



Dynamics of the Protracted Chieftaincy Conflict in Nkwanta of the Oti Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The study examines the dynamics of the Nkwanta conflict from the lens of the causes, the effects of the conflict, and the measures that militate against the management of the protracted conflict in the Oti Region of Ghana. It draws the theoretical insights from Azar's "extended societal conflicts" which postulates that conflicts or disputes in society are because of interlinked networks of insufficient development, structural deficiencies, and divisions in identity among other factors. The study utilizes largely a qualitative research design in which 23 interviewees shared their views, opinions, and perspectives on the Nkwanta conflict in the Oti Region of Ghana. The Nkwanta area is also closer to the Togo border which makes the area strategic and could make the conflict have a spill-over effect on Ghana and Togo due to the close ethnic relations of the Nkwanta people of Ghana and those in Togo. The study found that chieftaincy and land ownership are the main causes of the conflict. Other factors that contribute to the conflict include partisan politics and the vested interest of some individuals in the area. In terms of the effects of the conflict loss of lives and properties are the main effects while effective conflict resolution stems from the involvement of all the parties through respect, compromise, and forgiveness from the parties involved in the conflict. The study recommends the involvement of unbiased external mediators with a high sense of professionalism toward the resolution of the protracted Nkwanta conflict in the Oti Region of Ghana.

Introduction

Conflicts like the Nkwanta conflict in Ghana's Oti region are complex, arising from various interacting factors over time. This complexity makes resolution difficult and challenges peace-building efforts (Yaro & Longi, 2023). Understanding these dynamics is essential for effective peace initiatives. According to Coleman et al. (2007), conflict dynamics involve conditions that shape conflicts and act as attractors, leading to either violence or peace. Mitchell (2005) notes that the evolving nature of conflicts adds to their complexity, influencing peace-building efforts in distinct ways.

These conflict dynamics significantly impact the success of peacebuilding initiatives, especially in post-war contexts where overcoming challenges is crucial (Paris, 2014; Sisk, 2013). As highlighted by Lederach (2005) and the United Nations (2014), peacebuilding requires diverse approaches to create and support frameworks that prevent conflict relapse and ensure lasting peace. The Cambridge Centre of African Studies Series (CCASS) (2012) highlights that peacebuilding is a complex, evolving process marked by enduring nature, interconnected players, and multifaceted



goals aimed at consolidating peace. Effective peacebuilding requires understanding these complexities.

According to the Institute for Economics & Peace. Global Peace Index (2020) global peace has slightly declined, though Ghana remained the most peaceful country in sub-Saharan Africa in 2014, despite a drop from its 2012 position. However, sporadic violence persists in Ghana, driven by ethnic, religious, economic, and political factors, as Kendie, Osei-Kufuor, and Boakye (2014) noted. The Nkwanta conflict, linked to chieftaincy and land ownership disputes (Tsikata and Seini, 2004), exemplifies the intricate nature of ethnic conflicts. Tonah (2012) argues that ethnic conflicts are complex and resist one-size-fits-all solutions. Theories by Talton (2010, 2003), Varshney (2002), and Tolsma et al. (2008) fall short of addressing the contextual and temporal dynamics of these conflicts. Blagojevic (2009) suggests analysing conflicts beyond individual causes to understand their intersections and intensifications. Coleman and Vallacher (2010) recommend using Dynamical Systems Theory to grasp the dynamic nature of conflicts, offering a framework to analyse how societal interactions and historical contexts influence conflicts. The research aims to explore these dynamics and propose strategies for achieving lasting peace in Nkwanta.

Theoretical Framework

This research is underpinned by Azar's (1986) premise of Extended Societal Discord, asserting that specific fundamentals and elements play a crucial role in determining conflict's origin and obstinate nature. Sociologist Edward Azar introduced the Elongated Societal Discord Hypothesis, classifying conflicts that linger, persist, and appear unsolvable as "extended societal conflicts" (Azar, 1985). Agreeing with the supposition, essential preconditions and factors meaningfully impact the development and progression of these encounters, contributing to their protracted nature. According to Azar (1986), these dynamics comprehend group identity, lack of necessities, a multifaceted causal sequence involving the state's role, and the arrangement of global acquaintances. Also, the theory recognises situations like colonial inheritance, local historical settings, and the diverse mutual makeup of society. Azar proposed that the roots of persistent societal disputes lie in the interlinked network of insufficient development, structural deficiencies, and divisions in identity.

This implies that extended societal conflicts do not have a singular origin or dimension; instead, a convergence and emergence of elements contribute to the persistence of these conflicts, covering institutional, cultural, economic, political, psychological, etc. However, the Extended Societal Discord Hypothesis has limitations, chiefly depending on neo-colonial interpretations of conflict prerequisites and emphasising guidance of collective content by external forces. This portrayal illustrates the conflicted community as a target rather than a contributor to the conflict, as observed in the ongoing crisis in Nkwanta. Different ethnic groups align, stand shoulder to shoulder, and heed external influences, contributing to the drawn-out conflict.

While Azar's Protracted Social Conflict theory initially concentrated on conflicts within a state that revolve around a prevailing tribal group, community and governmental structure, its main arguments remain relevant for interpreting the protraction of the inter-ethnic conflict under examination. According to Kendie et al. (2014), inhabitants perceive the conflict as mythical, as highlighted in reports in their conflict mapping across Ghana, where some believe invisible hands are complicit in prolonging the Nkwanta conflict. Ongoing contests over ethnic primordial issues and a symmetric competition among parties striving for Chieftaincy and Land, resulting in direct violence as a manifestation of grief, align the conflict directly with the tripod of issues outlined in Azar's theory for understanding the prognosis of a conflict.

Brief Happenings in Nkwanta

In Nkwanta South, ongoing conflict over the yam festival rituals has raised safety concerns among residents, who call for increased intervention from security forces. The dispute, involving the Challa, Adele, and Akyode ethnic groups, has led to several injuries, with one person in critical

condition from an alleged stabbing. The conflict, which erupted around 5:00 p.m. on a Monday in 2019, also resulted in the destruction of several houses and shops.

Plate 1: Residents of Nkwanta fleeing for safety



Source: Ghanaian Times, 2023

Between 2020 and 2021, tensions in Nkwanta, Ghana's Oti Region, escalated, resulting in clandestine killings in both townships and farms. These tensions led to open clashes between ethnic groups like the Challas, Kotokoli, and Adeles against the Akyode during their festivals (Citi News, 2023). In 2022, the murder of an individual on his farm by unidentified assailants further inflamed tensions among various ethnic groups.

In 2023, tribal conflicts reignited, leading to the deaths of four individuals and numerous injuries. The conflict involved the Challah, Akyode, and Adele ethnic groups in Nkwanta, the capital of Nkwanta South Municipality. Disputes over ritual practices during the Akyode tribe's annual Yam Festival sparked violent clashes, resulting in multiple deaths and gunshot injuries. The military was deployed to restore peace, but many residents fled their homes out of fear (Citi News, 2023). Due to the ongoing violence, the government imposed a curfew in Nkwanta in 2024, with some areas under strict curfew measures as a response to the crisis (Citi News, 2023).

Conflict dynamics

The Nkwanta conflict, rooted in land ownership and chieftaincy disputes, has grown more complex due to political influences and cultural practices like the Yam Festival. This has intensified the conflict, making it harder to resolve. Like other long-standing Ghanaian conflicts, such as those in Bawku and Bolgatanga, external actors like security forces and peace councils can complicate the peace process by altering power dynamics, often leading to temporary peace agreements disrupted by renewed violence.

Peacebuilding efforts in Nkwanta must address deep-seated issues, including land disputes, ethnic tensions, and political influences. Effective peacebuilding requires a nuanced approach involving local leaders, peace councils, and civil society organisations. Success depends on understanding the conflict's complex, evolving nature and the local context.



Theories of peacebuilding have evolved to address the complexities of modern conflicts, integrating political and economic factors. Traditional approaches might not always resonate with local communities, potentially exacerbating tensions. A more effective strategy involves working closely with communities to address specific needs and promote shared interests, such as economic development and cultural preservation. This approach aims to create "positive islands" of cooperation to help reduce hostility and foster hope.

Tribal conflicts

The text examines the significant role of tribal identity in the escalation, duration, and intensity of conflicts. Tribal groups, with their inherent differences in language, religion, and cultural traditions, often experience complex conflicts when their identities are threatened. Tribalism, a socially constructed phenomenon, emphasises group history and cultural traditions, making tribal conflicts deeply rooted in social, cultural, and political dynamics.

Sambanis (2001) characterises tribal conflict as warfare among communities disputing power relationships with the state, often revolving around power struggles and rational calculations of costs and benefits. Langridge (2012) introduces the concept of the security predicament, where perceived threats to livelihood or security among tribal groups can lead to confrontation. This is particularly relevant to the Nkwanta conflict, where agricultural livelihoods tied to land provoke defensive and aggressive actions. Idowu (2004) offers differing views on the causes of tribal conflict, suggesting that these conflicts arise from political, economic, psychological, and cultural factors that provoke fears and insecurities or from irreconcilable stances on symbols of symbolic value to ethnic groups.

Politics and Ethnicity

The text examines how political authorities play a crucial role in conflict zones by influencing resource allocation and accessibility, often leading to protests and violence. Berg (2008) highlights political leaders' control over resources in regions like the Central African Republic, Sudan, and Chad. Blagojevic (2009) and Adebani (2007) argue that politics is central to ethnic competition and violence, with political conscription being key to initiating and executing conflict (Yaro & Kipo-Sunyehzi, 2024). Adebani (2007) notes that when new groups challenge the existing power structure, dominant groups organise to maintain control, while politically threatened groups resist these changes.

This political aspect is particularly relevant in the Nkwanta conflict, where tensions rise if one tribe perceives another as politically favoured, especially regarding resource distribution. Such perceptions can lead to feelings of marginalisation and provoke conflict. Public gatherings can rekindle old rivalries, and Azar (1986) suggests that governance plays a critical role in satisfying or frustrating identity groups' needs. The government's imposition of a curfew in Nkwanta could be seen as a preventive measure to maintain peace by limiting gatherings.

Ross (2001) observes that overlapping conflict grievances make identifying the root causes of aggression difficult. Eminue (2004) adds that even when individuals focus on a single dimension of difference, they can still strongly identify with their community in opposition to others. This highlights the importance of conflict managers, particularly in Nkwanta, in carefully navigating boundaries and understanding violence triggers to maintain peace effectively.

Methodology

The study was conducted in Nkwanta, located in the recently created Oti Region. The Nkwanta South Municipality was carved out of the northern part of Ghana's Volta region. It is one of the nine Municipalities formed within the Oti Region. With a population of 135,936, the Municipality has a gender distribution of 50.13% males and 49.87% females (Ghana Statistical Service GSS, 2021). The predominant religion is the traditional African religion, which coexists with Christianity and Islam. Notably, over half of the population consists of youth. Regarding employment, the formal sector, encompassing Municipality Agriculture officers, teachers, nurses, and development



practitioners, has a smaller presence than the informal sector in Nkwanta South Municipality. Most residents engage in agriculture, forestry, fishing, and trading (GSS, 2021). The interviewees were drawn from the following locations in the Municipality, Nkwanta Township, Nkwanta Low Cost, Nkwanta English and Arabic, Nkwanta Medical Village, Nkwanta New Town, Nkwanta Chillinga, Nkwanta Obanda, Nkwanta Nsana Zongo, Nkwanta, Dadiase Road, Nkwanta, St. Joseph hospital, Nkwanta Alhaji bench area, Nkwanta Medina area, Nkwanta, Odomi, Nkwanta, Mountain Sanai, Nkwanta, World vision area, Nkwanta south. The communities selected were the most affected by the conflict.

Research Design

The study was driven by its alignment with explanatory design. This choice was made because of the design's capacity to support the qualitative analysis of data derived from the field (Bailey & Carol, 2017). The Research Design encompasses the thorough collection and analysis of qualitative data, culminating in the final interpretation stage. This methodological approach enhanced the study's robustness, moving beyond merely presenting qualitative data. Feldman (2019) and Burgess (2002) have observed that the qualitative method is particularly suitable for interpretative procedures due to its greater analytical depth. The research purposefully focused on its target population of 25 stakeholders and persons with knowledge and understanding concerning the conflict dynamics in the Municipality. The snowball sampling technique was used to select participants due to their philosophical comprehension of the subject matter.

Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

Researchers employed an online Google Survey Form interview guide to obtain primary data for the study. The survey questions were circulated to interviewees using WhatsApp using the snowball method. Researchers chose this method due to the insecurity at the location, rendering individual interviews impossible amidst ongoing conflicts. The Nkwanta South Municipality is under curfew from 6 pm to 6 am. The principal source of primary data stemmed from the inhabitants of the Nkwanta South Municipality. The interviewee was chosen through the snowball technique, which allows another interviewee to help researchers source another interviewee when it is challenging to identify them (Firchow & MacGinty, 2020; Omair, 2014). This was enhanced by secondary sources, academic journal articles, published books, and digital documents sourced from the internet. Each interviewee was allotted approximately 45 minutes, with prior notice and consent from all interviewees. Communication was made to the interviewees earlier concerning the interview time, and their acceptance and the planned time were established before the interview.

Strict observance of ethical research procedures was maintained during the data assortment process. Interviewees' consent was carefully considered, and anonymity and confidentiality were adhered to safeguard their well-being. The research team conducted interviews over three months, specifically from November 5, 2023, to January 30, 2024. The study achieved an impressive response rate of 92%, which underscored the cooperation and active involvement of the respondents, which was highly encouraging.

Data Analysis

Initially, 25 interviewees were chosen for interviews, but 23 could actively participate. Two respondents decided not to participate, citing concerns about potential invasions and personal reasons. The researchers acknowledged this as an uncontrollable aspect inherent in the research process. Thematic analysis was employed for the scrutinised data. Researchers shared them after transcribing the interview results for collective editing and review. Each researcher then assumed the responsibility of devising codes, subthemes, and main themes from the transcribed data. The resultant themes, stemming from the codes, underwent individual categorisation and nomenclature by the researchers. The identified themes were subsequently compared following the individual coding and theming phases to ensure uniformity, reliability, and relevance. The researchers meticulously reviewed and refined the codes, consolidating them into foundational



themes, which were then organised into comprehensive themes. Ultimately, the data results were interpreted in alignment with the identified themes, adhering to the study's objectives.

The causes of the Nkwanta Conflict

One factor mentioned to be a possible cause of the conflict is politics. The findings showed that some politicians are behind the conflict or are there to make political capital out of the conflict by aligning one ethnic group with another ethnic group. This is what a participant has to say:

The minister promised to assist one of the Tribes in gaining paramountcy. The Achode tribe strongly supports NPP, while the Adale tribe belongs to NDC (Participant 1, MTK-Male, Tertiary, Kotokoli).

The second participant linked the Nkwanta conflict to chieftaincy and landownership and saw the two as the main course of the protracted conflict in Nkwanta. This is what he says:

Chieftaincy dispute and land ownership (Participant 2, MTO-Male, Tertiary, Other Tribes)

Participants 3 and 4 (MTO) share similar views that the cause of the conflict is based on diverse interests, divisiveness, chieftaincy, and tribal politics. The main cause of the Nkwanta conflict from Participant 5, MTO) is “land”, while Participant 7 is MTA-Male, Tertiary. Achode) attributed the cause of the conflict “about chieftaincy”.

This is what a Female Participant has to say on the causes of the Nkwanta conflict: She puts the causes on two main factors, namely:

Land ownership and paramount chieftaincy (Participant 22, FSO-Female. Secondary/Second Cycle and Other Ethnic Groups. Nkwanta)

Table 1: Summary of the causes of the Nkwanta Conflict

Perspectives, Views, or Opinions expressed by participants	Participant/Location
Claiming of township	Participant 8, MTA
Festival, politics, and political power	Participant 9, MTO Teacher, Obanda
Chieftaincy	Participant 23, FTO. Midwife, Nkwanta

The Effect of the Nkwanta Conflict

One participant associated the effects of the conflict to several factors:

Loss of lives, displacement of people, destruction of properties, burying of shops and farms. Other effects of the conflict include healthcare providers taking transfers out of the town, where only emergency cases are attended to at the hospitals, and the loss of babies from pregnant women who could not attend routine checkups (Participant 2, MTO).

Participants 3 and 4 had divergent views on the effect of the Nkwanta conflict, as one points to the loss of lives, the other points to less access to health care services as some health workers leave the area and some doctors and health professionals refuse to post to the community [Nkwanta]. As for participants, the main effect of the conflict is “retardation of development”.

Most health workers have fled the town, putting undue pressure on the few available public health services, which cannot be conducted in the war areas because of fear (Participant 5, MTO).

Participant 7, MTA, expressed his opinion on the effects of the Nkwanta conflict: loss of life and property and low production.



Table 2 Effects of the Nkwanta Conflict

Perspectives, Views, or Opinions expressed by participants	Participant/Location
People lost their lives and properties, also stopped educational activities and lost their jobs	Participant 8, MTA
Loss of life and property, Loss of life and some women have to give birth in their homes without the help of a nurse.	Participant 9, MTO Teacher, Obanda
Displacement of people. Loss of lives, loss of properties, high cost of living and decrease in human population	Participant 22, FSO, Nkwanta
People flee from their homes because of displacement and loss of property and livelihood. Other effects include a lack of health services, a shortage of medication and supplies and the closure of health facilities	Participant 23, FTO. Midwife, Nkwanta

Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

As Tsikata and Seini (2004) noted, the Nkwanta conflict is primarily driven by chieftaincy and land ownership issues. Effective resolution strategies are necessary to address such conflicts. These may include negotiation, mediation, arbitration, accommodating differing perspectives, and compromising to build consensus. The research emphasises gathering participants' opinions on the most effective mechanisms for resolving the ongoing Nkwanta conflict.

On effective conflict resolution towards resolving the protracted Nkwanta conflict, this is what a participant has to say:

Effective conflict resolution mediation between the two major tribes [Achode and Adele]. The tribe with the largest land mass should be given paramountcy (Participant 1, MTK)

Participants 4 and 4 (MTO, Residents of Nkwanta) mentioned some forms of compromise as the best resolution. Three actors are essential in conflict resolution: Chiefs, political leaders, and opinion leaders. Both participants support the role of foreign mediators and think they are likely to be biased in the conflict. They mentioned peace talks, dialogue, and forgiveness. Some of the key actors that have been involved in the resolution of the Nkwanta conflict are:

MCE [Municipal Chief Executive], Police commander, RM [Regional Minister], NIB [National Investigative Bureau], the chiefs of the feuding tribes, national security, and religious leaders (participant 5, MTO)

A participant shares his views on some effective conflict resolution mechanisms.

Arbitration must be implemented for the leaders (Participant 7, MTA).

Table 3: Effective conflict resolution Mechanisms

Perspectives, Views, or Opinions expressed by participants	Participant/Location
The call for security forces in Nkwanta. Also, provide accommodation for the security forces	Participant 8, MTA
They used the police and other security personnel and Chiefs	Participant 9, MTO Teacher, Obanda
Actors with a good understanding of the issues of the conflict. Actors like the Mayor, Police or the law enforcement of conflict, Community organizations such as churches, schools and Residentials themselves	Participant 23, FTO. Midwife, Nkwanta

The Factors that Militate Against the Management of the Nkwanta Conflict

One key factor that militates against the management of the Nkwanta conflict is the lack of will of the traditional leadership to make some compromises or reach some agreement due to entrenched positions. This is what a participant said about the positions or stands of some traditional leaders in the Nkwanta Traditional Area:

The leaders of the Tribes involved are unwilling to come to a compromise or give up their interests (Participant 1, MTK, Resident of Nkwanta)

Another participant opines that one factor that worked against the management of the conflict is the absence of a single paramount Chief in Nkwanta. For this reason, the participant states that:



There is no paramount chief in Nkwanta; there are chiefs for the various tribes. Also, the indigene is unwilling to comply with conflict resolution directives. And in some cases, there is tribal revenge. (Participant 1, MTK, Nkwanta)

On any comments or recommendations), this is what the participant said:

About 50 lives have been lost and are still counting. Hence, the Government should take more drastic measures to resolve this (Participant 1, MTK Nkwanta).

Other factors that militate against the resolution of the protracted conflict in Nkwanta are based on the following factors or conditions:

The occurrence of the conflict results from leadership failure from both the traditional rulers and the political correspondent of the municipality. Moreover, Nkwanta has no one Chief. All four indigenous tribes (Challa, Adele, Akyode & Ntrubo) have their chiefs and paramountcies. Thus, the inability to bring all chiefs together for a frank discussion of the matter and the matter of the land ownership in court has not been settled yet (Participant 2, MTO)

Some factors perceived to militate against the resolution of the protracted conflict include the following:

Nkwanta has no recognised paramount chief. Also, one of the parties involved in the conflict is using government machinery against the other group. Some of the leaders are implicated by and have no credibility on one side of the feuding parties due to political partisanship (Participant 5, MTO)

Other inhibiting factors include:

One of the parties is acting with impunity because most of them belong to the ruling party. They disregard orders by state institutions but go scout-free. On rare occasions, when the culprit is interdicted, political powers are exercised to free them (Participant 5, MTO).

Suggestions or recommendations towards the resolution of the Nkwanta conflict are:

All the chiefs and individuals, including heads of government institutions, who are directly involved in this violent conflict should be arrested and prosecuted. In that case, their followers will take caution (Participant 5, MTO).

Participant 7, MTA, identified these factors as militating against the resolution of the Nkwanta conflict.

There is a lack of justice due to a lack of understanding, and intruders are coming to join because there is no justice. The court must declare who owns the land, and leaders are not trying to tell the truth.

A Female Participant has this to say on some of the factors that worked against the resolution of the conflict:

Political interface, resources to manage the conflict, lack of understanding. Thus, they kill our people, and we must also kill them Intolerance (Participant, FSO, Nkwanta)

Discussion

Theoretically, the findings largely reflect or agree with Azar's (1986) proposition that the roots of persistent societal disputes lie in the interlinked network of insufficient development, structural deficiencies, and divisions in identity. The study found inadequate development and identity issues among the four indigenous ethnic groups in Nkwanta: Challa, Adele, Akyode and Ntrubo. In addition, there are problems of identity among the ethnic groups, issues of who owned the land in Nkwanta, and issues of which of the ethnic groups' chiefs is supreme (Paramount Chief), among other identity issues. Above all, some structural deficits exist within the traditional and state legal systems, which all compound the issues and protracted the conflict.

The study found multiple factors responsible for the Nkwanta conflict. However, the most visible or pronounced factors are chieftaincy and land disputes among the ethnic groups in Nkwanta. The



factors seem to concur with the works of Tsikata and Seini (2004). Further, the study found that besides land and chieftaincy, there are other factors like ethnicity and the influence of partisan politics where some politicians, local and national, try to take advantage of the conflict for their political gain (make political capital out of the conflict siltation to improve their political fortunes). Thus, the findings of this study agree with several previous studies (Sambanis, 2001; Adekson, 2004; Idowu, 2004; Adebani, 2007; Blagojevic, 2009; Langridge, 2012; Yaro & Kipo-Sunyehezi, 2024). However, this study's findings seem inconsistent with previous studies that emphasise individual identity and national identity politics based on a state-institutionalised system (Vandeginste, 2009; Zartman, 2005).

The study found that the Nkwanta conflict is multi-actor and has multifaceted effects. Ranging from loss of lives and properties to associated issues of violence, and this finding agrees with Mitchell (2005) and Coleman, Vallacher, Nowak and Bui Wrzosinska (2007). Also, the Nkwanta conflict affected the people's access to healthcare services, and this finding is consistent with other studies (Yaro, Kipo-Sunyehezi & Danjoe, 2023; Yaro & Kipo-Sunyehezi, 2024).

This study found that mediator arbitration and negotiation are the key conflict resolution measures or mechanisms adopted in resolving the Nkwanta conflict. Also, the study found a multifactor approach as an effective mechanism towards resolving the dispute or conflict. Other measures utilised in the conflict include peaceful talks, issues of understanding of the issues involved, and the roles of chiefs, security forces, and politicians as paramount. These study findings seem to agree with Coleman et al. (2008). Also, the Nkwanta conflict is dynamic and complex, and this study finding agrees with other studies (Skalník, 2002; Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Schneider, 2008; Tonah, 2012).

On the other hand, this study established that despite all the efforts towards the effective resolution of the Nkwanta conflict, other factors still mitigate against the resolution. These factors were identified as key inhibiting factors, namely failure from traditional rulers and political leaders in the municipality and the absence of a paramount chief, as Nkwanta has no one. These empirical observations agree with earlier studies (Tsikata & Seini, 2004; Tonah, 2012; Yaro & Longi, 2023). However, the findings seem inconsistent with other studies that emphasise peacebuilding, consensus-building measures or mechanisms in protracted conflict situations, national or international (Zartman, 2005; United Nations, 2014; Yaro, George & Gregory, 2023).

Conclusions

The study concludes that the Nkwanta conflict is multi-actor, and the causes of the conflict are multifaceted. It calls for all hands-on deck; all the various ethnic groups need peace talks, understanding, and some forms of compromises for peace instead of entrenched positions. This study suggests that legal systems should delve into the landowning and chieftaincy dispute and possibly come up with a verdict that may settle the land and chieftaincy conflict in Nkwanta in the Oti Region of Ghana, West Africa. The study also recommends that chiefs and elders from all ethnic groups use their palaces for peace, tolerance and mutual respect. Also, as part of the measures to resolve the conflict, there is a need to depoliticise the Nkwanta conflict. Politicians must desist from using conflict for votes in the Nkwanta South Constituency. This is a good step towards lasting peace. The people of Nkwanta need to see the security forces in the area for peace and not war. Security is in Nkwanta to keep the peace.

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