitutional crisis that facilitated the politicisation of the conflict. The British assisted the Dagombas chiefs in documenting their succession rules in 1930. However, its operation had not taken a firm root when in 1948, the British helped the Dagomba people to amend the constitution. The Andani royal gate claimed that it was amended under shadowy dynastic circumstances. Thus, the Andanis have not accepted it as a credible addition. Non-acceptability has led to the simultaneity of two constitutions that are primarily opposed to each other. This constitutional crisis has facilitated the politicisation of the conflict (see Bolaji 2016). Also, it is essential to state that the proponents of the politicisation theory have placed too much faith in the neutrality of public servants and expected them to be impartial over whatever conflict of the constituent parts they are asked to adjudicate. If they had taken bureaucratic neutrality as a myth, their analyses would not be overwhelmed with the politicisation thesis.

Post-structuralism is another thesis that has found utilisation in explaining some of the significant works on Dagbon. MacGaffey (2006) employed social pluralism as a version of post-structuralism. He saw the pluralistic nature of the African society characterised by the dualism of traditional and modern governance structures as a legacy of the colonial era and as a challenge for governance. Other scholars have variously described this dualism as "the two publics" (Ekeh 1975); "a dualism of structures" (Englebert 2002); "the mixed government" (Sklar 2003); "the complicated dance" (Herbst 2000: 174); and "the stable

symbiosis" (Whitaker 1970), among others. Also, MacGaffey explained that the structures' modus operandi appears to be legitimised by two different moral systems – civil society system for the state and cultural community for the kingdoms. According to MacGaffey (2006), this structure called for two levels of loyalty as a citizen to the state and/or a subject to a kingdom. Whereas in the colonial era, the operation of the two systems blocked individual agency, in the postcolonial system individual agency experiences enablement. Moreover, citizenship was reserved for some classes of people in the colonial era. In the post-colonial era, it has been democratised for everyone, thereby increasing the individual agency of the hitherto "subjects" to challenge the traditional structures, norms and customs and turning the state and the kingdoms as an arena for benefit-seeking. Therefore, this legacy has made state governance a nightmare since another system acts more like an adversary than a friend. The bastardisation of the traditional system has paved the way for politicising the conflicts associated with it. The social pluralism that incorporates traditional governance into the state system encourages its challenges; its anti-state postures include waging war against opponents and challenging its monopoly of violence. The political class has a stake in the conflicts in traditional governance structure makes a huge challenge in addressing the anti-state activities at the cultural level (2008).

In a later study published as a book and entitled *Chiefs, Priests and Praise-Singers: History, Politics and Land Ownership in Northern Ghan*a, MacGaffey (2013) used part to espouse his thesis on the reification of tradition as the leading cause of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. He stated that a relentless contestation characterised the history of Dagbon for dynastic succession. The colonial enterprise's raison d'être was to democratise succession politics in place of violent and turbulent succession politics. The British wanted it to be constitutionally and traditionally grounded in a bid to put a robust foundation for democratic succession politics in place. He noted tradition as the fundamental issue in the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict when he stated that,

> [a]t the same time, parties to succession conflicts that could no longer be carried on by violence used a reified Tradition to confront and manipulate governments, comparably misrepresented as Politics. Despite Tradition's supposed fidelity to historical truth, it provides endless regressive possibilities for arguments; the dispute between the Andani and the Abudu royal factions that began in the 1880s remains unresolved (Macgaffey 2013:50).

He concluded that it was the reification of tradition, which was not monolithic at the grassroots. The postcolonial state and its apparatuses – that should have been promoting centralist inclinations – were championing the reification of traditions through several commissions that turned tradition into "a political instrument" against opposing forces (MacGafee 2013: 54).

Ahorzu (2014) also uses a post-structuralist perspective in analysing the Dagbon conflict. Ahorzu (2014) explains that the social structures produce power dynamics that create platforms for domination and subordination. Ahorzu explained that the Dagbon case exemplifies how social structures promote "cross-generational and institutional continuities". The social structure produces a three-dimensional power, namely "signification, legitimation and domination" (Ahorzu 2014:115). The first has to do with the totality of the ideological construct that initiates social change, whereas the second refers to what is permissible and impermissible. The domination dimension of power signifies the hierarchical structures of social relations. All these have implications for agency and conflict resolution. The traditional governance – with its rules, norms and customs – is structured in ways that challenge agency, making the conflicts that emerge from it difficult to resolve due to the competing interests of individuals. Nevertheless, the post-structural arrangement has given some leverage to people. Using the Dagbon as a case study, Ahorzu (2014) explains that people have learned how to navigate traditions, norms, and customs to initiate social change that addresses their ambitions in the traditional governance systems. Actors are creative in constructing structures that make them actualise their dynastic dreams. Contestations become apparent because of power struggles for limited resources that are constrained by structures. On the cultural deadlock that the Committee of Eminent Chefs (CEC) encountered, Ahorzu (2014) explained the politicisation of the conflict as a syndrome of post-structural arrangement. He used the Dagbon case to explain a multi-layered structure's complications that impact third-party negotiations. He was critical of third-party involvement and the fact that it cannot be nonaligned but reflects the structures that they have produced.

Ateng et al. (2018) employed a cultural perspective to analyse the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, particularly the escalation of the conflict during the peace process. They distinguished between high-context/collectivist and low-context/individualistic cultures. The individual is closely knitted to the group or society's norms, values, and well-being in the former. Thus, whatever the individual does has implications on the reputation of the group/society. In the latter case, the individual is loosely connected to society and enjoys a high level of freedom and autonomy. Also, the low-context and high-context cultures have implications for peace negotiation. Whereas peace negotiations are seen in terms of resource distribution in low-context cases, peace negotiations are considered building relationships. Communication during negotiation in high context cultures appears to be indirect and implicit and will require a sound knowledge of the cultural norms and values. Nonetheless, in low-context, communication is straightforward and clear.

Having explained that the Dagbon culture is a high–context one, Ateng et al. (2018) stated that the traditional customs and values guided the peace negotiations, including the selection of representatives of the gates. Cultural values and norms, according to them, played a crucial role in defining and moulding the interests and priorities of the gates before the Committee of Eminent Chiefs (CEC). It is important to stress that

the appreciation of these cultural issues sheds some light on the cultural stalemates that the Committee of Eminent Chiefs that almost paralysed its work. Nonetheless, having explained the patriarchal character of the Dagbon society, the hint that women also played crucial roles in the peace negotiation process was not enough. They should have specified the actual role the Committee of Eminent Chiefs played.

Asiedu (2008) employed the game theory in political science to offer some helpful insights into the cultural implications of the actors' (in this case, the royal gates) making strategically relevant decisions. In the game theory, actors – in an attempt to strategise for a possible outcome – try to determine what decisions they should make in anticipation of a given decision of their opponent. He used the game theory to analyse the stalemate that the Committee of Eminent Chiefs (CEC) encountered when the Kufuor administration tasked them to examine the cultural dimensions of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict and make appropriate recommendations. The CEC's *Roadmap to Peace Dagbon*[1] had benchmarks that were easy to read on paper but difficult to interpret culturally and implement practically. This made the royal gates largely uncooperative to the CEC. Therefore, the cultural implications compelled the two royal gates to be strategic in their decision-making because of some possible feared outcomes. The Abudu royal gate – fearing that if the final funeral rites of Naa Mahammadu Abudulai IV were not performed in the Gbewah palace, their gate would be customarily extinct from dynastic succession – decided strategically not to cooperate with the CEC's initial benchmarks. On the other hand, given the close association between the Abudu royal gate and the Dankwa/Busia tradition, the Andani feared that if the Andani regent vacated the palace for the final funeral of Naa Mahammadu Abudulai IV, the Abudu royal gate could capitalise on the goodwill they enjoyed from the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) to ascend to the skin. Thus, Andanis strategically insisted they would not vacate the Gbewah palace, nor would they cooperate with the CEC. The two royal gates viewed the conflict in a zero-sum game and were not ready to compromise their positions to achieve a win-win outcome. Asiedu's (2008) call for a neutral third party that could broker a win-win outcome in this culturally complex deadlock implied that the two royal gates did not see the CEC as a neutral and impartial committee, a key ingredient in mediating complex conflicts.

In questioning why the conflict has been intractable since the 1950s and addressing the title of his study *Examining State Capacity in the Management of the Dagbon Crisis in Ghana*, Asiedu (2008) blamed the absence of an institutional mechanism at the state level to resolve the conflict. The lack of institutional mechanism showed gaps in the ways commissions upon commissions, which were ad-hoc, were tasked to investigate the Dagbon conflict. Such commissions also were not impartial since they favoured the royal gate that was dining with the government of the day. Also, besides that the commissions'

1 Committee of Eminent Kings, (March 30, 2006): Roadmap to Peace, http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.p hp?ID=144533 (accessed on July 15th 2021)

recommendations had always led to conflict settlement rather than conflict resolution, partisan considerations and political expediency had always rendered the government useless in implementing the recommendations resulting from these commissions.

Brukum (2006), whose chapter examined the conflicts in northern Ghana, generally blamed the British colonial edifice that lay the foundation for indirect rule through promoting a hierarchical ethnic structure – favouring people with centralised political systems against people with acephalous systems. On the Dagbon conflict, he blamed the British for intervening in dynastic politics and favouring one gate against the other in succession politics. However, through the 1930 constitutional conference, it attempted to codify the Dagbon customs on succession. Since then, one gate has struggled to disallow the other from ascending the skin. We will examine the limitations of this chapter in the fifth section that unearths some historical misrepresentation.

Abdallah and Amedzrator (2014) examined the Dagbon conflict from the CEC's work, which they see as an indigenous mediation approach to conflict resolution in Ghana. They construe the Dagbon conflict as a longstanding chieftaincy dispute between the Abudu and Andani families over the rotational system for ascension to the kinship of Dagbon. They think that "the legitimacy of a candidate to be selected as Ya-Na; the procedure for the selection of Ya-Na; and the legitimacy of the selection committee as well as kingmakers" (Abdallah and Amedzrator 2014:16) as the core issues of the conflict. Although crucial in understanding the conflict, these issues appear to be symptoms of the problem rather than the roots. As explained earlier, at the heart of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict was a constitutional crisis on which these symptoms were feeding on (see Bolaji 2016). It is essential to state that the statement that "[i] n one instance in 1960, the Mate Kole Commission of Inquiry was established by the Convention People's Party (CPP) government." (Abdallah and Amedzrator 2014) is not accurate. The Busia government set up the Mate Kole Commission in 1969 (Staniland 1975: 155), not in 1960 as Abdallah and Amedzrator (2014) claimed. Nkrumah tasked the Opoku-Afari Commission to investigate the conflict and make recommendations in 1960 (Staniland 1975: 144). It is imperative to state that seeing CEC's assignment as an "indigenous approach" has raised some critical comments in some studies. In the first place, a vital question to ask is: was the approach indigenous to Dagbon or indigenous to Ghana? The authors claimed that some Asante cultural terms played some roles in peace negotiation, which meant that the approach could not be entirely indigenous to Dagbon. Also, that the CEC's peace negotiation processes missed some vital components of the Dagbon indigenous approach to conflict resolution, such as its sanctions, soothsaying, and the engagement of the Kuga-Naa as a non-royal bridge between the Abudu and Andani royal gates makes it difficult to term the CEC's work as indigenous (Tuurosong 2021; Bolaji 2020).

Issifu and Asante (2015) adopted Christopher Mitchel's SPITCEROW conflict analysis model that entails the following elements, namely, "the sources of the conflict,

the parties involved, and pertinent issues, the tactics used by the parties, the changes and enlargement of the conflict, the roles of varied parties, the potential outcome and the winners in the conflicts." **(Issifu and Asante 2015: 130). Issifu and Asante (2015) deserve some commendation for using a relatively unpopular model yet relevant in conflict analysis. While they employed Christopher Mitchel's element to explore the various dimensions of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, they should have preceded its application with a thorough discussion of the strengths and weaknesses of the model. Again they failed to integrate these elements to show their relative strengths in escalating and de-escalating the conflict or influencing one another.**

Another critical study on Dagbon is Paalo's and Issifu's (2021) recent work on that Dagbon that sees the CEC's mediation as de-internationalising hybrid peace. Hybrid peace emerges when the Western concept of liberal peace combines with local peace initiatives as an infrastructure to create sustainable peace and development. Using the hybrid peace model, Paalo and Issifu (2021) see the Ghanaian state as a surrogate of the international community that descends with its state apparatuses to engage, through traditional chiefs, with conflicting royal gates to address the century-old chieftaincy conflict. CEC, acting on behalf of the state that needed to be distant from the conflict resulting from its biased past, engaged with local knowledge, customs, and structures to broker peace between the Abudu and Andani royal gates. While the state's involvement provided security, it engaged the key chiefs and stakeholders from both gates in the peace negotiating process. Having provoked meaningful engagement with the stakeholders in the peace negotiation, they think some conflict-hit communities in Africa communities can replicate the CEC's metroplolised hybrid peace. Paalo and Issifu (2021) identified two major problems with the CEC's work. First, its work was not very inclusive since it ignored some critical stakeholders, particularly the youth and women. The second problem, which may justify the first, was that the government poorly resourced it for its assignment.

Their work gives a good impression of the CEC's use of Kuga-Naa's (a non-royal elder) deep engagement in the peace process. Nonetheless, the CEC' did not end its assignment with that level of cooperation and engagement with some of the Yendi elders, including the Kuga-Naa (Bolaji 2020; Tuurosong (2021). The conspicuous absence of the custodians of the kingdom, notably the Kuga-Naa, Tugri-Naa, Gomli and others – who should have officiated the rituals – at the final funeral rites of Yaa-Naa Mahammadu Abudulai IV spoke volume of the CEC's disengagement with essential stakeholders (Bolaji 2020). As argued elsewhere, the CEC's mediation was not as transformative as many may have wished for some reasons. First, the 2018 Report of the CEC did not emerge from the true representation of the two gates, particularly the Andani royal gate. The CEC sidelined the Andani faction loyal to the then Kampakuya-Naa and the slain king's immediate family in the last stage of the mediation. Second, Paalo's and Issifu's (2021) claim that the state distanced itself from CEC is problematic. Its final phase took place under highly polarised circumstances. It presented its report in a very political climate. Also, rebuking

the Kampakuya-Naa and the Kuga-Naa for non-cooperation with the CEC in a televised presentation was contrary to a truly transformative mediation. The Kampakuya-Naa's rebuttal of the CEC's assertion of non-cooperation further proved that the CEC was not transformative at the end of its assignment (Bolaji 2020).

Tuurosong (2021), in his work, investigates peace-promoting and conflict-resolving themes in some Dagbani movies during the conflict-prosecuting period. The study sees movies are learning platforms where viewers are exposed to affective lessons on conflict resolution techniques. Films allow people to reflect on their lives. Having explored McCombs and Shaw's Agenda Setting Theory, it investigated whether Dagbani filmmakers had any peacebuilding agenda in the filmmaking. The study also unearths some critical themes that some movies covered, such as unworthy leadership and its consequences, unity and good neighbourliness, effects of broken homes and families, respect for leadership, succession conflicts, and conflict-induced underdevelopment. This study – that targeted filmmakers, peace researchers and film viewers, including members of the general public and chiefs from both sides of the conflict – unearths that Dagbani movies expose their viewers to causes of conflicts, ethnocentrism, stereotypical issues, relationship mending, hero celebration, healing, conflict resolution, and guidance and counselling among others. The study recognises some challenges in the film industry that affect its peace promotion, such as the lack of adequately trained producers, over dominance of foreign movies, and illegal duplication or production of compact discs (CDs). Nonetheless, there are some issues with this study. Since the article delved into peace-promotion during the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, the title should have captured the conflict so that readers will not misconstrue it as peacebuilding through movies generally. Also, the article should have explored the highlights of the colonial roots of the conflict to give readers a robust background in understanding the conflict. Furthermore, there are documentation issues with the article.

Contentious Rotational System of Succession

One of the most insidious issues on the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict is whether the rotational succession system has been the tradition in Dagbon dynastic politics. Some of the studies under this review almost agree that rotation between the Abdudu and Andani was the practice. Nonetheless, they failed to investigate the extent of the evidence for it, neither did they present the Abudus' reason for its violation (Tonal 2010; Abdallah and Amedzrator 2014; Ahorzu 2014; Ateng et al. 2018). Some of the studies under this review also made claims that call for further investigation into the operation of the rotational system (Ahorzu 2014: 103; Debrah et al. 31; Albert 2008: 53). Thus, it will be intellectually rewarding to interrogate the extent of the rotational system of succession in the dynastic politics in Dagbon.

Until the death of Yaa Naa Yakubu in 1845, "violence, manoeuvres, and … assassinations" (Martinson 2002 quoted in Awedoba 2009: 192) and regency characterised the succession to Yani. Rotation between the two royal gates started with the death of Yaa Naa Yakubu in 1845. In fact, the rotation had not yet had a firm root when European colonial powers began to manipulate it for their expansionist initiatives. Given that the Germans' support and assistance that saw Yaa Dramani deposed after barely two weeks on the throne and Yaa Alhassani (1899-1917) installed was in furtherance of the rotation, one can describe the Germans' support as facilitative. Had it not been because of the Germans' intervention, the Andanis would have had two consecutive times on the skin, and the rotation would not have started. Then the disruption of the emerging rotation came in 1920. The elders unanimously nominated Yo Naa Bukari (an Andani) to ascend the Yendi skin to succeed Yaa Alhassani in 1920. The British intervened and asked Yo Naa to resign, citing ageism and ill-health as reasons for not supporting his nomination. Instead, the British supported the candidature of Abudulai (1920-1938) – the son of the deceased king and the regent praising his loyalty to the colonial government. This singular act of the British – which prevented the second round of the rotation to take off – has served different purposes for the stance of both gates on the rotation. For the Andanis, since the nomination of Yo-Naa was unanimous and the British even urged him to resign, he was Yaa-Naa and served the second round of the rotation. Thus, there was a tradition of rotation. However, the Abudus insisted there was no ascension since the core rituals did not accompany the nomination. They have, therefore, maintained that where rotation between the two gates had occurred, it was a mere coincidence. Besides this controversial I920 ascension, the Andanis got the chance to ascend the Yendi skin again in 1938 after the death of Yaa Naa Abudulai II with the ascension of Yaa Naa Mahama II (1938-1948). The following table depicts the checkered operation of the rotation.

Historical Trajectory of Succession Rotation between the Abudu and Andani Gates

Succession	Abudu Gate	Andai Gate	Rotation Status
1845 – 1876	Naa Abudulai		The first round of the rotation completed
1876 – 1899		Naa Andani II	
1899 – 1920	Naa Alhassani	Naa Dramani – (Kukra Adjei - an Andani) was deposed after barely two weeks on the skin for Naa Alhassan	The German's intervention ensured the second round of the rotation.
1920 – 1938	Naa Abudulai II	Naa Abukari was nominated unanimously, but the British urged him to resign.	The British distorted the end of the second round of the rotation. The 1920 ascension was contentious since both royal gates claimed that they ascended the skin.
1938 – 1948		Yaa-Naa Mahama II	The rotation revived, but the Andani could count this as the end of the 3rd round of the rotation since they claimed to have ascended the skin with the resignation of Naa Bukari in 1920.
1948 – 1953	Naa Mahama III		The ascension of Naa Mahama could be counted as the beginning of the fourth round of the rotation.
1953 – 1967	Naa Abudulai III		The Abudus' claim that the 1948 Amended Constitution empowered 11 divisional chiefs to select the Yaa-Naa rather than the traditional kingmakers distorted the rotation in 1953. In 1960, Nkrumah intervened with the Legal Instrument (LI) 59 to restore the rotation and assigned two consecutive turns to the Andanis to compensate them for the two ascensions the Abudus enjoyed that distorted the rotation.
1967 -1968		Naa Andani III	Two committees – Committee of the traditional kingmakers and the Committee of divisional chiefs endorsed by 1948 Amended Constitution – selected Mion-Lana Anani (an Andani) and Mahammadu Abudulai (an Abudu), respectively. However, the spirit of LI 59 appeared to have prevailed on the succession politics and restored the rotation. Thus, Naa Mahama Andani was coronated eventually.
1969 – 1974	Naa Mahammadu Abudulai IV		In a move that disrespected the rotation, the Busia administration – through the Kole Committee – posthumously dethroned Naa Mahama Andani III
1974 – 2002	Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani		The Acheampong government – working with the Ollenu Committee's recommendations – deposed Naa Mahammadu Abudulai IV in 1974. The Ollenu Committee stated that Naa Abudulai was not correctly installed according to the Dagbon custom. This move again attempted to restore the rotation.

Sources: Staniland 1975; Skalni 1975; Bolaji 2016.

However, with the Andanis' claim and Abudus' disclaim that rotation has been part of the tradition of succession, there was an essential addition to Dagbon customary succession rules. The 1986 Supreme Court ruling, which recognised and confirmed the rulership of Yaa-Naa Mahammadu Abudulai IV over Dagbon as a former Yaa-Naa, gave a centralist stamp to acknowledge the rotation between the Abudus and Andanis as a national law (Bolaji 2018).

We can infer from the table above that the Andani gate desired the rotation system in the succession politics. However, it is crucial to discern that the Abudulai royal gate was violating the rotation with a practice that was also dear to their hearts, which was regency as a means of ascension to the Yendi skin. The Abudu gate had always ensured that they played their politics well to ensure that regency replaced rotation if at all it was a dominant practice. They lobbied the British to make Yo-Naa Bukari resign in 1920 to pave the way for the installation of Naa Abudulai II, the regent of Naa Alhassani. Again, in the 1953 succession politics after the death of Naa Mahama III (1948-1953), the Abudu argued that the 1948 Amended Constitution had changed the rules and ensured that Naa Abudulai III (1953-1967) succeeded his father, Naa Mahama III.

Therefore, given the checkered trajectory of the rotation between the Abudu and Andani royal gates as explained in the table above, the Ahorzu's (2014:103) claim that "[t]he two royal families alternated the succession until 1954, when Gbon-Lana (i.e., regent in the absence of king) Abudulai, an Abudu family member, was selected to succeed his father Ya-Na Mahama III." is not entirely true. Also, since the rotation was not the regular practice, although the Andani gate desired it as a safeguard in what may be described as a turbulent succession politics, it would be an overstatement to state that "[t]raditionally, it is sacrilegious for one gate to prevent the other to occupy the skin when it is the turn for that gate to assume the position of a Ya-Na." (Debrah et al. 2014: 31). Furthermore, it is inaccurate to maintain that "[t]he dispute was half solved in 1960 when the government restricted the right to the office of the Ya-Na to the descendants of Ya-Na Abudulai and Ya-Na Andani." (Albert 2008: 53). The first attempt to document the restriction of ascension to the two royal gates and the three dukedoms of Karaga, Savelugu and Mion was when the British attempted to codify the Dagbon succession rules and customs in what came to be known as the 1930 Dagomba Succession Constitution. Nkrumah's intervention in 1960 through the Legal Instrument 59 only reinforced the spirit of the 1930 Dagomba Succession Constitution.

Following the illustrations in the table above, the claims in the following quotation invite critical comments.

> "The traditionally recognised rotational succession rule, which has been in existence since 1824 was finally breached when the Abudu royal gate attempted to sideline the Andani royal gate from the contest of the throne. The Abudu royal gate, thereby introduced an unknown practice of 'primogeniture', incompatible with Dagbon custom, permitting them (Abudus) the exclusive right to the Yaa Naa throne" (Paalo and Issifu 2021: 411)

To begin with, how can we say that the rotational system was "traditionally recognised" when one party's stance was that it was not the usual practice? Second, the rotation started after the death of Naa Yakubu in 1845. Therefore, the rotation could not have started in 1824 because it was after him that the succession began to rotate between his children. Also, the practice of "primogeniture" whereby the firstborn or the most senior son (who acts as a regent during the funeral of the diseased chief) ascends the skin had been part of the dynastic succession politics long before the rotation started. In fact, during the deskinment campaign against Naa Abudulai III in the 1950s, the Andanis compelled the Dagomba State Council to invite the Namoo Naa, "the custodian of traditional customs and constitutional practices." The Namoo Naa was emphatic in stating that the eligibility of a regent had been part of the Dagbon tradition long before the 1930 Constitution documented it (Yakubu 2005). Thus, primogeniture was not an "unknown practice" in Dagbon succession politics. What was unknown was the 1948 constituted selection committee that sought to introduce election by eleven divisional chiefs. It is crucial to state that even when the rotation dictated the ascension, "primogeniture" had always been the criterion for the gate that was having its turn. Let us now turn our attention to some inadequacies in narratives on the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

When the Scholar's Pen Slips: Some Inadequacies in Some Narratives on

Dagbon Chieftaincy Conflict

While the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict received some scholarly attention after the regicide of Yaa Naa Yakubu Andani II on Match 27th 2002, some scholarly works have come with some inadequacies. In an attempt to trace the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict to the precolonial dynastic succession politics in Dagbon, Brukum (2006:436) stated that:

> A typical case is that between the "Abudu Yili" and "Andani Yili" in Dagbon which, but for governmental political intervention, would have always been bloody. The Dagbon skin had been occupied by descendants of Na Gbewah until Na Alhassan came to the throne in the 1850s. Na Alhassan had two sons who eventually became the founders of Abudu and Andani gates. After the Na Alhassan, succession to the skin started rotating between the descendants of Abudu and Andani. But since 1900, while four Ya Nas have come from the Abudu Yili, only three have come from the Andani Yili.

However, there is a misrepresentation of historical personalities and facts in Dagbon history in the quotation above. As captured above, Naa Alhassan is not the progenitor of the Abudu and Andani gates. The progenitor of the two gates was Naa Yakubu, who reigned from 1829 to 1845, and his two elderly sons from different mothers who founded the Abudu and Andani gates were Naa Abudulai (1845-1876) and Naa Andani (1876-1899), respectively (Staniland 1975; Bolaji 2016). Naa Alhassan was a direct grandson of Naa Yakubu (1825–1845) and was the son of Naa Abudulai. Naa Alhassan sought German's military assistance in 1899 to unseat the Naa Darimani (Kukra Adjei), an Andani who had been installed as Yaa-Naa when the former thought that it was the turn of the children of Yaa Abuduali to ascend the throne (Staniland 1975).

Also, in presenting an overview of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, Debrah et al. (2014:32) ran into a distortion of historical facts when they noted that,

> "The elders agreed that upon the demise of the Ya-Na Yakubu, the elder son, Andani (1849-1876) would succeed him and the younger son, Abudulai (1876-1899) will step in upon the death of Andani (Tonah 2006; Brukum, 2004). This method was followed through such that Andani was enskined as Ya-Na Andani after the death of Ya-Na Yakubu I in 1849. Similarly, in 1876 Abudu became the Ya-Na when the brother Ya-Na Andani passed out." (Debrah et al. 2014; 32).

Actually, in the above narration, the reigns of Andani and Abudulai have been swapped for each other. Also, the biological seniority of Abudulai has been given to Andani. Nonetheless, both oral tradition and written records agree that the Naa Abudulai was the elder son and reigned between 1849 and 1876, while Naa Andani was the younger son. His reign was between 1876 and 1899 (Staniland 1975; Ladouceur 1972; Awedoba 2009).

It is also incorrect to describe the Nayiri as the paramount chief of Napkaduri, although the Nakpanduri paramountcy is under the Mamprugu kingdom. The people of Nakpanduri, who are Bimobas, are one of the historical acephalous people that the British anthropology described as "stateless" and which the British colonial administration brought under the sovereignty of the Mamprugu as a centralised political system (Debrah et al. 2014:35).

When the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict climaxed with the regicide of Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani II in 2002 and confronted the government of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) as a nightmarish political challenge, John Agyekum Kufuor established the Committee of Eminent Chiefs (CEC) to examine the cultural aspects of the conflict. Three weeks later, Kufuor set up the Wuaku Commission to investigate the criminal aspects of the 2002 resurgence of the conflict. However, it is essential to state that the actual

date of establishing the Committee of Eminent Chiefs (CEC) has also encountered misrepresentations, as the following quotations indicate in some works.

> Given that neither the WC [Wuaku Commission] nor the court was able to reconcile the two royal families, the need for an alternative method that would lead to an amicable solution of the conflict became imminent. Hence, in November 2003, the government abandoned the judicial process and appointed a Committee of Eminent Chiefs (CEC) to mediate the conflict (Debrah et al. 2014:35).

> In line with this provision, and after a series of efforts by government institutions had failed to restore peace to Dagbon, the former President of Ghana, Mr John Agyekum Kufuor, constituted a Committee of Eminent Chiefs in 2003, under the chairmanship of the Asantehene Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the King of Ashanti (Abdallah and Amedzrator 2014: 32).

> In 2003 President Kufour constituted a Committee of Eminent Chiefs comprising of four prominent Ghanaian kings and charged them with the responsibility of finding a durable solution to the chieftaincy dispute in Dagbon. After a long period of deliberations and negotiations, representatives of the two feuding clans in Dagbon signed a "Roadmap to Peace" on 30 March 2006 (Tonah 2006: 10).

> In 2003, the government appointed the Committee of Eminent Chiefs to resolve the traditional chieftaincy differences between the two factions. The Committee negotiations were based on Court rulings and the various Committee reports on the Dagbon crisis. It brought together parties to the conflict, the UNDP, Ministries of Interior and Chieftaincy (Ahorzu & Gebe 2011: 23).

> In 2003, the then president of Ghana; John Agyekum Kufour constituted a Committee of four Eminent Chiefs led by Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, Ashanti King. Their responsibility was to find a durable solution to the chieftaincy dispute in Dagbon (Issifu 2015).

> In an effort to find a lasting solution to the perennial conflict which had persisted since colonial times, the Government of Ghana appointed a Committee of Eminent Chiefs in 2003 to negotiate a peaceful resolution of the traditional chieftaincy differences between the two factions (Ateng et al., 2018: 517).
>
> It is therefore of no surprise when after the recent crisis the government set up a commission of enquiry (the Wuaku Commission, chaired by a retired supreme court judge) to investigate the conflict, identify the perpetrators, and make recommendations (Republic of Ghana, 2002a). In furtherance to the establishment of the commission, the government set up a Committee of Eminent Kings headed by the Asantehene (the Ashanti King) to find customary and traditional solution to the aged-old dispute (Asiedu 2008: 28).
> The WC's final report submitted to then President, John Agyekum Kufour on 6 November 2002 …. Given the complex and delicate nature of the conflict, neither the commission of inquiry nor the formal court as well as the joint police-military peacekeeping mission was able to reconcile the two factions in Dagbon. This led to a home-grown alternative method of indigenous conflict resolution [the Committee of Eminent Chiefs] that targets a nonzero-sum and customarily binding outcome (Paalo and Issifu 2021:413).

Two things are evident in the above quotations. First, that the CEC was established in 2003; second, that it was set up as an alternative to the Wuaku Commission after the latter failed to identify the killers of Yaa-Naa Yakubu II and his elders in 2002. The descriptions in the above quotations are not adequate. In the first place, the then president, John Kufuor established the CEC on 3rd April 2002 even before the establishment of the Wuaku Commission on April 25 2002, although the activities of the Wuaku Commission came to overshadow the former (see General News 2002d; Adjei 2019, Kamasah 2019, The Ghana Report 2019; The Ghanaian Times 2019, Alhassan and Doudu 2019; The Confidential Online 2019; Independent 2019; Hope and Osei 2019). John Agyekum Kufuor established the CEC on April 3rd 2002, when he met the Naayiri Gamni Mahammadu, the paramount king of the Mamprugu Traditional Area and the Yagbon-Wura Bawa Doshie II, the Paramount King of the Gonja Traditional Area, at separate meetings. Kufuor finalised the establishment of the CEC on April 5th 2002 when the Ashantehene accepted Kufuor's invitation to chair the Committee (General News 2002a; General News 2002b; General News 2002c; General News 2002d). It is

also important to stress that the Kufuor government gave the two committees different assignments. Whereas the CEC was to investigate the cultural dimensions of the conflict, the Wuaku Commission was to examine the criminal aspect of the conflict and make recommendations (Wuaku Commission Report 2002).

In fact, Debrah et al. (2014:31) had earlier stated in their work that, "[i]n 2002, the government resorted to the eminent chiefs' mechanism of addressing conflict." And later in the same work, they committed an internal inconsistency when they said that, "[h]ence, in November 2003, the government abandoned the judicial process and appointed a Committee of Eminent Chiefs (CEC) to mediate the conflict." (Debrah et al. 2014:35). Also, Issifu's (2015) and Tuurosong's (2021) claims that the composition of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs (CEC) was four is incorrect. The composition of CEC was three. Since Tuurosong (2021) sourced Tonah (2010) without comparing it to other sources, the misrepresentation was inevitable.

The Dagbon Chieftaincy Conflict: towards a resolution

The most significant limitation of some of these scholarly works is that the authors have been quick at attempting to diagnose the cause of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict, even if their diagnoses have not been entirely correct. They have not been equally speedy in recommending solution to the intractable Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. Most of these works put much hope on the Committee of Eminent Chiefs (CEC) to resolve the conflict. Understandably, most of these works were published while the CEC was still ongoing. Thus, Asiedu (2008), Albert (2008), Abdallah and Amedzator (2014), Ahorzu (2014), Debrah et al. (2014) and Ahorzu (2014) published their works while the Committee of Eminent Chiefs experienced a cultural deadlock that seemed unending. Abdallah and Amedzator (2014) saw political interest as a significant challenge to resolving the conflict. While Ahorzu (2014) praised the Wuaku Commission's work for identifying some personalities that could be prosecuted for the murder of the Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani 11 and some of his elders, he lamented the political influence that halted the prosecution. Albert (2008) echoed the suggestion of the scholars who saw the problem as a lack of proper incorporation of traditional governance with the modern state system. But the question is: how can there be proper incorporation when politicisation has been a stumbling block. Ateng et al. (2018) saw the solution to the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in the government creating a facilitating environment. The poverty of this suggestion is that the public officers who should create the enabling environment are themselves part of the problem, as we earlier pointed out that bureaucratic neutrality is a myth. Also, this recommendation seems to be generalised and does not capture the peculiarities of the Dagbon case.

On their part, Issifu and Karim (2015) expressed a somewhat doubt in the CEC's work. They stated that the actual resolution of the conflict lay in the hands of the Abudu

and Andani royal gates, citing political interference as a drawback to any meaningful resolution of the conflict. Nonetheless, they have not specified what must be done for the Abudu and Andani royal gates to take charge of their destinies. Debrah et al. (2014) acknowledged that the CEC chalked important milestones in performing the final funeral rites of the two late Yaa-Naas and enskinning the Abdualai Andani, the first son of the slain king, as the Kampakuya Naa, the Regent of Dagbon. They suggested that the Dagbon Traditional Council constitute an electoral college made up of the stakeholders who will select Yaa-Naa through a secret ballot. While this suggestion may sound democratic and in line with the modern state system, the historical experience of the Dagbamba people has not informed it. Part of the problem has been that the 1948 Amended Dagomba constitution sought to democratise Yaa-Naa's selection. The reforms expanded the selection committee and desecularised the selection by removing soothsaying. The Andani royal gate claimed that the reforms did not emerge from consensus and have consistently opposed any reference to them. Given the Dagbamba's attachment to culture and given how the Andanis rejected the 1948 attempt to introduce election into the selection of the Yaa-Naa, it is implausible that this recommendation will see the light of the day.

Ateng et al. (2018) and Tuurosong (2021) published their works after the CEC concluded its assignment. The two pieces saw the installation of a new Yaa-Naa, Abukari Mahama II, as a monumental achievement, just like many other commentators in social and political discourses. Many have stated that the CEC had resolved the intractable Dagbon Conflict. Nonetheless, this review contends that the CEC concluded its assignment as a conflict settlement rather than conflict resolution since it did not address the root causes of the conflict. By its nature, conflict settlement does remove the conflict but does address the root causes of the conflict. One of the most significant achievements of CEC was the installation of Bolin-Lana Mahammadu Abudulai to the Mion skin, one of the gate skins to Yendi. The installation was significant because the 1986 Supreme Court ruling had been implemented, ending over a decade of constitutional wranglings between the royal gates. Customarily, this meant Abudus' homecoming to Dagbon dynastic politics, having accepted Yaa-Naa Mahammadu Abudulai IV's status as a former Yaa-Naa who did not die on the skin. However, three principal constitutional issues are at the core of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict and have characterised its resurgences each time a Yaa-Naa dies, and dynastic politics animates. The three constitutional issues are the rotation of succession between the two royal gates, regency as a candidature to Yendi skin and the selection committee. It is through a constitutional conference between the two royal gates that these constitutional issues can only be resolved.

Conclusion

In this article, I have reviewed some significant works on the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict after the regicide of Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani II. Also, I have critiqued these works by interrogating the major themes propounded in them and providing additional, and sometimes alternative, views. I have also uncovered uncritical acceptance of the issues revolving around the controversial rotational system between the Abudu and Andani royal gates and provided the historical trajectory of the rotational system, and demonstrated the extent of its operation in the Dagbon dynastic politics since the late 1840s. Regarding historical misrepresentation, I have shown that Naa Abudulai was the most elderly son of Yaa Naa Yakubu and reigned before Naa Andani, his younger sibling. These are historical facts that have been part of the Dagbon conflict. As Schultz (2013) noted, one of the undeniable features of intractable conflicts is that they carry along historical facts and events, which are sometimes subject to frequent debates. Fortunately, the seniority of Naa Abudulai over Naa Andani and that the former reigned before the latter are issues on which the two royal gates, chunt drums and the Dagomba collective memory unanimously agree. In connection with the CEC, I have indicated with incontrovertible evidence that the actual date for its establishment was April 3rd 2002 before the Wuaku Commission (WC) and not 2003 as many works inaccurately documented. Furthermore, the composition of the Wuaku Commission was three, not four, as some works mistakenly reported. Therefore, scholars need to document these significant historical events accurately, particularly those that touch on the history of the royal gates. The fear – as Tint (2010: 389) noted – is that "[d]ifferences in the content of historical information received from various sources may create an opening for greater shifting in beliefs or perceptions about a conflict." This shifting can potentially change power dynamics in the conflict, change the course of the narration, and disadvantage some parties to the conflict.

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