Understanding the enemy system theory

A variety of theories exist to explain ethnic conflicts. Others have also been developed to assist design measure to manage and resolve these conflicts. A theoretical framework of conflict resolution will be studied which will include the causes of the conflict. It is from this framework that the appropriate peace building and conflict resolution measures will be developed for the situation in Bawku. I will use the Enemy system theory, Human needs theory, and colonialism as theories to explain the cause of the conflict.

The general idea of the Enemy System Theory according to Volkan et al, (1990) is the hypothesis that humans have a tendency to discriminate which leads to the establishment of enemies and allies. The following ideas make up the Enemy System Theory. The first idea is that of identity with its associated concept of the negative identity and distinguishes an enemy from an ally. The next concept is that of ethno-nationalism under which Montville (in Volkan 1990, p. 169) defines the concept of " ethnic victimization as the state of ethnic insecurity caused by violence and aggression". Depending on the circumstances, feuding parties often have a feeling of insecurity in their survival hence the tendency to protect it. Another part of this concept is the known premise among ethno-national groups that passivity ensures the continuation of victimization (p. Montville in Volkan 1990, p. 170). The next concept deals with the psychological mechanism that enables humans to aggress and kill one another. These are the processes of demonisation and dehumanization (Demetrois and Juluis in Volkan et al. 1990). According to Cunningham (1998), the Enemy System Theory offers a sophisticated theory of conflict which explains difficult problems such as terrorism and the depth of ethnic conflict. While it is a behavioural theory, it offers a bridge to

classical theory by blending a number of approaches. Consequently, the case of Bawku can be identified in the Enemy System Theory. This is due to the fact that even though there is intermarriage amongst the tribes, an institution that builds bonds and strengthens relationship, the legacy of previous generations and their socialization of their children has preserved the term ' enemy'. For this reason one tribe always considers the other as the antagonist leading to demonization and dehumanization. In other to ensure a halt in victimization and attacks, reprisals are necessary. It is for this reason that a massacre of women and children occurred during the conflict in Bawku. It is also not uncommon for retaliatory killings of traders and even drivers from tribes that are considered neutral just because they sympathize with either of the feuding groups.

Human Needs Theory (HNT) was developed in the 1970s and 1980s as a basic theory of human behaviour. It is based on the fact that humans have basic needs that have to be met in order to maintain stable societies. John Burton (1990, also in Volkan 1991, p. 82-83) identifies that conflict situations are necessitate by the struggle at all levels to satisfy needs such as security, identity, recognition, and development. They struggle to harness their environment as a necessary tool to ensuring the realization and achievement of these needs. This struggle for basic needs is theoretically related to the " Frustration-Aggression theory which is based on the stimulus-response hypothesis". The frustration of not satisfying these needs leads to aggression and subsequently, conflict. What distinguishes Human Needs theory from the Frustration-Aggression theory is that the former is concerned only with

absolute requirements (needs) while the later is also concerned with wants and desires.

The need to satisfy basic needs of life in Bawku is achieved through formal education and gainful employment. The basic occupation of the residents are farming and trading. It is believed that a majority of Kusaasis are farmers while Mamprusis monopolise the business sector. For this reason, an attempt by either tribe to venture in the livelihood of the other leads to a violent confrontation. An example is a monopoly of the cattle market which has being a flash point for sometime. The acquisition and control of land has being the biggest and root cause of the conflict. Since land is the major and basic capital of the people having absolute control of the land by taking over kingship by either of the sides will mean a loss of significant capital. This will threaten their security and survival therefore they claim they are fighting a just cause. Unemployed youth are an easy target for opinion leaders to use as a fighting force. Politicians have worsened the situation by playing to the tune of the tribe that has majority of its people in the party thereby giving the other a impression of lack of recognition which will eventually lead to lack of development.

Colonialism was possible by the use of force, that is the invasion, subjugation, and control of a previously independent region. The beliefs of the colonialist generally dictated the social patterns present in the colonies. Europeans assumed that Africans were a tribal people who identified with a single ruler, usually local to the village unit. In spite of of their motives, and the different types of social organization that confronted colonial administrators, a similar pattern of a homogenous tribal unit controlled by an

autocratic ruler was forcibly applied. According to David Welsh (1996, p. 477), even in instances " Where colonized societies had known no indigenous chieftainship, such as the Kikuyu, the British, believing that all African people must have chiefs, created chiefs and endowed them with minor bureaucratic functions."

Bill Berkeley (2001, p. 79-88) describes the European mechanism for coping with the disparity between the few white settlers and the numerous administrative areas in the colonies: " Tribalism solved the colonial dilemma of how to dominate and exploit vast numbers of indigenous inhabitants with a limited number of colonial agents, by mobilizing groups on the basis of linguistic and cultural similarities that formerly had been irrelevant." Nowhere was this issue more readily apparent than in Sub-Saharan Africa, where, with the exception of few white dominions like South Africa, direct European domination was limited to a handful of urban centers with barely a few thousand permanent white residents in each colony.

While the formal means of colonial control began to wither away in the second half of the 20th century, a legacy of a deadly trend of " tribal" conflict in Sub-Saharan Africa remained. Africans had to find a way to adapt to the nation-state model of governance, while trying to cope with social and economic structures that were remnants of the colonial era. After independence, the ethnic identities that had been constructed and taken shape during the past century came into direct conflict, thus, among the Africans themselves on which group, or coalition of groups, would achieve control."

Similarly, the legacy of the colonial administrators to use the Mamprusis as a tool to harmonize and control parts of the Northern Part of Ghana for easy administration resulted in violent clashes among the people. These clashes occurred during colonial rule of which the colonial administration did little to end. Bawku was one of the trouble zones in the North which was left until today. This legacy has become a bane on the development of the area.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION THEORIES

Professor Burton distinguishes between conflict resolution, management and settlement. Conflict Management is ' by alternative dispute resolution skills' and can confine or limit conflict; settlement is ' by authoritative and legal processes' and can be imposed by elites. Burton (1993) suggests by contrast:

. . . conflict resolution means terminating conflict by methods that are analytical and that get to the root of the problem. Conflict resolution, as opposed to mere management or ' settlement', points to an outcome that, in the view of the parties involved, is a permanent solution to a problem. [49]

Conflict resolution is, in the long term, a process of change in political, social, and economic systems. It is an analytical and problem solving process that takes into account such individual and group needs as identity and recognition, as well as institutional changes that are required to satisfy these needs. [52]

Traditional approaches to conflict management or regulation have largely been based on mediation and negotiated ' settlements'. These approaches will only work when the conflicting parties are amenable to negotiation and

have something tangible they are able to bargain. The use of the Track Two Diplomacy approach to conflict resolution, Power sharing theories as a means of solving conflicts that have their roots in power and autonomy will be explores.

THE TRACK TWO DIPLOMACY

Using the Enemy System and Human Needs theories to explain the conflict in Northern Ghana only the first step. Understanding the nature and parameters of a conflict is useful, but the objective is to use this analysis to resolve the conflict. By applying the assumptions of John Burton's Conflict Resolution Theory, we can map a way forward. There are practical methods and processes that can be used in our move from theory to practice. These processes are what is known as Track Two Diplomacy. Joseph Montville defines this as: Track two diplomacy is an unofficial, informal interaction between members of adversary groups or nations that aims to develop strategies, influence public opinion, and organize human and material resources in ways that might help resolve their conflict. It must be understood that track two diplomacy is in no way a substitute for official, formal, " track one" government to government or leader-to-leader relationships. [53]

One of the key phenomenon that track two diplomacy has been developed to deal with isProtracted Social Conflict (PSC).[54] Protracted social conflict is a type of conflict that is not based on material interests, but is one based on needs; particularly identity related needs of ethno-national or communal groups. Edward Azar describes this conflict type: These identity groups, whether formed around shared religious, ethnic, racial, cultural, or other

characteristics, will act to achieve and insure their distinctive identity within a society. When they are denied physical and economic security, political participation, and recognition from other groups, their distinctive identity is lost, and they will do whatever is in their power to regain it. In short, this is the origin of protracted social conflict. [55]

Track two diplomacy is a three stage process that enables group representatives to work towards resolving intergroup conflict in a non-threatening, non-coercive and non-confrontational environment. As mentioned, it is not designed to replace track one or official diplomacy, but it can often pave the way for official negotiations by initiating attitude changes in public opinion and decision makers. There are three stages or processes. The first stage is a series of problem solving workshops or forums. These workshops are designed to bring influential people from the respective communities in conflict, but not the key decision makers, together to explore alternative means of defining their conflict. The goal is to transform their perceptions about the conflict from zero-sum to win-win. This can be achieved through the process of facilitated meetings as part of the workshops. These workshops are facilitated by a panel of experts on the psychology of intergroup conflict and on the specifics of the conflict in question. The facilitators do not seek to impose or even offer solutions to the conflict, their purpose is to facilitate communications and gently guide the participants towards changing their attitudes and perceptions themselves. Through this change comes the ability to view the conflict in new terms. This is the transformation that makes viewing the conflict as zero-sum to viewing it as win-win, possible.

The second stage of track two diplomacy is to influence public opinion and to change the attitudes and perceptions of the protagonist communities. These changes will be based on the alterations that were made by the participants in the problem solving workshops. This is by no means a simple or automatic process, but one that takes time, and a great deal of perseverance and patience. Before the communities themselves can be targeted, the workshop participants must first convince the decision makers in their communities of the veracity of their newfound perceptions. After this has been achieved, the wider communities can undergo a process of transformation. Mass communication will be an important element of this process. Besides mass media, academic journals and conferences and special events can help with perceptional changes. This process is helped by tangible gains that are made in the third process: cooperative economic development.

POWER SHARING

Horowitz offers some hope through a system of power sharing; but not the type of top – down power sharing that was attempted in Northern Ireland in 1974 (the Power Sharing Executive), but from the bottom – up.[24] Political engineering is required in situations like this. Institutions must be altered or, in the case of a state with little legitimacy, replaced with new ones.