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**Propaganda Censorship and the Media: An Ethnographic Study of Ghana Dagbon Chieftaincy Crisis-2002-2019**

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PHD DISSERTATION

TOPIC

Propaganda, Censorship and the Media: An Ethnographic Study of Ghana Dagbon Chieftaincy Crisis, 2002-2019

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This dissertation is submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of a degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) Journalism Studies, at the School of Creative Studies and Media, Bangor University, Wales, United Kingdom.

*August 2019*

## DECLARATION

This thesis is being submitted with the consent of my supervisor and I declare that it is the results of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. All other sources are acknowledged by bibiographic references. This work has not previously been accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree unless, as agreed by the university, for approved dual awards.

## DEDICATION AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

*They planned and Allah also planned, and Allah is the best of planners (Qur'an 8:30)*

All praise is to Allah for all the blessings.

I dedicate this Ph.D. research to my late father, Mahama Sayibu Mahami, who could not live long enough to witness this moment. I pray that his soul continues to rest in perfect peace in the bosom of Allah. I also dedicate it to my mother, Hajia Mariama Yakubu Mahama for her prayers. To my children, this is a motivation for you; it is not over until it is all over.

I thank President John Dramani Mahama for this magnanimous gesture in granting me state scholarship notwithstanding my criticism of his NDC government over the Dagbon crisis. Your reconciliatory nature makes this gesture unsurprising.

When I set out for this Ph.D. project, a colleague journalist and Professor advised me to look for a good supervisor and not only a good university. That once I found a good supervisor, I found a good university. My searches finally webbed Professor Vian Bakir. I have no regrets coming to work with you. Your very critical commentaries, your encouraging words, your patience and due diligence to my work and your general academic guidance cannot be expressed in words. You have helped developed my intellectual capabilities. Thank you, Vian.

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the use of propaganda and censorship by Ghana's governments, the intelligence community and the military in the Ghana media reportage of Ghana's Dagbon chieftaincy conflict reignited by the murder of the Dagbon king, Yaa Naa Yakubu II on March 27, 2002. Even though the conflict started in 1948, Ghana's Supreme Court had settled it in 1986 but dissatisfied with the ruling, Abudu fighters attacked the Yaa Naa's palace and murdered him under circumstances described by the media as 'questionable intelligence failure'. This led many to suspect it was politically motivated. *There is scholarship on government and military propaganda and censorship of the media in conflict times in Africa and Ghana but no scholarship on government, military and intelligence community propaganda and censorship in chieftaincy conflict times in Africa and Ghana, including the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. This thesis fills that gap by investigating how propaganda techniques, including lies, deception and denial and censorship techniques like pooling and denial of access, intimidation and harassment were used against the media by Ghana's governments, intelligence community and the military in the Ghana media reportage of the Dagbon conflict.* The study investigates how the above techniques have contributed to the perpetuation of the conflict from 2002 to 2019. Using the qualitative design of interviews, official documents and newspapers' sources coupled with participant observation, autoethnography and reflexivity and using thematic and textual analysis, the study finds that governments, military and intelligence community propaganda and censorship played a large role and were partially responsible for the murder of the Yaa Naa and the perpetuation of the conflict. The study finds that media bias that largely emanated, especially from peace insensitive journalism and over reliance on official /elite sources by Ghana's *Daily Graphic* newspaper and *Ghana News Agency* remained a threat to efforts at closing-down the conflict. Part of the study's contribution to knowledge is that beyond the traditional method of intimidation, harassment and threats of journalists by governments, the military and the intelligence community to secure favourable media coverage, as chronicled by Western scholars of media and conflict, politicians in the Dagbon conflict used physical violence as technique of censorship and propaganda where political party and government 'foot soldiers' were unleashed onto critical media personnel. The study draws attention of Western scholars of media war and conflict to a reverse of the Rwandan situation in Ghana's Dagbon, where the Ghanaian media tried to stop the Dagbon conflict, but which efforts remain undocumented, unlike their Rwandan counterparts that fanned the conflict. The study is significant for scholars of media and conflict because it is the first study on government, the intelligence community and the military propaganda and censorship of the media in the reportage of chieftaincy conflicts in Africa and Ghana, including the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. It is also the first comprehensive study on media reportage of chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana, including the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

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**CHAPTER ONE**

## 1.0 Background and history of the conflict

Dagbon is a multi-ethnic society with a population of more than one million people based on the 2010 population census. The people are overwhelmingly muslim, accounting for about 79 per cent of the population (Tonah, 2002, pp.5). Dagbon is 9,611 square miles in area and more than 50 percent of the population of the northern region of Ghana. Ghana is situated in the west coast of Africa with diverse ethnic groupings, including the Akan group, the Ewes, the Guans and the Mole Dagbani group where Dagombas belong. The northern region's population is about 2 million, according to the 2000 population census (Mahama, 2009, pp.1). It is largely rural with a few urban areas like Yendi, the traditional capital, Tamale, the political capital and Gushegu and Savulugu (Tonah, 2002, pp.5). Yendi that lies 98 kms away from Tamale is where the king of Dagbon (Yaa Naa) resides. The Dagbon people are predominantly into agriculture and trade (Martinson, 2002, pp.12). The people of Dagbon are called Dagombas.

The Dagombas are the single most numerous ethnic grouping in the northern region (Ladouceur, 1972, pp.98, Tsikata and Seini, 2004, pp.33). Under the Yaa Naa are a number of divisional chiefs who exercise authority over a particular portion of the kingdom. Among these are the Tolon Naa and the Gushegu Naa (Ladouceur, 1972, pp.98). The Dagombas make up about eight percent of Ghana's population.

The Dagombas are strongly attached to the institution of chieftaincy, which partly accounts for the intensity with which conflicts over there are carried out. It is considered particularly disgraceful, for example, to allow a chieftaincy to pass away from one's family or to be lost to one's 'gate' (Ladouceur, 1972, pp.98). According to Awedoba 'chieftaincy is the heart-beat of Dagbon and all and sundry aspire to become chiefs; there are different grades of chieftaincy that both royals and non-royals can aspire to' (2009, pp. 203).

## 1.1 Motivation for Research

This study is motivated by my desire to contribute my quota to the on-going efforts at abating the conflict and ensuring peace in the Dagbon area. As a member of the Dagbon royal family and having reported the conflict as a journalist from March 2002 to 2016 (see chapter four), I have seen how the conflict has affected people's lives. These effects include segregation, termination of jobs and lack of social cohesion amongst many Dagombas. While this situation perpetuates, some people, including politicians, take advantage of the conflict to divide Dagombas the more (for their selfish ends), while the issue remains unresolved.

I have also experienced situations where businesses and marriages have collapsed because of the mistrust between the Abudu royal family and the Andani royal family. These two royal families emanated from one great grandfather, Yaa Naa Yakubu I (see figure one later in this chapter). Some people have refused to patronize goods from the other side, and some have either sacked their wives or ran away from their husbands. Media reportage within Ghana has not only done little to expose some of these unfortunate happenings but has through some of the reportage exacerbated the conflict. It is my considered view that issues raised in this study coupled with lessons and recommendations therein will contribute in no small measure towards the on-going peace efforts in the Dagbon traditional area.

## 1.2 Origin of the Conflict

Dagbon is significant in the national politics of Ghana in that the Dagombas are the single largest ethnic grouping in the north that occupies one third of Ghana's landmass and one of the 'gate ways' to the Upper East and West regions of Ghana. The people are mainly into agriculture (see above) and so Dagbon is considered one of the 'food baskets' of Ghana. Insecurity in the area therefore has the potential of affecting smooth governance of the country. In terms of electoral votes, the Dagombas, constituting majority of the citizenry in the north command a huge influence and are therefore considered very important in the national scheme of things. This explains successive governments' continuous involvement in the Dagbon chieftaincy affairs as can be seen later in this study.

Each side in the Yendi dispute has had its educated and articulate spokesmen, and since 1954 its prominent political figures as well. It was largely through the activities of these men that the dispute became a political issue shortly after independence as they had strong links with both traditional authority and with the modern political system (ladouceur, 1972, pp.101). The Abudu faction aligned itself with the United Party (UP) (that later metamorphosed into the New Patriotic Party (NPP) while the Andanis were associated with the Convention Peoples' Party (CPP), (Tonah, 2012, pp.7).

The origins of the present Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy dispute (henceforth Dagbon conflict) go back to 1948, after the death of Yaa Naa Mahama II, a member of the Andani family. His son Andani, as Gbanlana (regent) put himself forward as a candidate to succeed his father. However, he was unsuccessful, and the chieftaincy went to Mahama III. Andani then became Mion Lana, (chief of Mion, which is one of the three seats next to the Yaa Naa). On the death of Mahama III in 1953, he again put forward his candidacy. According to the principle of rotation, it should be his turn to occupy the Yendi skin. This rotation system originated in the late nineteenth century, following the death of Yaa Naa Yakubu I who was succeeded first by his son Abdulai and then by another son Andani II. Since the death of Andani II in 1899, there has been in some measure an alternation between descendants of

the two brothers, until Andani again was passed over. The Gbanlana or regent (first son of Mahama III) succeeded his father as Abdulai III in March 1954. Dissatisfaction over his ascension continued long after his installation (ladouceur, 1972, pp.100).

Shortly after independence the Andanis mounted a campaign to have the Yaa Naa deskinned (as Dagbon chiefs sit on skins, their instalment is referred to as enskinment and when they are sacked, they are deskinned) on several grounds. They argued that it was against Dagbon custom to have a Yaa Naa with physical deformities (defective eyes and defective toes) and that he was not properly installed (Tsikata and Seini, 2004, pp.34). Such a campaign however ran counter to an equally important Dagbon tradition that says that a Yaa Naa once installed cannot be deskinned. Yaa Naa Abdulai III survived the crisis until his death in 1967 (ibid).

Meanwhile earlier in 1960 the Nkrumah government (1957–66) brokered an agreement between the two factions which attempted to restore the rotational succession system in Dagbon. It was agreed that on the death of Yaa Naa Abdulai III the next king should come from the Andani clan. In line with this agreement Andani III from the Andani clan was selected as the Yaa Naa in 1968 following the death of Abdulai III in 1967.

In 1968, the same year Andani III was installed Yaa Naa, the National Liberation Council government (1966–69) that earlier overthrew the Nkrumah regime in 1966 set up the Mate Kole Committee to inquire into the Dagbon conflict. The Committee's report declared Yaa Naa Andani III's enskinment as not being in accordance with Dagbon custom and therefore annulled his enskinment. Instead, Gbanlana Mahamadu was to be installed as Yaa Naa. The Committee's report was accepted by the Busia government (1969–1972) a day after Dr. K. A. Busia became Prime Minister on 4th September 1969.

On 9th September 1969, fighting broke out in Yendi following attempts by the security forces to forcibly remove members of the Andani clan from the royal palace resulting in the death of 30 members of the Andani clan. Gbanlana (regent) Mahamadu was thus subsequently installed as the king (under the skin name Abdulai IV) with the support of the ruling Busia government (Ahorsu and Gebe, 2011, Olawale, 2006, in Tonah, 2002, pp.7). On his part Ladouceur captures it as follows:

> On 4th September 1969 the Ghanaian government announced that it had decided to uphold the findings of a government commission of inquiry into a chieftaincy dispute in…Yendi. Five days later, on 9 September 1969, soldiers and police opened fire on a crowd of demonstrators in and around the chief's palace, killing 23 persons and wounding at least 40 others. More than 700 persons were arrested and charged with unlawful assembly…The government-sanctioned chief was taken to the palace, which was being guarded by soldiers and police (1972, pp.97).

In 1972, Acheampong's military government (972–78) overthrew the Busia regime and set up the Ollenu Committee to ascertain the correct custom and customary practices for the nomination, selection and enskinment of a Yaa Naa. This followed continued agitation by members of the Andani clan for a review of the decision of the Mate Kole Committee. The Ollenu Committee declared the deskinment of Yaa Naa Andani III as illegitimate and subsequently called for the removal of Abdulai IV as Yaa Naa. Based on the recommendations of the Ollenu Committee, Yakubu Andani (the eldest son of Andani III who having passed on) was enskinned as Yaa Naa in 1974.

Yaa Naa Yakubu II kingship was challenged by the Abudu clan. However, their attempts at changing the status quo during the Provisional National Defence Council regime, (1981–1992) failed. Furthermore, Ghana's Supreme Court in December 1986 ruled in favour of the Andani clan as it upheld the recommendations of the Ollenu Committee. It also affirmed the principle of the rotation system. Like the Andanis, (some of) the Abudus also refused to recognize the authority of the Yaa Naa until his murder on March 27, 2002 (Tsikata and Seini, 2004, pp.44, Tonah). See 'Figure1' below on ascension to the Dagbon kingship.
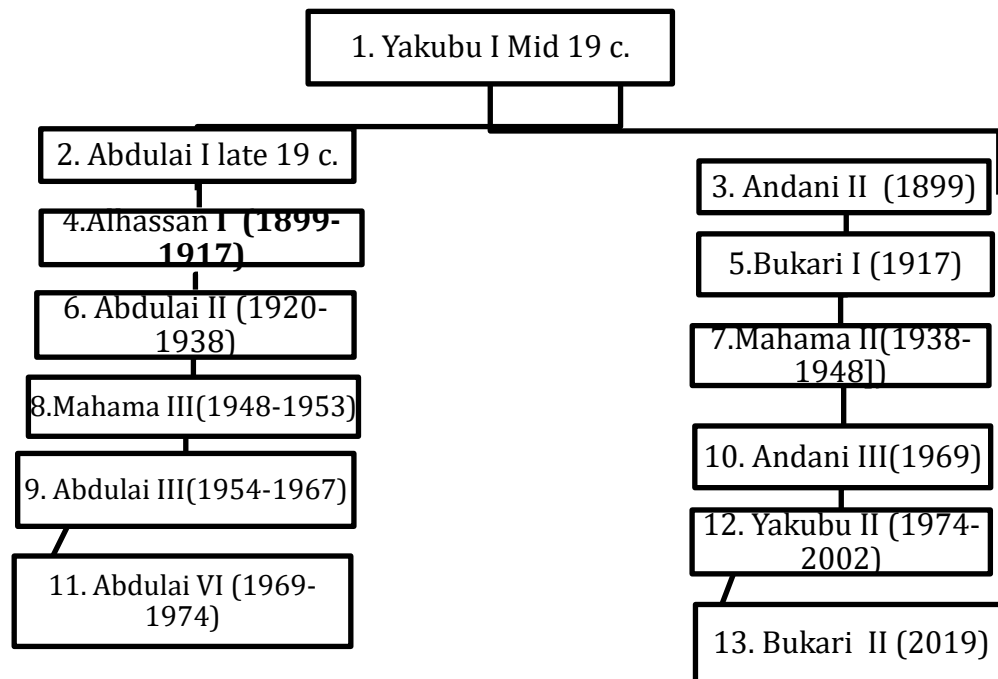
Source (Ladouceur, 1972, pp.99, with additional information from me).

The above figure shows succession to the Dagbon kingship. Yaa Naa Yakubu I gave birth to Abdulai I and Andani II. The two sons who belonged to different mothers established the 'Abudu' (coined from Abdulai) and 'Andani' factions. Their progeny ascended the throne rotationally until the late 1948 when the conflict began (see figure 1 above)**.**

Owing to the 2002 conflict informed by the murder of Yaa Naa Yakubu II, Dagbon was without a substantive chief for 17 years until January 2019 when a new Yaa Naa, Abukari (Bukali) Mahama was installed. This followed the performance of the funerals of the two late Yaa Naas, Abdulai IV of the Abudu family and Yakubu II of the Andani family (see below under Government response to the murder). The new Yaa Naa, with the skin name Bukali II and an Andani was the chief of Savulugu until his elevation.  The installation of a new Yaa Naa is however not the end to the crisis but the beginning of the end to it as can be seen in chapter eight.

**1.3 The Murder**

On March 25, 2002 JOY FM, a private radio station in Accra, Ghana reported that the two families-Abudus and Andanis were preparing for 'war' over disagreement over the performance of certain rites associated with the fire festival amongst other traditional rites. (The fire festival is one of the traditional festivals performed by Dagombas, Mamprusis and some other tribes in the Northern Region). The Yaa Naa was not happy that the Abudus were performing the traditional rites. It is pertinent to note that traditionally, the performance of important rites like that of the fire festival is the sole preserve of the chief, and in the case of Yendi, the Yaa Naa. However, the eldest son of Abdulai IV referred to as 'Bolin Lana' (chieftaincy title) by the Abudus, was leading the Abudus to perform certain rites associated with the festival. This created the impression that he was also a chief further creating the impression of the existence of a parallel traditional authority in Yendi which was a challenge to the authority of the Yaa Naa as the overlord of the area. Disagreement over the performance of the rites created tension compelling the District Security Committee to impose a dusk to dawn curfew and ban the festival. Yaa Naa Yakubu II intervened and the ban together with the curfew was lifted by the (then) Northern Regional Minister, Prince Imoro Andani. This was after he held talks with the Yaa Naa at his palace (Gbewah palace) in Yendi (Tonah, 2012, pp.8).

Reports of tension were however denied by government officials, including the Interior Minister, Malik Alhassan Yakubu, who was also the sitting Member of Parliament for the Yendi constituency. He blamed the media for the reports and accused them of mischief. He said Yendi was calm (JOYNEWS, March 26, 2002). JOY FM was later to report as thus; 'At the time JOY FM spoke to the Ya Na's secretary on Tuesday, fighting was still going on, but the police were nowhere to be found...government rather accused JOY NEWS of mischief...' (myjoyonline.com, March 30, 2002).

Contrary to government's position in the media that Yendi was calm, the Abudus attacked the king's palace and between March 25 and March 27, 2002, fighting between the two factions persisted until Yaa Naa Yakubu II was killed on Wednesday March 27, 2002 (Tonah, 2012, pp.8, Olawale, 2004, pp.11). His body was burnt with his head and one of his arms severed from the body, taken away only to be found a week later at the same spot that they were severed (Mahama, 2009, pp.134). This was notwithstanding the fact that the whole palace area was guarded by soldiers and under dusk to dawn curfew. Government could not find those who returned the 'body parts' raising suspicion amongst the Andani family that government was shielding the culprits (Ibid).

According to Olawale (2008, pp.9-10) one of the reasons for the attack on the Yaa Naa was the Abudus' quest to perform (at the royal mausoleum) the funeral of their king, Abdulai IV.

He was deposed as king in 1974 and his position taken over by the slain Yaa Naa Yakubu II (see above). Abdulai IV died in 1988 (Tonah, 2012, pp8). Another reason, according to the Wuaku Commission was the insistence of the Abudu family to perform certain festivals previously held solely under the auspices of the Yaa Naa Yakubu II (Wuaku Commission report, 2002). The fighting persisted without any intervention by the security forces. This was how I, while reporting in March 2002, for JOY FM, reported the attitude of the security agencies towards the three-day attack on the Yaa Naa:

> ... It is now clear that despite the presence of security forces at Yendi, no attempt was made to bring the situation under control. The security forces stayed away and made no attempt to stop the clashes between the Andani and Abudu factions because they were not ordered to do so. Our Northern Regional Correspondent, Sayibu Mahama who was with a Ministerial delegation currently on a fact-finding mission ... (reports) the attacks started on Monday morning when the late Yaa-Naa was performing rites for the fire festival... (Myjoyonline.com, March 30, 2002)

The Wuaku Commission was later to confirm my report when it found that 'exchange of gunfire' continued for three days without the intervention of the security forces (Wuaku Commission report, 2002).

Government led by President John Kufour (2001-2009) later admitted that the slow response by the security agencies contributed to the escalation of the crisis. A Minister of State at the Presidency and a former *BBC news* editor, Miss Elizabeth Ohene told the media that the security agencies 'lapsed into a sense of complacency', resulting in the death of Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani (Ghana News Agency, April 1, 2002).

## 1.4. Government's Response to the Murder

The first reaction of government to the crisis was to express 'regret' at the death of the king and promised to hunt down the perpetrators and punish them. Government declared a State of Emergency and dusk to dawn curfew in the Dagbon traditional area. Government also sent a high-powered delegation led by the Senior Minister, Joseph Henry Mensah to Yendi to meet with the feuding factions to help calm the situation. Government officially declared a censorship regime as it asked all media houses to clear their reports on Dagbon affairs with the Ministry of Information before broadcast (see chapter six). Two Ministers of State, the Interior Minister, Malik, Alhassan Yakubu and the Northern Regional Minster, Prince Imoro Andani resigned their positions 'in order not to interfere' in the investigations. Abudu government officials in top security positions, including General Hamidu were also later to 'resign'.

Government set up a mediation team in 2002 (the Committee of Eminent Chiefs) to investigate the traditional aspect of the crisis to help resolve it to ensure peace in the Dagbon area. The team was headed by the king of Ashanti, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II. Other members were the Nayiri, Naa Gamni Mahamadu, king of the Mamprugu Traditional Area and the Yagbon-Wura, Bawa Doshie II, king of the Gonja Traditional Area.

Government also in 2002 set up the Wuaku Commission of inquiry headed by Justice I. N. K. Wuaku to deal with the criminal aspect of the conflict (Tonah, 2012, pp.9). The commission exonerated all government officials accused by the Andanis of complicity in the murder of the Yaa Naa. It also recommended the prosecution of suspects from both the Abudus and the Andanis for various crimes, including possession of arms but recommended the prosecution of some Abudus for the murder and conspiracy to murder the Yaa Naa (Wuaku Commission report, 2002). However as argued latter in this study, the Wuaku Commission's recommendations failed to make any significant impact. The Andanis rejected the commission's final report (Ghanaweb.com, January 9, 2003) while government also failed to implement the report.

The Eminent Chiefs' committee however succeeded in its core mandate of ensuring the performances of the funerals of Yaa Naa Yakubu II and the ousted former Yaa Naa Abdulai IV after 16 years of deliberations. The committee in its final ruling indicated that both funerals of the late kings should be performed at the Gbewah palace and accorded the rites of a deceased Yaa Naa. The successor of Yaa Naa Yakubu II was to be decided by the king makers of Dagbon led by the Kuga Naa who is the chief custodian of Dagbon culture and tradition (Citinewsroom.com cited in Ghanaweb.com, 16 November 2018). The committee's arrival at the final decision was largely as a result of the shift in entrenched positions taken by the two chieftaincy factions. The Andanis who since 1988 refused to allow for the funeral of Abdulai IV to be performed at the Gbewah palace softened their stance while the Abudus also agreed that 'contrary' to the rotation system, the Andanis would continue the kingship since the slain king, Yaa Naa Yakubu II did not die a natural death. Allowing the Abudus to succeed him would be unfair and set a dangerous precedence for people to kill in order to inherit the kingship (interview with government source, January 10, 2019). The king makers on Saturday January 19, 2019 selected an Andani and chief of Savulugu, Naa Abukari Mahama as the new Yaa Naa. A week later, on January 25, 2019 his investiture took place at the forecourt of the Gbewah palace with the skin name Yaa Naa BukaIi II. In attendance were the sitting President, Akufu Addo and former President, John Mahama.

Meanwhile the slain king's remains could only be interred after 4 years of his murder for two reasons; his severed parts could not be found, and his remains could not be interred without them and the Andanis insisted on getting the murderers prosecuted before his

burial. The severed parts were later 'uncovered' and given to the Andanis by government that explained that they were found exactly the place the king's body was burnt (Mahama, 2009, pp.134). This was notwithstanding the fact that the whole Gbewah palace precinct, including where the Yaa Naa was killed and his body burnt was guarded by soldiers 24/7 and under State of Emergency. Yet no one was sighted returning the 'body parts' (see more in chapter five). Upon appeals from government the king's remains were interred in 2006 and his regent, Abdulai Yakubu Andani was installed as Kampakuya Naa (regent) and acted for 12 years until a substantive Yaa Naa was enskinned.

## 1.5 Opposition Response

The main opposition at the time, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), led by its minority leader in parliament, Alban Sumani Bagbin while contributing to a debate on the floor of parliament on the extension of the State of Emergency on Dagbon called on the government to 'set up a high powered independent judicial inquiry into the conflict to dig out (uncover) the root causes and forestall an escalation of the situation' (Ghana News Agency, April 5, 2002).

The NDC party in its 2008 manifesto promised to 'set up an independent commission' into the murder of the king but failed when they won power in 2008. Former President Rawlings of the NDC claimed through his spokesperson, Kofi Adams that he had video evidence of the killing of the king but could not provide it after the Andanis requested for it following the electoral victory of the NDC in 2008 (see chapter five). It is significant to note that both the government and the main opposition (at that time) NDC failed to keep their promises to the letter, with the crisis not completely abated, reigniting debate in Ghana about how political parties and various governments in the country use the Dagbon crisis to their advantage. This issue will be discussed later in this study. The northern region of Ghana was to witness another murder of a king in a similar bizarre fashion as discussed below.

## 1.6 Bimbilla chieftaincy crisis

The failure of government to deal with the murders could have arguably influenced another murder of a king in nearby Bimbilla in the Nanumba district of the Northern region. Naa Andani Dasana was in 2014 murdered in cold blood in his palace by unidentified people believed to be his opponents in the fight for the kingship of Nanung (the kingdom of the Nanumba people). Like the Yaa Naa murder, government attributed the killing to 'Intelligence failure' even though police and military were on guard duty at his palace. No one was prosecuted for the murder and even though scores of people were arrested, they were later released for lack of evidence.

The conflict followed the death in 1999 of the Bimbilla naa (king of Nanumbas), Naa Abarika Attah who was from the 'Bang yili gate', one of the two gate skins to the Nanung kingship (see Supreme Court ruling on Bimbilla chieftaincy Appeal, May 23, 2018). It was the turn of the other gate, the Gbugma yili gate to choose a successor and Andani Dasani was chosen by majority of the king makers, a decision that was rejected by Nakpa naa, Salifu Dawuni of the same Gbugma yili gate, triggering the conflict between them (Ibid). This triggered litigation between them, but the claimants could not however survive the final ruling at the Supreme Court that eventually settled the matter in favour of Andani Dasana by affirming his kingship of Nanung. Nakpa naa Salifu Dawuni, an NPP sympathizer had died earlier followed a year later by the murder in 2014 of Naa Andani Dasana, an NDC sympathizer and former Northern Regional treasurer of the party.

Their political persuasion courted sympathy and support for them, especially in Dagbon from the Abudus largely for Salifu Dawuni and Andanis mainly for Andani Dasana. This further raised tensions over the kingship. Sporadic fighting between supporters of the two claimants had claimed several lives from both camps.

The Bimbilla chieftaincy conflict has several similarities with the Dagbon conflict, including the king's murder, 'intelligence failure' and feud over kingship as well as meddling of politicians in the conflict and failure on the part of the state to apprehend the culprits. Bimbilla shares geographical boundary with Dagbon from the south. The people of Bimbilla called Nanumbas share the same great grandfather (Naa Gbewah) with the Dagombas and have also lived without a substantive king (up to the time of submitting this thesis) after their last king, Andani Dasana was murdered in cold blood in 2014.

The Bimbilla chieftaincy conflict is useful for the discussion on transferability of some of the concepts and techniques of propaganda and censorship by government, the military and intelligence community in this study of the Dagbon conflict (see chapter three under Transferability and Reliability, 3.14).

## 1.7 Gap in Research

There is no comprehensive research on media reportage of the Dagbon conflict, necessitating the need for this study, especially for historians of the Dagbon conflict as well as political communicators, media and conflict scholars and students. Key searches on 'Proquest' produced 32 journal articles out of which 26 were selected, including from 8 African 'journals' spanning from November 2, 2016 to May 4, 2019. The searches were on the following key words, 'media and conflicts in Ghana', 'media and conflicts in Northern Ghana', 'media and the Dagbon crisis', 'the Yaa Naa murder', 'the Dagbon conflict' and 'scholarly works on Dagbon Chieftaincy crisis'. They produced literature on conflicts in Ghana and Northern Ghana, including the Konkomba-Nanumba conflict of 1994 and the

Bawku conflict of the 1930s (Northern Ghana). They also included the Nkonya and Alavanyo conflict (Volta region) in the early 1920s amongst others. Articles on Dagbon; the background to the conflict, the conflict itself that resulted in the murder of the Yaa Naa and the political, social and economic implications of the conflict were selected.

The articles selected included from the most prolific writers of the Dagbon conflict namely, Ladouceur, 1972, Tsikata and Seini, 2004, Bolaji, 2004, Tonah, 2012, Asiedu, 2008, Olawale, 2004 and Ahorsu and Gebe, 2011. 'Murder of African King; Ya Na Yakubu II' (Mahama 2009), (again with key searches on 'books on murder of Yaa Naa') was selected.

The literature was selected because it concentrated on the background to the conflict and events leading to and after the murder of the Yaa Naa. Except tangential references to media reports on the attack on the Yaa Naa's palace by the Dagbon conflict scholars, including Mahama (2006), Tonah (2012) and very little on the role of the media in the conflict by Harriet et al. (2013), there is no comprehensive study on Ghana media reportage of the Dagbon conflict. This study is about Ghana's media reportage of the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict and media bias, censorship and propaganda of the conflict.

**1.8 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

1. To uncover the constraints journalists faced in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict from 2002 to 2019
2. To determine the extent to which journalists reacted to the issues of censorship and propaganda techniques by governments, the military and the intelligence community during the period under review and how these techniques affected media reportage of the conflict and the resolution of the conflict.
3. To determine whether there were biases in the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict
4. To determine how the feuding parties in the conflict responded to the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict and propaganda and censorship of the media.

My research questions are:

Q1. What censorship and propaganda techniques were apparent in the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict from 2002 to 2019?

Q2. To what extent has propaganda and censorship contributed to the perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict from 2002 to 2019?

Q3  How biased was the media (Daily Graphic newspaper and Ghana News Agency) in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict from 2002 to 2019?

Q4  How did the media bias affect the practice of conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana from 2002 to 2019?

Q5  What opinion does the Andani and Abudu leadership hold of the media reportage of the conflict from 2002 to 2019?

## 1.9 Phenomenon of study

The study seeks to investigate whether media bias, censorship and propaganda of the media are responsible for the perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict and I set out to achieve that by answering the above research questions, using interviews, official documents and media texts and analysing them through textual and thematic analysis using a qualitative research design.

## 1.10 Thesis Structure

Chapter one has provided a background and brief history of the Dagbon conflict. It focused on the origin of the conflict since 1948 and the interventions made by various governments at various stages of the conflict, including the setting up of committees and the responses of government and the opposition to the murder of the king in March 2002.

Chapter two reviewed the literature on media war and conflict in the West and Africa. It discussed censorship and propaganda techniques against the media in Britain, the U.S, Germany, Africa and Ghana. The chapter looked at how Governments, the Military and the Intelligence Community in the above areas manipulate the media using censorship and propaganda techniques. It also discussed theoretical frameworks and concepts of 'public opinion' 'media bias' 'objectivity' and 'peace Journalism' to build the framework for the study.

Chapter three discussed the methodology used in the study, the collection of data and the phenomenon of study. The use of qualitative method, ethnography and reflexivity to gather data were explored in this chapter. In all, this chapter discussed how and why I chose and designed my methods and how they affect the reliability and validity of my findings. It also discussed methods on Auto-ethnography, Textual and Thematic Analysis to provide the framework for the understanding of my RQs. Chapter four discussed my experiences in reporting the conflict and chapters five, six and seven discussed the empirical factors whiles chapter eight analysed the findings of the study.

Chapter nine drew conclusion and offered suggestions for journalism practice and for further research. It also offered lessons for Western scholars of media and conflict on the use of 'social exclusion' 'attachment of journalists' 'opinion leaders as facilitators of propaganda' and 'physical violence' by politicians as censorship and propaganda techniques. It also focused on the Rwandan genocide as a reverse of the Dagbon case where the Ghanaian media's hopes of preventing the Dagbon conflict through their reportage were dashed by politicians. Unlike the Rwandan case, this aspect of the Dagbon case has not attracted any scholarship from scholars of media and conflict. It argued that the above together with lessons learned during the research process, including threats posed to journalism standards in Ghana, using untrained and uneducated 'journalists', could attract scholarly attention at the global Journalism Studies level in relation to whether the Ghana case is peculiar or has similarities with journalism practice in other African and non-African countries, including the west.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

## 2.0. Introduction

Studies on the relationship between the media on one hand and government, the military and the intelligence community on the other since the beginning of World War I till May 2019 have revealed wide ranging prohibitions from the latter against the media's reportage of wars and conflicts. These prohibitions can be categorized into two broad ways; security censorship and propaganda through the lens of strategic communications. Prolific authors of media and conflict are unanimous in their scholarship that the media suffer acts of harassment, intimidation, detention, deception amongst others in their relationship with governments, the military and the intelligence community in the media's reportage of wars and conflicts. These writers include Knightley (2004), Allan and Zelizer (2004), Aday (2017), Hammond (2017), Allan and Sreedhaam (2017), Hallin (1989), Carruthers (2011), Bakir (2013, 2017) and Bakir et al. (2018) amongst others.

This review in a thematic fashion, will examine-through the lens of strategic communications-the scholarship on security censorship and propaganda by governments, military and intelligence community against the media in the West and Africa. The review will cover the two World Wars-World War 1 (1911-1918) and World War II (1939-45), the Cold War (1947-91), the Vietnam War (1954-75) and contemporary wars including, the Iraqi Wars (1990-91, 2000), the Afghanistan War (2001) and War on Terrorism (from 2001). I chose these wars because scholarship on them can best explain the patterns of relationships (including propaganda and censorship) between the media on one hand and governments, intelligence community and the military on the other in the Dagbon conflict reportage. Literature on these wars will apply largely to the Dagbon conflict reportage as it will identify concepts, strategies and techniques that were used against the media in the Dagbon conflict reportage. Literature on the contemporary wars will offer more relevant literature than historical literature even though historical literature is still relevant to this study as it lays the foundation upon which contemporary literature is developed. My decision to start with World War 1 (1914-1918) is because that was the first time propaganda which is one of the concepts under study in this thesis, was used in an 'organized and scientific manner' and still relevant today as historical literature. This is notwithstanding the argument that propaganda 'dates back 2,400 years ago to Sun-tzu's the *Art of War*' (Knightley, 2004, 85). I ended my search to identify concepts techniques and strategies of censorship and propaganda against the media in 2019 because that was the year I ended my studies on propaganda censorship and media bias in the reportage of Ghana's Dagbon chieftaincy crisis.

A systematic review on propaganda and censorship of publications, (books and journal articles) including from 22 'E journals' (see table below) on media war and conflict in the West and Africa was carried out. The following journals were reviewed.

**Table One-Academic Journals Reviewed**

| |
|---|
| 1. International Journal of Communications |
| 2. African Media Review |
| 3. Academy of Contemporary Research |
| 4. Canadian Journal of African Studies |
| 5.Canadian Journal of Communications |
| 6.Commonwealth Journal of International Affairs |
| 7. Global Media and Communications |
| 8. International Journal of Press /Politics |
| 9. Journalism |
| 10. Journalism Studies |
| 11. Journal of Mass Communication and Journalism Studies |
| 12. African Council on Communication Education |
| 13. Review of African Political Economy |
| 14. Journal of Peace Research |
| 15. Nordic Journal of African Studies |
| 16. International Journal of Public Opinion Research |
| 17. Journal of Communication |
| 18.Intelligence and National Security |
| 19.Media War and Conflict |
| 20.International Journal of Strategic Communications |
| 21.Journal of Sustainable Development in Africa |
| 22. Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly |

In doing the search, from November 2, 2016 to May 2, 2019, the following key words were used on 'ProQuest'; 'media war and conflict' 'media and conflict' 'censorship and the media' 'propaganda and the media' 'propaganda and the Western media' 'censorship and the Western media' 'censorship and the African media' 'propaganda and the African media' 'propaganda and the Ghanaian media' and 'censorship and the Ghanaian media'. The rest were 'military censorship and Western media', 'military propaganda and the Western media', 'military censorship and African media', 'media propaganda and African media,' 'government censorship of Western media', 'government propaganda and Western media' and 'the media and intelligence community, amongst others.

The words 'censorship, propaganda and the media' were also paired with key authors of 'media and conflict' like Philip Knightley, Philip Hammond, Vian Bakir, Susan Carruthers and Gadi Wolfsfeld amongst others. For media and intelligence community, names of

authors like Steven Livingston, Stuart Allan, Richard Keeble, Vian Bakir, Robert Dover and Michael S. Goodman amongst others were paired against 'media propaganda and censorship and intelligence community'. This produced an array of literature on the relationship between the media and their propagandists and censors. My selection of the literature was based on the pattern of argument along media propaganda and censorship since that is what my dissertation is researching.

The search found literature on censorship and propaganda of the media in the West and Africa, including the Ghanaian media by governments, the military and the intelligence community during war and conflict times. *There was however no research on propaganda and censorship of the African media, including the Ghanaian media during chieftaincy conflicts by governments, the intelligence community and the military.* This reveals a gap in literature on censorship and propaganda in African and Ghanaian media during chieftaincy conflicts in Africa and Ghana, including the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. The next task of this discussion is to define *Strategic Communication*, *Censorship and Propaganda*. Propaganda and censorship operate through the lens of strategic communication.

## 2.1 Definitions

This section will define *strategic communication, censorship* and *propaganda* that are crucial in this study of propaganda censorship and media bias in Ghana's media reportage of the Dagbon conflict. Some communication scholars have argued that defining strategic communication is not an easy task. Thomas and Stephens (2014, pp.4) have argued that like the myriad of definitions associated with the term 'strategy' and 'communication,' 'we do not expect that a singular definition of strategic communication will ever be agreed on'. While they 'prefer to purposefully defer drawing boundaries' that would 'prematurely narrow the exploration of the topic of strategic communication', they choose to look at strategic communication through three lenses: strategy, communication theory, and research methods, arguing that different combinations of these three lenses offer an infinite number of paths for studying strategic communication. However, Hallahan, Holtzhausen, Vercic, van Ruler, and Sriramesh (2007, pp.3) define strategic communication as 'the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfil its mission'. Argenti, Howell and Beck (2005, pp.83) define strategic communication as 'aligned with the company's overall strategy, to enhance its strategic positioning'. From the above, strategic communication can therefore be defined as a deliberate attempt by an individual or a group or an organization to use communication to enhance their plans and strategies to fulfil their mission. The use of strategic communication by governments, the military and the intelligence community against the media during war and conflict situations is therefore to enhance their censorship and propaganda measures in order to 'fulfil' their 'mission' of getting favourable coverage. Having defined strategic communication, I now

define censorship, which is one of the branches of strategic communication, the other (to be considered in this study) being propaganda.

According to Webster's dictionary, to 'censor' means 'to examine in order to suppress or delete anything considered objectionable'. The word 'censor' originated in ancient Rome, where the government appointed officials to take the census and to supervise public morals. Censorship occurs with the imposition of political or moral values on others by suppressing words, images, or ideas found offensive (Heins, 1993, pp.3). Censorship is generally understood to be the official suppression or prohibition of forms of expression (Moore, 2013, pp. 46). Moore adds that its legal definition is narrower '...expressly the official inspection of books, journals, theatre, film, music and popular media of many forms before release (pre-publication)'. This is to ensure that 'they do not offend against legal proscriptions instituted by governments' (ibid). Having defined censorship, I proceed to define propaganda.

Propaganda has attracted vigorous debate and scrutiny from scholars of propaganda and persuasion, including Taylor (2003), Jowett and O'Donnell (2012), Black (2001) Doob (1948) and Bakir et al. (2018). Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, pp.1) define propaganda as a communication that attempts to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist (the one behind the propaganda idea). They argue propaganda functions with persuasion which they define as 'an attempt to satisfy the needs of both the persuader and the persuadee' in a 'communicative process of influencing others'.

The above thesis is crucial to the understanding of propaganda techniques in this study. I proceed to discuss propaganda and censorship and their relationship with governments, the intelligence community and the military in the West and Africa.

## 2.2 Censorship

There are different types of censorship. This discussion will however examine security censorship of the media by governments, the intelligence community and the military in the West and Africa, because that constitutes one of the main themes this thesis is investigating. Censorship of the media by Western military is discussed next.

## 2.2.1 Western Media and Military Censorship

The Western media has since World War I (1914 to 1918) been under fire from governments, the intelligence community and the military in the West in its reportage of wars and conflicts. Consequently, the latter have adopted strategies to contain the media during war and conflict situations in order to ensure supportive coverage. One of these strategies is censorship. The techniques used to execute censorship against the media include embedding, pooling and denial of access to the frontline, regulations, intimidation,

harassment, arrests, detentions and threats of death, (Knightley, 2004, pp.105), (Allan and Zelizer, 2004, pp.30), (Taylor, 1997, pp.104-107), (Aday, 2017,pp.106), (Hammond, 2017, pp.65), (Allan and Sreedhaam, 2017, pp.102), (Hallin,1989, pp.127) and  (Caruthers, 2011, pp.50,74) amongst others.

Embedding as news management is where reporters are attached to the various military units (for weeks, months and or years) during wars and conflicts and this gives the military the opportunity of controlling the way the media report. Frederick Palmer of the *New York Herald* recounting his 'ordeal' in reporting World War I states:

> ...we lived in a mess with our *conducting officers* paying for our quarters, food...and having written our dispatches turned them over to the officers for *censorship*...the important items were those we left out and that made us public liars (Hallin, 1989, pp.127).

This submission is supported by Knightley (2004, pp.101-102) who states that during World War 1, leading correspondents were dressed in officers' uniforms, without badges or insignia of a rank but were given honorary status as 'captains and provided with food, housing, transport and also *with* military censors'. Taylor (1997), reports that military censors (during that war) were on the spot to 'review every word and image' before broadcast (pp.106-7). The fact that the censors were able to 'review every word and image' suggested the journalists were attached to the military which enabled the latter to review their words and images. Wilesmith (2011) while presenting a 'Reuters Institute Fellowship Paper' notes that in Afghanistan War (2001) the British government and military made 'considerable effort to embed visiting correspondents' even though 'experienced reporters like Hilsum of Channel 4 News (in Britain) (were) weary of the process' (pp.39).

Comprehensive system of embedding journalists started in 1996 under the Bill Clinton administration during the Bosnian war. The Pentagon described it as 'where a reporter goes and lives with the unit for several days or weeks and then writes a story' (Kenneth 1996, Department of Defence news briefing, May 7 cited in Heinz, 2007, pp.948-963). A U.S. army official however provides a more detailed definition of embedding as follows:

> ... Embedding is the act of assigning a reporter to a unit as a member of the unit. The reporter eats, sleeps and moves with the unit. The reporter is authorized open access to all sections of the unit and is not escorted by public affairs personnel. Rather, the unit is the reporter's escort. Reporters file their stories from unit locations and security is accomplished at the source, by establishing with the reporter what can be covered and reported on and what cannot be reported on, or when material can be reported (ibid).

Heinz argues the idea of integrating journalists into military units for a duration of a war was not settled until March 2003 in Iraq where some 775 journalists were invited into 'boot camps' by the U.S. army where basic military knowledge was impacted unto them to help them report 'safely and accurately' (ibid). He further argues that following the American example, the British Ministry of Defence also had to embed 128 journalists with British military units who were then dispatched to Iraq in mid March 2003 (ibid).

Under the embedding system, journalists are required to submit to security 'ground rules' that protect U.S army and their operations and failure on their part risks suspension or expulsion from combat zone (Douglas, 2009, pp.32). Embedding journalists goes with inducement where journalists are offered food clothing and shelter and protection from the military (Knightley, 2004, pp.101-102, 469).

To further facilitate embedding of journalists, inducement as a technique of military censorship was introduced as journalists were offered 'giveaways' during the coverage of wars and this is exemplified in the 'giveaways' offered journalists during World War 1 where leading correspondents were offered 'giveaways' in return for favourable coverage (see Knightley above). See also *New York Herald's* Frederick Palmer's 'confession' under 'embedding' above.

These 'giveaways' continued decades on as during the Vietnam War, U.S military fed journalists on a reimbursable basis (Knightley, 2004, pp.469). In contemporary times and in the Gulf War of 2003, Ralph Blumenthal and Jim Rutenberg of the *New York Times* reported that U.S military stated that 'journalists covering any United States attack on Iraq will have assigned slots with combat and support units and accompany them throughout the conflict'. They will also share '*transport, food and accommodation*' with correspondents (see New York Times, FEB. 18, 2003). The 'giveaways' constitute a substantial risk of influencing the journalists to give favourable coverage about the military. Beyond embedding and inducement, the military adopt other approaches to ensure favourable coverage during wars and conflicts. These are pooling and lack of access, harassment, intimidation, threats of death and sometimes killings.

Examples of pooling and denial of access can be seen in World War 1 when journalists were 'confined to lavish castles away from the fight while cameras were denied access to where death and destruction took place' (Taylor, 1997, pp.104). In the Gulf Wars (1990-91, 2003) the media were not only denied access to the frontline of the coalition forces but also in some cases to the enemy's territory, Allan and Zelizer (2004, pp.29). They argue that 'when the media tries to gain access to other parties (in the war), they provoke charges of treason'. They poetically summarize their observation about the Western media in Afghanistan and Iraq wars:

Western reporting of the wars in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003) were stories told by Western correspondents reporting from Western positions speaking to (mainly approved) Western political and military sources, mainly about Western military personnel, strategies, successes and less often failures... (pp.29-30).

Lack of access was not just about news reports and T.V. pictures but also still pictures as Knightley (2004, pp.105), states that during the Iraqi war of 2003 'only two photographers were allowed by the British Army onto the field, both of them army officers tasked to compile historical records only...'. For Allan and Sreedhaan (2017, pp.102) during the wars in Iraq (2003), Libya (2011) and Syria (on-going) 'accessibility was always an issue amidst the chaos of violence', owing to a strategy of 'lock out or lock down imposed on journalists by state and military authorities'. Beyond accessibility problems the media also face intimidation and harassment as argued below.

Journalists suffered intimidation, harassment and threats of death as part of censorship. During World War 1, newspapers in Germany were 'directed' by the military authorities to 'patriotically educate the nation of the need for secrecy' (2005, pp.28). Knightley (2004) says during the Iraqi wars of 2003, only the military were permitted to take pictures and anyone else found taking photos faced the firing squad (pp.105). In the same war, journalists were warned by the U.S military against violating the censorship rules and those found culpable faced severe consequences and 'independent journalists risked getting detained, lost, captured or killed' (Allan and Zelizer, 2004, pp.30).

The intimidation was so pronounced that 30 media companies, including the *Associated Press*, in a letter to the Pentagon, complained about 'a growing number of incidents in Iraq in which journalists (were) harassed by U.S. troops in the course of covering the news' (Keefe, 2009, pp.1). Sandy Johnson of the *Associated Press* said 'our journalists in Iraq have been shoved to the ground, pushed out of the way, told to leave the scene of explosions' (ibid). This intimidation tactic included seizure of equipment as Sandy again said, 'we've had camera disks and videotapes confiscated, reporters detained,' (ibid). Allan and Sreedhaan (2017, pp.102) say journalists' lives were 'targeted' (in Iraq, Libya and Syria) as part of the 'lock out or lock down' rules imposed on journalists by the U.S authorities.

It is clear from the above discussion that the military has a consistent pattern of techniques of censorship against the media. These are pre-censorship (polling and denial of access), post-censorship (threats of death, intimidation and harassment in the midst of access) and embedding (where journalists obey military 'ground rules' while being attached to the military who feed, protect, house and clothe them but review their reports that makes it difficult for journalists to report critically about the military even though they have access

to information). These patterns of censorship from the military produced self censorship as captured by Carruthers in reference to censorship measures in Britain and Germany during World War 1:

> Many editors sought Press Bureau guidance on stories acquired from sources other than the official wire service which they feared might contravene the nebulous rules... this was voluntary self censorship...if in doubt, ask the censors became the editors' unwritten rule (Carruthers, 2011, pp.51).

As will be demonstrated in chapter six, some journalists covering the Dagbon conflict also resorted to self censorship in other to stay away from trouble. However, the impact of military censorship of the Western media goes beyond self restraint to include direct threats to lives of correspondents. Knightley (2004, pp.105), says in the 2003 Iraqi war, any journalist 'found taking photos faced the firing squad'. Lack of access to the battle front also makes it difficult for correspondents to 'do a good job'. Allan and Zelizer state that during the Gulf Wars (1990-91, 2003) journalists were pooled and barred from certain places and warned against violation and that 'independent journalists risked getting detained, lost, captured or killed' (2004, pp.30). Beyond the threats of death, journalists sometimes were victims of direct shelling by the military as captured by Allan and Sreedhaam below:

> Liverpool-born Tim Hetherington and his American colleague Chris Hondros – underscored the constant dangers negotiated by those striving to document the cruel realities of warfare. Both were killed on the afternoon of 20 March 2011 in the besieged Libyan city of Misrata, victims of deliberately targeted shelling by Gaddafi forces (2017, pp.97).

These censorship measures rendered the media 'weapons of mass deception' (Freedman, 2017, pp.72), a euphemism for complete loss of not only editorial and journalistic independence but also public trust. In Africa the media had its share of military censorship as discussed below.

## 2.2.2 Military Censorship and the African Media

Military censorship of the media in Africa is very distinct from what pertains in the Western world because of the history of coups in Africa. Unlike the military in the West that applies censorship against the media during war and conflict times to ensure favourable coverage, the media in Africa suffer a 'daily routine' of harassment, arrests, detention and to some extent killings in the hands of the military. Unlike their Western counterparts who travel around the world to report wars and conflicts, some 'as embeds', African media are

mostly confined to local wars (presumably for financial reasons) and in most cases are denied access to the front line as in the case of Zimbabwe (Sikosana, 2011, pp.46). This discussion on *censorship of African media by the military will therefore be confined to the everyday interaction between the media and the military in both democratic and undemocratic regimes.*

The harsh and hostile atmosphere created for the media by successive military leaders in Africa since independence through the promulgation of censorship laws, closure of media houses, seizure of publications, arrests, detentions and killings of journalists are the focus of Ngara and Nsebonu (2012). They say the media suffered seizure of publications as tens of thousands of newspaper copies were seized by the Nigerian military government in 1991 alone and in 1992 the *Guardian, Concord* and *The Punch* newspapers were closed by the Saani Abacha military regime (pp.191-192).

They also suffered detentions as in Nigeria, Godwin Agbroko (Week newspaper) and Dapo Olorunyomi (The News Newspaper) were detained and beaten with rods and electric batons. Nosa Igiebor and Ono Osifo-Whiskey (both of Tell) spent six months in detention. Babafemi Ojudu (The News) was detained for eight months without being allowed a change of cloths while others like Chris Anyanwu, publisher of TSM, George Mba of Tell magazine and Ben Charles Obi of Classique were sentenced by a secret military tribunal to various jail terms over alleged involvement in the 1995 phantom coup (Ngara and Nsebonu, 2012, pp.191-192). These molestations in some cases conducted to deaths as journalists, including Bagauda Kaltho of *The News* in Nigeria was abducted and killed just like Tunde Oladepo of *The Guardian* in Nigeria (Ngara and Nsebonu, 2012, pp.192).

The killings were not confined to Nigeria alone as journalists like Norbert Zongo of Burkina Faso in 1998, Carlos Cardoso of Mozambique in 2000 and Deyda Heydara of Gambia in 2004, were also killed for being critical of their respective regimes (Karikari, 2010, UN Africa Renewal Report). Journalists were also harassed and according to Nyamnjoh (2005, pp.48) '… (under) military regimes (in Africa) it was subversive to question government policy'. Apart from intimidating the media with charges of subversion, military governments also turned despotic as Mwangi observes that in Africa '… military regimes increasingly turned despotic and further compromised the media as an ally in the match towards tyranny (2010, pp.4).

Wide ranging regulations and restrictions were also put in place by the military governments to check the media some of which laws were inherited from the colonial administration (Nyamnjoh, 2005, pp.48). Nyamnjoh argues 'the post colonial press from the 1960s to the 1980s (when military coups were widespread) was subject to draconian laws and administrative censorship' (ibid, pp.42). In Ghana during Ignatus Acheampong's led military regime (AFRC, 1972-78) 'strict sanctions' were imposed on the media, while

during the period of the (PDNC, 1981-92), 'restrictions were intensified' (Lindberg et al. 2012, pp.12). Under the fourth democratic dispensation journalists continue to suffer brutalities and deaths. Latest statistics from the *Media Foundation for West Africa* indicate that 138 incidences of violence have been recorded against journalists in Ghana from 2005 to 2014. The perpetrators include police, military and political party vigilante groups (Authoritarian Tech, 2019). In January 2019, a journalist, Ahmed Swale who exposed corruption at the Ghana Football Association was shot dead in a drive-by shooting (Authoritarian Tech, 2019). The forms of censorship took a pattern along seizure of publications, detentions, killings, harassment and promulgation and use of existing laws that criminalized dissent. These developments impacted on the journalists, including physical and economic impacts as well as division in the media, loss of public trust and loss of journalistic independence.

The physical impact of military censorship on the media ranged from detentions, harassment, injuries and amongst others, deaths as indicated by Ngara and Nsebonu in the Nigerian case (see above). There was also loss of editorial independence by the media and loss of public trust. The stringent control of the media by the military epitomized loss of journalistic and editorial independence since the media was not free in its reportage during the military regimes. In Nigeria the media risked detentions harassment and deaths, Ngara and Nsebonu (2012, pp.191-192) for publishing any unfavourable news against the military establishment which also suggested loss of editorial independence.

In Ghana the media was 'viewed with apprehension' because of its proximity to 'abuse of civil liberty' (Avle, 2011, pp.7) while in the observation of Mwangi, the media in Africa 'was an ally in the match towards tyranny (2010, pp.4). All this suggested lack of editorial independence and lack of trust for the media. The impact of military censorship on the African media included harassment, detentions, loss of jobs and deaths as argued above. I now focus on government censorship and westren media.

### 2.2.3 Government Censorship of Western Media

Western governments influence on the Western media in times of wars and conflicts has attracted criticisms from Western writers of media and conflict, especially in the U.S and the U.K. They say the media generally act as 'faithful servants' to governments in times of wars and national crisis because of excessive dependence on official sources when constructing the news, patriotism and fear of flak (if reporting is seen as undermining the war effort), (Wolfsfeld, 1997, pp.69, Livingston et al. 2007, pp.48). Western governments achieve censorship of the media-amongst other factors-through suppression of dissent, denial of access and framing up of journalists. Connelly and Welch observe that Western governments during World War 1 and 11, 'imposed strict censorship on the flow of information and used the media for their own ends' (2005, pp. x).

In Germany and Britain, the use of official secrecy act was pronounced during World War 1. German government in 1904 placed a bill in parliament to 'provide for the control of naval and military information in cases of emergency' and followed it up with the Official Secrets Act in 1910 which determined that the press would not hold anything deemed contrary to 'public interest'. The British imposed 'wide ranging prohibitions' against the collection and publication of information about the war or any material which might be useful to the enemy (Carruthers, 2011, pp.50).

Carruthers' view is supported by Knightley who states that in World War I (1914-18), under the Defence of the Realm Act, the British government could 'examined incoming and outgoing cables' and could 'censor' newspapers (2004, pp.84). In addition, during World War II (1939-45) radio and telegraph services were suspended and although a diminish telegraph services continued, 'incoming and outgoing telegraphs had to pass through a press bureau...announced by Winston Churchill' (Carruthers, 2011, pp.49). Again, the British government in the late 1960s 'routinely intercepted and vetted telegrams' in what is known as the 'D-Notice Affair' (see Creevy, 2008, pp.209-212).

In Germany during World War 1, the government established War Press Office to suppress and release news and with that 'newspapers were strictly warned...to desist from informing their readership of the censorship measures' (Carruthers, 2011, pp.49). The suppression of dissent and denial of access is not confined to Britain and Germany alone. In the U.S in 1962 and during the Vietnam war, (1954-75) the U.S government issued the 'famous 'telegram 1006' which said, among others, that reporters 'should not be taken to such military operations which will easily lead to negative reports' (Mercer, Mungham & Williams, 1987, pp.213–214 cited in Kempf & Luostarinn, 2002). In recent times, during the war on terror, the U.S asked the Emir of Qatar to 'restrain' Al-Jazeera which had aired the Bin laden tape and asked American T.V. stations 'not to broadcast the tape live and unedited' (Hammond, 2007, pp. 65, Wilesmith, 2011, pp.10).

Another strategy was to frame up journalists. Journalists who proved difficult to control were sometimes framed up by governments. A case in point is that the U.S government framed up an *A. P.* (Associated Press) war photographer (Bilal Hussein) as 'serving the interest of the enemy' while covering the Iraqi war of 2006. He was held without a charge for two years (by the U.S government) and was later released without any charges preferred against him (Allan and Sreedhaan, 2017, pp. 95). This intimidating tactic was extended to contemporary times by governments of the U.S and U.K as stated below.

The intimidating tactic employed by the U.K and U.S governments against the media is explored by the *Surveillance Press Freedom* in a news release in 2013. The press freedom organization said U.K authorities arrested David Miranda (the partner of *Guardian Newspaper* journalist, Glenn Greenwald) without charges in London in 2013. The

detainment was 'designed to send a message to Greenwald, (whistleblower journalist on Edward Snowden's leaked documents, which revealed widespread unchecked surveillance program in the United States and England) and other journalists covering national security' (Surveillance Press Freedom, 2013). About the U.S and intimidating tactic, the press release said its Justice Department was spying on *Associated Press* journalists and went so far as to label a *Fox News* journalist a 'co-conspirator' in a leaked investigation (ibid).

Governments in the West adopt largely a pattern of wide-ranging prohibitions against the media through the enacting of censorship laws to suppress dissent, (see above in World War 1, Vietnam War and War on Terror) intimidation of journalists as stated above during World War 1 and the arrest and spying of journalists in contemporary times (2013) as chronicled by the *Surveillance Press Freedom* above. These censorship measures impacted on the media as follows.

The story of Bilal Hussein (see above) perhaps demonstrates one of the draconian ways governments can 'descend' to protect their interests; a move which had telling effect on the life of Hussein. His constant transfer from one prison to another amidst blindfolding was a 'terrifying experience' and constituted a substantial risk of affecting his psyche. The arrest of David Miranda and the spying and labelling of *Associated Press* and *Fox* journalists (see above) were all psychological warfare to deter journalists from playing their watchdog role.

The consequences of these are perhaps captured in Wolfsfeld's judgment of the media that they act as 'faithful servants' to governments in times of wars and national crisis' due to amongst other things 'the fear of flak' (1997, pp.69). The African media also endured censorship from their governments as discussed below.

### 2.2.4 Government Censorship and the African Media

The relationship between governments and the press in Africa has generally been characterized by 'tension and conflict'. Where there appears to be no tension, the reason is that the 'press has either been cowed into submission or it has become an organ of the ruling party' (Ansah, 1988, pp.9). This aptly describes the relationship between African governments and their media. A relationship based on tension and conflict (and consequently, mistrust) and that epitomizes the ordeal of the media in the hands of their African governments. The African governments achieve censorship of the media through several ways as discussed below.

Ansah (1998, pp. 9) notes that '...there has been a systematic suppression of all organized opposition (in Africa) and the elimination of all forms of organized dissent' all in the name of 'a development theory'-mobilizing the masses for accelerated development which is a euphemism for 'authoritarianism'. '...Journalists from the private media were also not

invited for government programmes' and 'decades of dictatorship put fear on experts and government officials who fear to talk to the media' (Nyamnjoh, 2005, pp.48). This situation epitomizes suppression of dissent and denial of access to information. In the 1970s, in Zimbabwe during the 'Matabeleland conflict, government placed a ban on reporting' the conflict. Foreign journalists found reporting from 'the sealed security zone' were deported (Sikosana, 2011, pp.46).

In Nigerian, the government's desperation to control the media is aptly captured in an interview with a Nigerian broadcast Minister, Alex Akinyele which appeared in the London-based *New Internationalists* publication. 'I don't censor them'. 'Let them write…but if anybody does anything that is against the national interest that person will have to answer questions…'. He adds that to 'criticize Nigeria is to criticize God.' (New Internationalist, 1989, cited in Mwangi, 2010, pp. 4). This is clearly an epitome of intimidation.

In Zambia, harassment and intimidation of journalists attracted the interest of the presidency as 'President Kenneth Kaunda appoint (ed) and fire (d) editors' (Nwangi, 2010, pp.4). In Zimbabwe the situation is not different as 'there is a culture of fear amongst media workers' because of government's reluctance to 'repeal the colonial laws that criminalize dissent'. The government relied on 'Rhodes bureaucratic and security personnel under whose auspices the culture of repression and fear originated and developed' (Sikosana, 2011, pp.45). These measures included the arrests of journalists, and the banning of newspapers (Manganga, 2012, pp.107).

The closure of newspapers and the detention and firing of journalists in some African countries are captured by Ochilo who reported that in West Africa, at least eight francophone newspapers were closed for 'allegedly failing to comply with press laws' while in 'Malawi, some journalists have either been detained or fired for writing critical editorials'. Similar harassments he noted were recorded in other countries such as Angola, Rwanda, Somalia, Togo, Zaire and Ivory Coast (Ochilo, 1993, pp.31).

In Burundi the government of Nkurunziza used the media regulatory body, National Communication Council to impose sanctions and to repress the media, including threats, arrests and prosecution of journalists (Frere, 2017 pp.5). Several private radio stations were closed, and the government started to create its own private radio to support its activities (ibid). In 2015, following a failed coup attempt by some military officers in Bujumbura, functionaries of the governing party went to the local *Rema FM* and looted it for giving voice to demonstrators protesting the third time presidential contest of President Nkurunziza. Police destroyed four main private stations and some T. V. stations were also burnt (ibid, pp.6). Scores of journalists and top managers of radio stations were threatened and accused of being 'accomplices' to the coup, thus forcing them into exile

(ibid, pp.7). Still in Burundi a journalist was shot dead after his broadcasting station was shut down and some other radio stations suspended, Fiedler and Frere (2018, pp.127).

In a treatise on surveys on how African conflicts have been covered by the Western media, Risso (2017) quoting articles from Keith Somerville and Marie Soleil Frere published in the *London Review of Books* (2013) identifies challenges faced by African journalists at times of political turmoil and ethnic conflict, including personal safety, logistics problems and locating witnesses (pp.59-64). Risso's argument veers into media imperialism where Western media coverage of African conflicts since World War II has portrayed Africa and reinforced Western public's mindset of the continent as primitive, violent and backward (ibid). Plaut (2017, pp.41) reflects on challenges faced by Western reporters reporting Africa, including '...frequently rigid rules and regulations (that) were inoperable in an African context' like seeking consent of parents before interviewing children in areas where such parents were killed, and the children abducted by rebels. Other challenges included how to convince editors to cover certain stories not urgent enough to demand instant attention and accessibility problems due to poor roads and lack of electricity amongst other social amenities (ibid, pp.44). Plaut also reflects on the dwindling number of Western correspondents in Africa mainly because of growing number of local portals and the internet where African diaspora could get their news from back home (ibid, pp.42). *In this study I am not looking at how the Western media covered the Dagbon conflict but the local media coverage of it. Again because of the marginal nature of their coverage arguably due to the challenges enumerated by Plaut above, their stories could not generate enough techniques and concepts of propaganda and censorship that I used in this study. Consequently, this study will not discuss Western media coverage of Africa, including the Dagbon conflict.*

In Malawi President Banda of Malawi 'jailed virtually the whole private press corps in the mid-seventies...'. In Uganda and Zaire, 'journalists shuttle in and out of jail so regularly that their wives don't even ask where they have been when they reappear' (Mwangi, 2010, pp.4). In Cote d'Ivoire '99 percent of journalists sanctioned since 1990 were sanctioned because of offences against the head of state', (Nyamnjoh, 2005, pp.67). In Swaziland a journalist, Bheki Makhubu lost her job and was detained and charged with criminal defamation for writing that future bride of the Swazi king was 'truant' 'naughty' and a 'school dropout' (ibid, pp.68).

The media also suffered deaths as in the 1970s, Equatorial Guinea's President Marcias Nguema dealt drastically with the media as he went a step further in the molestation of journalists; by the time he was overthrown and killed in 1979, 'all journalists of note had been executed or were on exile' (Nwangi, 2010, pp.4). Regulations were also introduced to 'check' the media as in South Africa, the degree and breadth of state interventions were

unequivocally on the rise. Hallin and Mancini (2012, pp.108) contend that the South African state continued to use apartheid-era legislations to curtail media freedom despite repeated appeals from the media to have those laws abolished. Instead a new legislation that proposed to vet all magazines and newspapers was introduced (ibid). These censorship measures were so pronounced that by 1988, the then Director of the Pan African News Agency, Auguste Mpassi-Muba, spoke out that it was high time the 'officially controlled, censored, muzzled or partisan news agency gave way in Africa to news based on the diversity of opinions' (Mwangi, 2010, pp.4).

In Zimbabwe government has refused to 'repeal the colonial laws that criminalize dissent' (Sikosana, 2011, pp.45). They used restrictive laws like the Official Secrets Act, the Law and Order Maintenance Act (LOMA) and the Emergency Powers Act, (Alexander 2006, pp.47 cited in Manganga, 2012, pp.105). In recent times, Manganga argued the state enacted 'repressive media laws like IPPA (200) and POSA (2002)' and bombed the *Daily News* printing press in 2001, a few days after government had declared that the paper posed a threat to national security (Manganga, 2012, pp.107).

The use of laws to criminalize dissent, intimidation of journalists, arrests, sanctions and detentions follow the pattern of African governments censorship of the media. Examples of these abounded in Nigeria, Togo, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland as stated above. Esipisu and Kariithi (2007, pp.58) summarize the picture as thus:

> Today's Africa's media picture is mixed... the other hand, countries like Zimbabwe, Equatorial Guinea and Eritrea have taken deliberate steps to limit all media scrutiny, reportedly expelling foreign journalists, banning international human rights groups, and trying to control internet access (Esipisu and Kariithi, 2007, pp.58).

The effect of these censorship measures on the media in Africa ranged from detention, loss of jobs, harassment and culture of silence on the part of journalists. Journalists faced arrests and detentions as in Cote d'Ivoire (see above) and in Zimbabwe a Defence Minister warned the *Chronicle* newspaper editor that he 'would send the brigade to his office to put him in his place' for daring to expose corruption in government (Sikosana, 2011, pp.45). In the same country journalists were detained and newspapers shut down (Manganga, 2012, pp.107). Ansah (1988, pp.9) summarizes the impact as thus 'There has been a systematic suppression of all organized opposition (in Africa) and the elimination of all forms of organized dissent'. Ansah (1991) adds that '...there is hardly any country in Africa where at one time or the other journalists have not suffered indignity and harassment...' (cited in Sikosana, 2011, pp. 45).

The economic impact of the censorship cannot be glossed over. Journalists lost their jobs which had economic implications on them and their families. Example is in the case of Bhaki Makhubu of Swaziland (see above). The result of the censorship measures also contributed to the 'shrinking of the privately-owned press' (Ansah, 1988, pp.9). The shrinking of the private media meant fewer jobs for journalists which also had economic implications.

In Botswana sedition and defamation laws against the media had rendered journalists helpless and they were cowed to submission and now practice self censorship (Nyamnjoh, 2005, pp.68). Beyond the situation in Botswana journalists of state media in Africa have also been rendered 'public relations practitioners for governments' (ibid, pp.48). The effect of all these is that 'the media has been cowed to submission by the censorship laws (Ansah, 1988, pp.9), compelling them to practice 'self censorship'.

Under the circumstance, the public lost trust in the media and according to Nyamnjoh, journalists from the public service (state owned media) fed the public with 'doctored information' made available to them by governments, an observation that suggested lack of trust. He says, 'often they took for granted (or were too powerless to question) the truth of what they were fed' which they intended 'presented to the public as if it were the fruit of professional or disinterested journalism' (2005, pp.48). Sikosana (2011, pp.45) argues that in the face of all the abuse in Zimbabwe, the media in Zimbabwe had been 'co-opted into corruption' by 'dimming its light'-a euphemism for the media doing little to meet public expectation of exposing the ills in government. This showed lack of trust in the media. Intelligence Community censorship of western media follows in the discussion.

### 2.2.5 Intelligence Community censorship and the Western media

The intelligence community is one of the three key institutions that work to ensure favourable media coverage in times of wars and conflicts. They achieve this through various strategies, including censorship propaganda and manipulation of the media. Bakir (2017, pp.245) identifies three key strategies employed by the intelligence community in the West to manipulate the press; these are withholding information or deliberately refusing to confirm or deny information, the use or threatened use of legal force and criminal prosecution against journalists and whistle-blowers, and the use of disinformation and psychological warfare techniques, based on forgeries, fabrications and deception.

Keeble (2017, pp.14), Hillebrand (2012, pp.704) and Dover & Goodman (2009, pp.18) however think that the key 'manipulator' in the manipulation of the media is the media themselves. Keeble identifies three main ways the security operatives in Britain manipulate the media during war and conflict times. These are:

1. Attempt to recruit journalists to spy on their colleagues or attempt themselves to go on journalistic cover
2. Intelligence officers posing as journalists to write contentious articles under false names.
3. Planting intelligence agency propaganda stories on willing journalists who disguise their origin from readers (2017, pp.14).

One of the strategies adopted by the intelligence community to control the media is manipulation. Keeble's second argument, (see above) that sometimes intelligence officers pose as journalists or plant stories in the media with willing journalists is a clear case of manipulation of the media. This is given impetus by Hillebrand (2012) who notes that much of what is known about 'modern intelligence agencies have in fact been placed in the public domain deliberately by the agencies themselves…often using the medium of the press' (pp.704). See also Dover and Goodman (2009, pp.18). Even though the media will often see this as 'scoop', the intelligence agencies have 'good reasons for the release of the particular piece of information at a particular point in time and under particular circumstances' (Dover and Goodman, 2009, pp.18). This strategy of manipulating the media is exemplified in the media coverage of the Dagbon conflict as can be seen later in this thesis.

They also use national security interest as an excuse to manipulate the media in return for favourable coverage. The media's 'fear of flak' (Wolfsfeld, 1997, pp. 69) is sometimes exploited by the intelligence community in the latter's bid to persuade the media to gain supportive coverage in times of wars and conflicts. Bakir (2013, pp.14, 2017, pp.245) argues that the intelligence community uses the argument of 'national security interest' to persuade journalists from publishing information considered unfavourable. In Britain in 1988, the Home Office (National Security) banned all unedited and live interviews with 'terrorists' supporters' (Schmid and Paletz, 1992, pp.96). During the war on terror the Bush administration invoked 'national security' to regard as suspicious any journalists questioning the war on terror (Bakir, 2013, pp. 14). Again with 'national security interest' the intelligence community uses injunctions against the media in order to ensure favourable coverage. Bakir (2017, pp.245) cites the USA's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and Department of Defence (DoD) which in the 1970s used prior constraint to obtain injunctions against newspaper, magazine or book publishers to prevent them from publishing classified or restricted information.

Intelligence agencies may also resort to blacklisting, harassing and threatening non-compliant journalists if they fail to manipulate the media through the above techniques. A clear case is the case of Gary Webb, the San Jose *Mercury News* reporter whose credibility was destroyed by the CIA for unearthing evidence in what became known as the 'Dark Alliance' in the 1990s. The evidence was that the CIA had conspired with Nicaraguan

contras to import cocaine into the U.S for the purpose of destroying the black community. The CIA used its editorial links to *Mercury news* (and other media organizations) to attack the credibility of Webb who was subsequently fired and who later committed suicide after failing to find a job for years (Taylor, 2009, pp.81-82).

There are clear patterns through which intelligence community manipulate the media. They will refuse to confirm or deny information, they will cite 'national security interest' for not giving out information and when they are 'under fire' they threaten to or use legal force against journalists. They infiltrate the media by posing as journalists or using journalists against journalists (see Bakir, 2017, pp.245, Taylor, 2009, pp.81-82 and Keeble, 2017, pp.14). These impacted on the work of the Western media to include physical and psychological impact as well as loss of journalistic independence, loss of public trust and division in the media.

The physical impact of the censorship of the intelligence community against the media in the West arguably lead to deaths and loss of jobs with the attendant psychological effects. The case of Gary Webb as argued by Taylor (2009, pp. 81-82) was how the intelligence agencies strategy of manipulation of the media affected journalists. Webb's credibility was destroyed by the CIA, who also used their editorial links to *Mercury news* to end the job of Webb at *Mercury news* (ibid). The CIA also blacklisted Webb, and failing to find a job for years, he decided to commit suicide (Taylor, 2009, pp.81-82). (Bakir, 2017, pp.245) contends that 'Where direct censorship and self-censorship fail, intelligence agencies may resort to blacklisting, harassing and threatening non-compliant press employees' and the blacklisting of Webb was what arguably led to his death by suicide.

Knightley (2004) said lack of access in the eighties produced a poor quality of reporting from world troubled spots and that in such circumstances, correspondents became a tool of the intelligence agencies (pp.476). Lack of access, he argues illustrated the convoluted manner in which facts had to emerge in the war between Afghanistan and Russia where published casualty figures for Soviet forces in Afghanistan varied from a low of 1,200 to a high of 10,000 yet it was difficult to find a Western correspondent who had seen for himself a single Russian body (ibid).

Psychological effect emanating from 'selective authorized leaks' is another technique used by the intelligence community as they cultivate sympathetic journalists and leak information to them, Bakir (2016, pp.2). This enables them to 'scoop' their colleagues who are often under pressure to get the news. This situation renders them prey to the whims of the security agencies and as Livingston et al. finds out 'because of their dependence on public bloc...to correct the democratic balance...the press becomes increasingly subject to manipulation' (2007, pp.48). They also use divisive strategies to get favourable coverage by

going undercover as journalists and planting journalists to spy on other journalists (see Keeble, 2017, pp.14). Through this they succeed in sowing a seed of discord and mistrust amongst journalists. Taylor says the CIA used their 'editorial links' to *Mercury news* to sack Webb (2009, pp. 81-82). Mistrust breeds division in the media and makes it easier for the intelligence community to manipulate the media. The consequence of this in Britain, according to Richard Keeble is that the media becomes 'playthings of MI5', (see The-Latest.com, 07/02/2008). Another technique the intelligence community use is to plant agents in the media (Keeble, 2017, pp14) and establish links with editors (see Taylor, 2009, pp.81-82). They take control of the situation and manipulate the news and this affects the editorial independence of the news organizations. The consequence of this leads to loss of public trust in the media. Freedman (2017) argues that whereas there is the capacity for disagreement in the media, (limited and tactical it may be) 'coherent oppositional frameworks are largely marginalized, and dissenting viewpoints remain highly bounded' (pp.72). He shares this view with other authors, including DiMaggio (2008), Edwards and Cromwell (2006, 2009), Philo and Berry (2011) and Pilger (1998) whose analyses coalesce around a shared view that, for all the valuable contributions of individual journalists, mainstream media function as 'weapons of mass deception rather than public enlightenment'. Hammond (2007, pp.64) while discussing image manipulation in the media and problem of trust, states:

> Most newspapers now feel obliged to have policies on the honest use of digital images and the very fact that the press has to promise not to use digitally altered pictures indicates that they know their readers have less confidence in the photographs as a reliable record of reality.

A study of audience reactions to news of 9/11 also uncovered 'a deep lack of trust in British and American TV news' amongst Muslims in the U.K (ibid). The question is, should the Western media be blamed entirely for falling prey to government, intelligence community and military censorship? Again Hammond (ibid) contends 'the mainstream Western media's own cynicism and the audience lack of trust are symptoms of a broader problem of political culture'. The cynicism notwithstanding, there is evidence that some war reporters have challenged the 'status quo' as captured by Tumber and Webster (2006). They contended that there were some war journalists like John Simpson of the BBC, Robert Fisk, John Pilger and James Cameron who maintained their 'reputation for seeking the truth' and that John Simpson refused to go to Iraq as an 'embed' because he 'didn't want to be beholden to the very people whose actions we are obliged to report on impartially' (Simpson, 2003 quoted in Tumber and Webster, 2006, pp.18). These notwithstanding journalists in the West continue to face censorship measures from the intelligence community as argued above. Intelligence community censorship of African media is discussed next.

### 2.2.6 Intelligence Community Censorship of African Media

This section looks at intelligence community censorship of the media in Africa. African media like their counterparts in the West also suffer censorship from their intelligence community. The *Post* newspaper of Zambia whose reporters were picked up severally for their reportage on security issues in Zambia is a clear case of intelligence community censorship of the media in Africa. Nyamnjoh writes that editors of that paper were picked up by the intelligence service for publishing a story that warned of 'Zambia's vulnerability to possible attacks from Angola and raised critical issues of national security'. They were charged with 'espionage and endangering national security' (2005, pp.67).

Scholarship on intelligence community censorship on African media includes the Botswana case where the ruling Botswana Democratic Party is tied to national security and the media is accused of undermining national security if they publish sensitive information about the party (Nyamnjoh, 2005, pp.68). These measures are not only in southern Africa but also in West Africa. In Togo, Amnesty's annual report (UNHCR Emergency and Security Service report) for 1998 noted continuing extrajudicial executions of returnees from exile and that 'the security forces … continued to enjoy total impunity for widespread human rights violations, including the detention and torture of journalists…' (Manley, 2003, pp.9). In Ghana security services were high on the list of those who harassed, intimidated and threatened the media with violence between 2003 and 2014 as recorded by *Media Foundation for West Africa* in its 2014 report (Authoritarian Tech, 2019). Intelligence community in Africa as demonstrated above used national security interest to harass, detain and torture journalists. These censorship measures impacted on the work of the media in Africa, including intimidation and harassment.

Nyamnjoh's (2005, pp.67) account above is a clear case of intimidation of the media. They also suffered harassment and torture as Manley (2003, pp.9) writes about how journalists in Togo were detained and tortured by the security services (see above). In Ghana security agencies molestation of journalists led to a drop in Ghana's ranking on press freedom by losing its first position in Africa in 2018 to Namibia in 2019 (Authoritarian Tech, 2019).

### 2.2.7 Conclusion on Censorship

It is clear from the above discussion that censorship abounds and plays a crucial role in the relationship between the media on one hand and governments, the intelligence community and the military on the other during war and conflict situations. Whereas literature on censorship of the media whether in the West or Africa during times of national crisis and wars is prevalent, literature on censorship of the media in chieftaincy conflicts is missing. *Literature on censorship by government, the military and intelligence community during*

*chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana is also not available. This represents a gap in literature which this thesis intends to fill.* Propaganda and the media are the next focus of the discussion.

## 2.3 Propaganda

This section will discuss core techniques of propaganda, including 'filters' of propaganda, 'information disorder', 'deception and denial' 'word game' and amongst others 'organized persuasive communication' and 'facilitative communication'. It will also discuss how propaganda techniques like lies, deception, denial, intimidation, harassment and coercion among others have been used against the media by governments, the military and the intelligence community in the West and Africa.

### 2.3.1 Core Techniques of Propaganda

Wardle and Derakhshan (2017, pp.5-6) in theorising propaganda offer a new conceptual framework for examining propaganda. They call it 'information disorder' and identify three ways by which it is examined. These are misinformation, disinformation and malinformation. Using the dimensions of harm and falseness, they argue that mis-information is when false information is shared, but no harm is meant; disinformation is when false information is knowingly shared to cause harm and mal-information is when genuine information is shared to cause harm, often by moving information designed to stay private into the public sphere (ibid). The introduction of malinformation to the debate is particularly significant in an era where there is growing debate about the Edward Snowden leaks. Examples of these types of information are also abounding in the Dagbon case as argued later in this study. The information disorder proponents argue that there are three phases in information disorder-the creation, the production and the distribution (ibid). The creation is when the message is created, the production is when the message is turned into a media product and the distribution is when the message/product is distributed or made public, Wardle and Derakhshan (2017, pp.6). Their model is further enhanced by Zollmann (2017) who goes further to categorize it.

Zollmann (2017, pp.7) sees propaganda as 'the forming of texts and opinions in support of particular interests and through media and non-media mediated means with the intention to produce public support and/or relevant action'. He argues that even though the above definition is broad it proceeds on the assumption that liberal democratic societies are exposed to a range of propaganda techniques applied by various institutions and actors (ibid). This is because propaganda manifests when content is aligned with state-corporate ideology (i.e. practices, values, meanings or interest-linked perspectives), (ibid, pp.9). Quoting Jowett and O'Donnell (1992, pp.214), he stresses that 'one purpose of propaganda is to maintain the legitimacy of the institution or organization that it represents and thereby ensure the legitimacy of its activities' (Ibid, pp.10). Propaganda Zollmann argues

does not only 'manifest in symbolic communication but also in physical interventions and whereas both techniques are aimed at shaping opinion and/or influencing behaviour, opinion does not necessarily need to change in order for action to be influenced (Ibid, pp.8). Zollmann professes empirical enquiry into 'production and distribution', 'content' and lastly 'reception orientated' as 'filters' of propaganda.

This model arguably seems to be a step ahead of Wardle and Derakhshan (2017, pp.5-6) who suggest three phases in information disorder (propaganda) as being the creation, the production and the distribution of a (propaganda) message (ibid). Beyond the creation distribution and message, Zollmann has added reception (audience response) into determining the effectiveness of a propaganda message (emphasis mine). Zollmann's propaganda treatise will be useful in discussing propaganda and the media in this study.

Doob (1948) cited in Black (2001, pp.124) characterizes the detection of propaganda amongst others as follows:

1.      A heavy or undue reliance on authority figures and spokespersons, rather than empirical validation, to establish its truths, conclusions, or impressions.
2.      A reduction of situations into simplistic and readily identifiable cause and effect relations, ignoring multiple causality of events.
3.      A greater emphasis on conflict than on cooperation among people, institutions and situations.

Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, pp.1) (see their definition on propaganda above) lay down the forms of propaganda as Black, White and Grey propaganda as follows:

1.   *Black propaganda* is when the source is concealed or credited to a false authority and spread lies, including creative deceit, an example is the lie told by the U.S government that Saddam Hussein had Weapons of Mass Destruction (see Propaganda and the Western media below). Black propaganda is therefore 'the big lie' (ibid, pp.17).

2.   *Grey propaganda* is when the accuracy of the information is uncertain. Here the source may or may not be accurate and is considered a middle ground between Black and white propaganda, e.g. the planting of stories in the media in Britain by the intelligence community as argued by Keeble (see under Intelligence Community censorship of the Western media).

3.   *White propaganda* is when the information is defined correctly and tends to be accurate, but the intention is to build credibility with the audience which could have usefulness for the future.

In adding up to the above treatise, Simpson (2015) argues that these three basic techniques are part of the psychological warfare techniques of the U.S. army that 'white propaganda, stresses simplicity, clarity and repetition and is designed to be perceived by its audience as truthful, balanced, and factual', and the U.S. often conducts this type of propaganda by using outlets such as the Voice of America (pp.9-12). Black propaganda, in contrast, 'stresses trouble, confusion and terror'. A disparity of black propaganda tactic involves 'forging enemy documents and distributing them to target audiences as a means of discrediting rival powers' (ibid). The last of the three, grey propaganda, is between white and black propaganda and typically involves 'planting false information about rivals in news outlets that claim to be independent of the U.S. government' (ibid). Psychological warfare the Americans emphasize, employs all moral and physical means, other than orthodox military operations, 'which tend to destroy the will and the ability of the enemy to fight, deprive him of the support of his allies and neutrals and increase in our own troops and allies the will to victory' (ibid).

Simpson adds three additional attributes of the U.S. psychological warfare strategy, including the use of 'plausible deniability' to allow the government to deny responsibility for operations that in reality originated from the United States, a cognizant policy of 'polarizing neutral nations into either pro or anti-U.S. camps' and the 'clandestine targeting of the U.S. population, in addition to that of foreign countries, for psychological operations' (ibid). It is significant to state that this policy was effectively used by the Bush administration in the war in Afghanistan (2001) with the famous declaration by George Bush to nation states that 'you are either with us or against us'. Given the arguments above has propaganda any constructive value? Taylor (2003) offers some insight below.

Even though propaganda has earned itself a bad reputation because of the historical function of fuelling fear, hypocrisy and ignorance associated with it, (as can be seen in the U.S. example), Taylor (2003), thinks that propaganda can either be defined in good terms or otherwise, depending upon where one is coming from; 'propaganda is about sides' (pp. 322). Branding something as propaganda or not depends upon which side you are on (ibid). He argues that even though propaganda has earned itself a bad reputation through its historical function of fuelling fear, hypocrisy and ignorance, it has the 'potential to serve a constructive, civilized and peaceful purpose if that is the intention behind conducting it (pp.324). This observation by Taylor is critical in analyzing propaganda in the Dagbon conflict with reference to the 'lie' told by counsel for the Yaa Naa, Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama that the Yaa Naa was alive when he had died (see chapter four). Taylor advocates that democratic institutions must practise propaganda based on democratic values namely persuasion instead of coercion, telling as much truth without jeopardizing lives and upholding values like respect for individual's life and freedom for all people (pp.323). In effect Taylor believes propaganda is not a bad thing and could be 'an instrument for

facilitating democratic values' and observes that 'it is the intention of propaganda that needs scrutiny and not just propaganda itself (pp.324). His argument that propaganda is not a bad concept is exemplified in this study as can be seen later in this discussion. Facilitative communication which is another form of propaganda is discussed below.

Facilitative communication is an important ingredient in modern propaganda. Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, pp.27-29) argue even though it is a 'sub-propaganda' it is a communication desired to render a positive attitude towards a potential propagandist and it takes the form of gifts and financial aids amongst others. Facilitative communication is crucial for this study because in Ghana it is believed that gifts are often given to journalists to facilitate favourable coverage.

Godson et al. (2011, pp.1-3) define deception as an effort by a propagandist to cause a target (propagandee) to believe in something that is not true with the view to leading the person to react in a way that serves his (the propagandist) own interest rather than that of the propagandee. They argue that the concept of deception is intended to 'create an alternative reality' in the mind of the propagandee. They distinguish denial from deception which they describe as 'attempt to block information channels by which a target could learn some truth' and that the method of denial is mostly used to safeguard 'classified' information (ibid). While denial and deception are separate terms, they argue that they are linked in practice; deception must include denial in order to induce a person to accept a story while denial will also include deception in order to deny the person knowledge about the truth (ibid). The concept of denial and deception is crucial to the discussion of propaganda later in this study. Bakir et al. (2018) however think there are conceptual limitations across the study of propaganda in relation to deception amongst others, a claim I discuss below.

In a conceptual framework to examining Organized Persuasive Communication [OPC], including propaganda, Bakir et al. observe that 'there exists, considerable terminological confusion and conceptual limitations across the study of propaganda' as authors 'focus on manipulative forms but tend either to examine historical cases or non-democratic states' (2018, pp.2). Consequently '…there is minimal conceptual development regarding manipulative modes of OPC involving *deception, incentivization* and *coercion'*. Therefore, manipulative OPC within liberal democracies is 'a blind spot, rarely recognized let alone researched, and with the result that our understanding and grasp of these activities is profoundly curtailed' (ibid).

They argue that efforts to distance Public Relations (PR) from propaganda by some scholars and some others equating persuasion to manipulation have served as a reason to avoid 'theorizing manipulative strategies such as deception and coercion' (pp.9-10). This they further argue is compounded by scholars like Taylor, 'defining propaganda as a

practical process of persuasion' involving 'attempts to influence our opinions, thus treating propaganda, persuasion and manipulation as synonymous' (ibid). Consequently, they submit that 'persuasion and manipulation are not synonymous' (ibid). Manipulation they argue, 'works against autonomy by enabling some people to obtain power over others' (ibid). This, they distinguish from persuading through 'non-manipulative argumentation'. They define 'Coercion' and 'incentivization' as well as deception as follows:

1. *Coercion* is an act of persuasion that compels an individual to act against their will through the threat or infliction of costs, including but not limited to, physical force. Coercive OPC operates in a number of ways. Commonly it can involve integration of physical actions and threats into the overall persuasion strategy (2018, pp.26).

2. *Incentivization* is a process of persuasion that involves promising or providing benefits. This involves creating a benefit (an extrinsic motivation) aimed at overcoming an individual's actual desire/belief (their intrinsic motivation) (ibid).

3. *(a) Deception through omissions* involve withholding information to make the promoted viewpoint more persuasive. It is deceptive because those involved know people would be less likely to be persuaded if they knew the full picture Deception through omission can also occur through disguising the source's identity (ibid).

4. *(b) Deception through lying* is defined as making a statement that is known or suspected to be untrue in order to mislead…To support lies, dis-information may also be used, whereby forgeries and staged events are used (ibid).

Bakir et al. treatises on propaganda are a necessary imperative to studying propaganda and the media in the Dagbon conflict because they offer a new conceptual approach to deception, lies and coercion that are necessary for the analysis of the Dagbon conflict under study. Another propaganda technique is Herman and Chomsky's propaganda model that is discussed below.

Herman and Chomsky (1988)'s propaganda model is one of the core theories of propaganda. Dubbed '*Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of Mass Media*, the module examines mass media as instrument of power that mobilises power for special interests that dominate the state and private activity (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, pp.xi). They argue that political and economic elite in consent with the media often use propaganda to manufacture consent by controlling the thoughts of majority members in a democratic society (ibid, pp.2). Their module argues that the media do not have to be controlled by the political and economic elite since they are an integral part of the class welfare that act in consent with the elite to establish, enforce, reinforce and monitor

corporate domination (ibid). They lay down five 'filters' of their propaganda module that shape the news audiences receive in a capitalist democratic environment namely 1. concentrated ownership, owner wealth and profit orientation of dominant mass media organisations, 2.advertising as key primary source of mass media, 3.media reliance on elite/official sources for news, 4.'flak' as a means of disciplining the media and 5.anticommunism as a means of religion and control mechanism to marginalise dissent (Herman and Chomsky 1988, pp.2). Eventhough their fifth model has been updated I am not using it in this study as it is less relevant to the concepts that I choose to discuss. In this study, I will use the third and fourth 'filters'. Flak refers to negative comments to news stories or news organisations that stay outside of the consensus and can include government sanctions, lawsuits, complaints and petitions (Wolfsfeld, 1997, pp. 69), (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, pp.2). Media organisations are large corporate bodies that depend largely on elite sources for news and advertising as a key source of revenue and this render them prey to dominant frames (Wolfsfeld, 1997, pp. 69). 'Experts' and official sources are also seen as trusted sources that do not require costly research and since media organisations motive is to make money (see filter one) they prefer such sources in generating news, thus ultimately relying on the elite for their news. This affects the news content as preferred meanings embedded in news are 'those that are functional for the elite' (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, pp.18-23). I use the two filters because they offer the techniques in detecting news bias that I used in this study as seen in chapter seven. Another propaganda technique is 'Word Game' which is discussed below.

Word game is another propaganda technique that is used by governments, the military and intelligence community in their manipulation of the media, especially in war and conflict situations. It includes 'the Fear Factor' 'Glittering Generality', 'Name Calling', 'Transfer', 'Testimony', 'Plain Folks' 'Band Wagon' and 'Card Stacking'. Jackall (1995) cited in Harb (2011, 27) describes how the *Institute for Propaganda Analysis* in the U.S. in 1937 offered thesis on propaganda. They include when a person warns an audience that disaster will result if they fail to follow a particular line of action, that person is employing the fear factor to achieve a specific result about how the audience should behave (ibid). The *Institute for Propaganda Analysis* summarizes four elements to a successful fear appeal:

1.    A threat:

2.    A specific recommendation about how the audience should behave:

3.    Audience perception that the recommendation will be effective in addressing the threat:

4.    Audience perception that they are capable of performing the recommended behaviour (Ibid).

A propagandist uses the Name Calling technique to label a person negatively and by doing so the propagandist hopes that the person will be rejected by the audience based on the negative labelling, instead of considering available evidence (ibid). A person uses Glittering Generality which is Name calling in reverse to try to make people approve and accept an idea or a person without examining the available evidence. Speakers use these two devices to attempt to 'arouse their audience with vivid, emotionally suggestive words'. However, in certain cases the propagandist 'attempts to pacify the audience in order to make an unpleasant reality more palatable' (ibid). Speakers who try to convince their audience that they (the speakers) and their ideas are of the people are using 'Plain Folks' technique, while 'Transfer' is a device that a propagandist transfers the authority, sanction, and prestige of something we revere and respect to something he would have us accept (ibid). Testimony is a technique used to construct fair and well-balanced arguments by quoting relevant and important sources while Band Wagon is the 'everyone else is doing it so do it' syndrome. Card stacking is where a propagandist employs all arts of deception to win sympathy for himself, group, nation, etc (ibid).

In conclusion, propaganda from the above discussion can be said to be achieved through amongst others the use of 'misinformation' (misguided or erroneous information) and 'disinformation' (false, incomplete or misleading information). Discussion on propaganda and the Western media in the media's reportage of conflicts follow.

### 2.3.2 Propaganda and the Western media

The use of euphemisms, fabrications and outright lies by governments, military and the intelligence community in the West in dealing with the media during conflicts is captured by various authors of media and conflict studies, including Bakir (2017), Connelly and Welch, (2005), Herman and Chomsky (2002), Bennett (1990), Carruthers (2011), Hammond (2007) and Hallin (1989). This observation by the authors is unavoidable in discussing media and propaganda in the West.

Bakir (2017) states media operating in digital environments have become more susceptible to editorial control where Public Relations (PR) practitioners go beyond providing information (facts, statistics or quotes) to providing 'news stories' (and) 'editorial framing' (pp.86). This is because time constraints for journalists and poor resourcing in the media compromise in-depth, time-consuming, investigative or critical journalism (ibid). Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Bennett (1990), argue opinions in the free Western media are 'constricted to the views of elite sources' and the media during war time produce 'propaganda rather than independent journalism' (cited in Hammond, 2017, pp.80). Hallin (1989) says during World War 1 and after controversies over lack of access to the media, Western governments 'agreed to grant access in return for censorship' (persuasion) and

that the gesture was because the press was considered 'central to the mobilization of public opinion' (pp.126-127).

German Chief of General Staff, Von Moltke said during World War 1, that a close relationship between the war leadership and the press was essential, as 'the press was an indispensable means of wagging war' (Connelly and Welch, 2005, 28). Still in Germany, the Third Reich power over the media was intrinsic to the state as Josef Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister, instructed journalists to 'instruct' not just 'inform' and to 'amplify state ideology' and 'mobilize public opinion on Nazi policy at home and abroad' (Carruthers, 2000, pp.74). He claimed that 'news policy is a weapon of war; its purpose is to wage war and not to give out information' (ibid, pp.85).

Carruthers (2011) explores how the media was used by Hitler's Third Reich to demonize and mobilize public support against their opponents, using outright lies and half truths to 'conjure a fearful imagined future' and as aggressors 'casting themselves as victims' and the 'victims as aggressors...a theme commonly found in mobilization propaganda' (pp.19-21). The Third Reich state-controlled newspapers, radio and feature films depicted Jews as 'Aryan Germans' 'eternal enemies' (hate propaganda) and 'hell burnt on world domination' who needed to be 'quarantined because they were a threat to the Aryan body politic' (Carruthers, 2011, pp.20).

In the U.S, government embarked on a demonization drive against Saddam Hussein using outright lies (Disinformation, thus Black Propaganda) to mobilize public opinion against the Saddam regime to attack him. The story told by a Kuwaiti teenager, Nayirah who offered a tearful testimony to the U.S Congressional Caucus on Human Rights of how she saw Iraqi troops throw babies from their incubators into an orgy was enough to mobilize coalition support against Saddam even though she later admitted it was 'hyped for propaganda purposes' (Carruthers, 2011, pp.24-25). Saddam was compared to Hitler and accused of harbouring 'Weapons of Mass Destruction' (WMD) and that he had links with Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida (Carruthers, 2011, pp.29), (Hammond, 2007, pp.66) and that Saddam had 'Mother of All Bombs' (ibid, pp.70), an example of Black Propaganda. All these turned out to be a lie as Stewart and Carruthers (1996) find out, the media was 'deliberately misled' by Iraq military might by Pentagon disinformation about 'colossal fabrications', 'artillery powerful beyond imagination' and 'vast stock of chemical and biological weapons' just to 'justify the carpet and terror bombing of both the military and civilian assets of this Third World Country' (ibid, pp.131).

U.S Defence Secretary, William Cohen further gave a shocking revelation about the WMD 'there was no guarantee that any of the command and control targets contained such weapons' and a former UN arms inspector, Scott Ritter said 'we're hitting empty buildings

and we are killing innocent civilians' (McLaughlin, 2002, pp.104). Livingston et al. state apart from the fact that 'little solid evidence was ever produced to link Saddam and Bin laden, and WMD', there was 'prove' that Bin laden had condemned Saddam's government as 'a secular threat to Islamic fundamentalism' (2007, pp.22). This suggested there was no links between Saddam and Bin Laden. Pentagon spokesman Arthur Sylvester stated that the 'patriotic duty' of U.S correspondents in all military situations was to relate only the kind of information which made the United States looked good (Mercer, Mungham & Williams, 1987, pp.213–214 cited in Kempf & Luostarinn, pp.2002).

Propaganda by Britain during wars (for the purpose of this study) is traced to as early as Word War I. Perhaps the most striking of all lies told during the war was by Britain against Germany of 'a German corpse factory' which 'melted down German soldiers' bodies for glycerin' (atrocity propaganda)-a lie by the British to stir up anti-German feeling in China (Carruthers, 2011, pp.35, Stewart and Carruthers, 1996, pp.25). Keeble says the system of pooling reporters of Britain with frontline troops since (after) the Vietnam War has served to reinforce the corporate media's role as 'propagandists for the state in times of conflict' (2017, pp.11). While writing on official inquiry into the Iraqi war, Danchev (2010) concludes that the case of WMD was 'sexed up' by the Blair regime to win public support to go to war (pp. 441) and that facts about WMD were manufactured with 'dubious legality' (ibid). Media manipulation has caught the attention of Taylor (1992) whose verdict is that the media often function as 'a tool of government propaganda' (cited in Goddard et al. 2008, pp.10). Western governments, especially the U.S and U.K governments also do collaborate in propaganda during conflict times.

Connelly and Welch (2005, pp. x) observe that during much of the 20th century, the Western media 'willingly collaborated in disseminating propaganda, justifying war aims, sustaining the morale of the home and fighting fronts and demonizing the enemy'. About the 'Cold War' Defty (2010) notes 'Britain and the U.S developed complementary approaches to anti-communist propaganda and as this propaganda activities expanded cooperation deepened' (pp.101). The two countries 'used film and strip cartoons to target mass audience in South East Asia against the communist regime (pp.115). U.S and U.K governments' propaganda collaboration continued into this 21st century (see above on Saddam's alleged WMD). Other strategies used to propagandize the media are inducement and image manipulation.

The Western military attitude of handing the media 'gifts' during war times is facilitative communication (inducement) which is another form of propaganda. Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, pp.27-2) say facilitative communication is a 'sub-propaganda' and it takes the form of gifts and financial aids amongst others. Knightley (2004, pp.469) says during World War I journalists were given food shelter and clothing. Giveaways were not confined to World

War I. During the Vietnam War, the U.S military assisted the correspondents and 'fed them on a reimbursable basis' (ibid). In contemporary times and in the Gulf War of 2003, Ralph Blumenthal and Jim Rutenberg of the *New York Times* reported that U.S military stated that 'journalists covering any United States attack on Iraq will have assigned slots with combat and support units (who will) accompany them throughout the conflict' and also to share 'transport, food and accommodation' with correspondents (see New York Times, FEB. 18, 2003).

Manipulation of the media also included 'image manipulation'. Hammond gives several examples of image manipulation, including how the *Los Angeles newspaper* merged two images on its front page to produce a more appealing composition of a soldier near Basra directing a group of civilians to take cover. Brian Walski, the photographer was instantly sacked (2007, pp.64). He adds that in Iraq while still hunting for Saddam, troops simulated his defeat by defacing his image and pulling down his statues (pp.67), an act described by Robert Fisk, a war journalist as 'the most staged photo opportunity…'. A freelance photographer and cameraman, Vaughn Smith who covered the Afghan war for the BBC complained about the artificial nature of much of the coverage (ibid, pp.68). Propaganda and the African media also received scholarly attention as argued below.

### 2.3.3 Propaganda and African media

African media and propaganda could be traced to the colonial era where African elite established newspapers to expose the ills of colonial administration and demand independence. In response to these agitations, the colonial administration across Africa put up censorship laws as tools of propaganda to criminalise dissent to demoralise these elites otherwise known as nationalists leaders from pursuing their agendas of mobilising the people for independence. These laws included the newspaper registration ordinance and the criminal code that required the registration of newspapers and criminalised publications considered libellous and seditious (Ngara and Nseboni, 2012, pp.184, Osafo, 2016, 871).

Following from independence, nationalists leaders maintained these colonial laws in post-independence era. They consigned to wholesale monopolisation of the media as the press regime was accompanied with the imposition of one-party state political regimes, Asante et al. (2013, pp.6). The idea was to use the media to mobilize people for accelerated development of their countries (Ibid). This press regime continued long after independence and in some cases was used for 'purely propaganda purposes', as Allan Thomson notes in Rwanda (as a one party state and before the genocide), radio disseminated propaganda for the president's party (2007, pp.42). Hallin and Mancini (2012, pp.108) note that in South Africa a government communications person said that 'the media is a repository of

immense ideological economic, social and political power' and that 'in the state's bid to harness all forms of power…the media are an obvious and essential partner'.

Beyond the use of the media to consolidate one party state regimes, military leaders found the need to use it to consolidate support for their regimes. In Nigeria Saani Abacha's military government 'bankrolled' a section of the media to campaign for prolongation of military rule and 'ethnicity and religion was craftily manipulated by the regime to divide the ranks of the Nigerian media', along northern and southern lines (Ngara and Nsebonu, 2012, pp.192). In Ghana during the military regimes, including Kutu Acheampong's era in 1972 and Jerry Rawlings era in 1982 there was a clampdown on newspapers and several journalists were arrested and jailed for opposing the regimes, Asante et al. (2013, pp.20).

In Francophone West Africa like Senegal, there was an increase in media outlets following from the country's independence from France in 1960. As part of his objective to create a strong national state, President Leopold Senghor outlawed the mass media even though it continued to function critically. In February 1960 he signed into law a decree that regulated the issuance of identity cards to journalists. In the following year another decree was passed delegating regulatory powers to the ministry of information (Asante et al. 2013, 16).

In Blaise Campaore's Burkina Faso in the 1990s, insulting the president was a crime and the press risked being summarily banned if they were accused of distributing false information or endangering national security. Few journalists were charged under the country's libel laws and a High Council of Communication was set up to monitor media content for the compliance of the law and ethical standards (Asante et al. 2013, 16).

The media was used by the Hutus in Rwanda to demonize and mobilize public support against their opponents, using outright lies and half truths as well as 'hate and atrocity propaganda' to mobilize public opinion against the Tutsis' in Rwanda leading to the genocide (Carruthers, pp.19-21). Hutu broadcasters for instance informed audience that 'Tutsi rebels (were) rushing in from Uganda to pauperize, displace and subjugate Rwandan majority population' (atrocity propaganda) and urged them to 'strike them before they strike you' (ibid, pp.20) and referred to them as 'dogs' 'snakes' and 'cockroaches' (hate propaganda) (ibid, pp.19). The use of propaganda in the media (radio) to fuel conflict in Rwanda is arguably the direct opposite of the Ghana Dagbon case, as will be seen later in this thesis, where radio was used to alert government officials of an impending 'regicide' but the warning signs were ignored and rejected by government leading to the murder of the Yaa Naa and others.

(Nyamnjoh, 2005, pp.48) argues that due to censorship measures, African journalists were 'confined to feeding the public with doctored information made available to them by governments'. Whether in the South, East, Central or West Africa, the media was used by

governments to propagandize the citizenry leaving Nyamnjoh to issue a 'damning verdict' that Governments' control of African media have rendered journalists in Africa more or less 'public relations practitioners' for the governments, 'committed much less to the truth and the public than to building a positive image…promoting the interests of government and the ruling elite' (2005, pp.48). This 'indictment' is complemented by Ali (2015, pp11) who observes that 'Government owned media in Africa' have been used by incumbent governments to 'deceive their people on projects they have not been able to accomplish…'.

### 2.3.4 Propaganda and the Ghana Media

Propaganda and the Ghanaian media can be traced to the colonial era when the African media otherwise known as 'nationalists press' were used variously to mobilize public opinion and support against the colonial regime. Ngara and Nsebonu argue that during the colonial period, the mass media was particularly useful in 'exposing the misrule, exploitation and evil of colonial rule to the international community' and the 'mobilization of the civil society groups' to mount pressure on the colonial government that culminated in the independence of African countries (2012, pp.184). In Ghana, formally the Gold Coast, during the British colonial rule, the nationalists press' anti-colonial activities in the form of agitations against the exploitation of the people and for self governance led to the introduction of press laws that stifled dissent. In response to growing criticisms of their rule, the British colonial administration in Ghana passed the first press law-the *Newspaper Registration and Ordinance of 1893* that was later amended to *Book and Newspaper Regulation Ordinance.* These laws established a newspapers, proprietors and editors register that enabled the colonialists administration to locate and arrest editors who published stories that were considered offensive to the colonial administration.  It also required the registration of title of a newspaper, its publishers, names of its editors and printers (Osafo, 2016, 871). These laws notwithstanding, nationalists press, including the *Accra Herald, The Gold Coast Times, The Gold Coast News and Gold Coast Chronicle* continued to grow compelling the colonialists to introduce more censorship laws to stifle dissent. In 1897, *the Book and Newspaper Registration Ordinance* required editors to return circulation, including title and location of the newspaper to the registration officials (Ibid). In 1934, the *Criminal Code Ordinance* or *Sedition Ordinance* was passed, and this gave the colonial authority the power to examine and arrest and jail editors who wrote stories considered seditious, libellous and of contempt. By this any news article that sought to 'insight hatred' against the colonialists was considered seditious. This law led to the arrests and convictions of many nationalists leaders, including Dr. Kwame Nkrumah (later Ghana's president from 1957-66) who edited the *Evening News* newspaper. Many editors were also charged with contempt, libel or sedition (Ibid, 877-878).

Interestingly these repressive press laws under the colonial regime that the nationalists fought against remained unchanged after independence. Media control continued following

the growth and expansion of the media after independence. Ghana's first president, Kwame NKrumah in the 1960s inacted a press law that empowered the information minister to stop any publications that he deemed unfit. The regime also passed the criminal code act that amongst others empowered the president to pass an executive instrument that would request publishers of books, newspapers and other documents to submit manuscripts for vetting before publication, Asante et al. (2013, pp.20). The newspaper licensing act also required publishers to apply for license to publish a newspaper or magazine which was renewable every year. Opposition newspaper, *The Ashanti Pioneer* was shut down after being subjected to control measures.

The National Liberation Council (NLC) that overthrew the Nkrumah regime in 1966 imposed stricter measures, including making it impossible for anyone to sue a government newspaper. Dr. Abrefa Busia who succeeded the NLC in 1969 dismissed the leader of the state-owned *Daily Graphic newspaper* for opposing him amongst other control measures and ensured tighter control of the media. Media measure controls continued under Kutu Acheampong in 1972 who clamped down on opposition newspapers for opposing his policies. Government control of the media intensified under the Provisional National Defense Council from 1982 and many journalists, including Kwesi Pratt Jnr. now managing editor of the *Insight newspaper* were severally arrested for being critical of the regime (bid). In 2001 however, the criminal libel and sedition law was repealed to enhance press freedom (Authoritarian Tech, 2019).

In the early 2000s to 2014 media freedom started to suffer again as security services were high on the list of those who harassed, intimidated and threatened the media with violence between 2003 and 2014 as recorded by *Media Foundation for West Africa* in its 2014 report (Authoritarian Tech, 2019). Even though the criminal libel law had been repealed in 2001 to ensure press freedom, Ghana government in 2002 declared a censorship regime during the outbreak of the Dagbon conflict as it asked journalists to clear their reports on Dagbon affairs with the Ministry of Information before broadcast (see chapter one). This move was rejected by the Ghana Journalists Association (GNA, April 4, 2002), even though state media reporters abided by it (see chapter six).

Efforts by the Ghana Journalists Association and Civil Society Groups in the country on demanding press freedom resulted in Ghana being one of the countries in Africa that enjoyed the freest media atmosphere from mid 2010, according to the World Press Freedom Day: 2018 Press index by *Reporters without Borders* (see GJA news, April 27, 2018). The ranking indicated that Ghana moved from 26th position in the world ranking in 2017 to 23rd in 2018, making it number one in Africa. However, Ghana lost the position to Namibia and moved downward by four places to 27th position in 2019 as a result of largely police molestation of journalists and the killing of Ahmed Hussein Suale, an undercover investigative journalist by unknown assailants, *Reporters without Borders, 2019 (*cited in

Daily Graphic, April 19, 2019). Suale was threatened publicly and his identity revealed by a ruling party member of parliament, Kennedy Agyepong who was not sanctioned (ibid). The report said a group of journalists had to run into hiding in later part of 2018 after producing a documentary that exposed corruption in Ghana Football Association (ibid). Another journalist, Manasseh Azure Awuni of the Multi-Media Group was whisked out of the country by the *Media Foundation for West Africa* after attempts on his life by 'unknown assailants' in 2019. This followed his expose' that a private militia group, *De eye group* headed by a former bodyguard of Ghana's President, Akufu Addo, used the Osu castle, a former seat of government as training grounds and operational head office for unlawful militia activities (Myjoyonline.con in Ghanaweb.com May 7, 2019). He later resigned from the company after it apologised to the government.

Ghana passed the Right to Information Bill (RTI) in 2019 after series of protests from journalists and civil society groups, but media practitioners still have a long way to freedom. The RTI does not guarantee access to budget information, contractual relationships and programme and financial information of government (Ibid). This renders the RTI less effective in the quest by the media to expose corruption, making its relevance questionable.

As at 2017, 128 television stations were authorized by the National Communications Authority, an electronic media regulator, to operate in Ghana out of which only 53 were on air. As at the same period 367 radio stations were operating across the country (see National Communications Authority official website) with over 25 newspapers, including the *Daily Graphic* Newspaper in circulation. The *Ghana News Agency* is the only wire service in Ghana and has been in operation since shortly after Ghana's independence in 1957. It has an online portal and beyond distributing news to media houses it competes with newspapers and radio online portals, making it a very powerful media organisation.

However. journalism standards in the country have been severely questioned due amongst other factors to poor remuneration of journalists' and lack of high professional standards (Isaac, 1988. pp.89), (Boafo, 1988, pp.62, 64). Even with the passage of time, this observation has not changed much.

Added to the above is the use of unqualified personnel to report as journalists, especially during conflict situations in Ghana. Having reported the Dagbon conflict myself I can state without any fear of contradiction that some of the correspondents who reported for some private radio stations on the conflict were either school drop-out or were not professionally trained journalists. It is generally believed in Ghana that managers of private media houses prefer to use such 'cheap labour' instead of investing adequately in news gathering, a situation partly blamed on poor financial returns. Even though scanning through African media literature on media constraints produced no adequate academic

study to this effect, there are tangential references to back my claim. For instance (Brouhard, 1979) (cited in Boafo, 1988, pp.62) states that a survey conducted on journalists' training and working conditions in the late 1970s revealed that 9 percent of journalists reporting in various media houses in Ghana had no formal media training. Four decades on, Paulitsch and Hummelink (2012, pp.1) writing on problems of journalism in Ghana in an online news article mentioned lack of educational requirements for becoming a journalist as a factor. 'In Ghana everyone is able to work as a journalist sometimes even without basic education' (Ibid). At the time of writing this thesis, the owner and Editor-in-Chief of *The New Crusading Guide*, a private newspaper in Ghana, Kweku Baako Jnr. is a school drop-out but has been practicing journalism for more than three decades.

This situation is not confined to Ghana alone. In Nigeria media practitioners in the 1990s included '…the commercially frustrated local elite driven out of business by unfair competition from European monopolists, the unemployed… who were sacked from jobs in ailing European firms…' (Agbaje, 1992, pp.42).

*Lack* of professional journalism training-be it inadequate or nonexistent-for media practitioners provides a fertile ground for state actors like government officials, the military and the intelligence community to feed the media with 'doctored information', a situation that also influenced my decision to investigate propaganda and censorship of the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict.

Media control measures put up by government in the Dagbon conflict reportage received varied reactions from the state and private media. The *Ghana Journalists Association* rejected the control measures, called it 'unworkable' and called on its members not to heed to it (GNA, April 4, 2002). Opposition media like *The Ghanaian Democtat* and *The Ghanaian Palava* amongst others also refused to heed to the control measures. Individual journalists like Kwesi Pratt Jnr. of the *Insight newspaper*, Eliasu Adam of the *BBC* and myself from JOY FM refused to clear reports with the Ministry of Information before broadcast. However as discussed in chapter six, state media journalists abided by the censorship measures as they either cleared the reports themselves with government or had them cleared by their editors.  In Tamale in the Nothern Region, state media journalists had to clear their reports with a military minder at the offices of the Northern Regional Coordinating Council where a censorship desk manned by the security agencies was established (see chapter six). This seeming division in the media led to a convolution in terms of information reception and digestion on the part of the audience. This view is supported by both the Abudu and Andani opinion leaders in an interview (see chapter seven). Having reported the conflict myself, I observed that while government media run government statements without subjecting them to scrutiny, opposition media was critical. One of such examples is JOY FM's reportage on the death of Issah Mobila, an Andani sympathiser in military custody. While government media reported government's statement that he died after sipping water, JOY FM rejected

government's position and reported that he was killed by the military. Autopsy report on the cause of his death confirmed JOY FM's report (see chapter four). Media freedom in Ghana today (2019) is becoming scarcely encouraging as the Akufu Addo's government has been accused of stifling media freedom by closing opposition radio stations, using a media regulatory body-the National Media Commission (NMC). Radio Gold and XYZ radio in the nation's capital Accra had their licences seized for allegedly violating licensure agreements, according to the NMC (JOY ONLINE, May 21, 2019).

The discussion above provides a framework for research into propaganda and censorship in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict. I now theorize 'Public Opinion' 'Peace Journalism' 'Media Bias' and 'Objectivity' that would address the questions of opinion leaders' opinion about media reportage of the conflict, peace journalism that would provide the framework for the practice of conflict sensitive journalism and media bias and objectivity that would discuss the issue of objectivity and bias in media reportage.

## 2.4 Theorizing 'Public opinion', 'Peace Journalism', 'Media Bias' and 'Objectivity'

'Public Opinion' 'Peace Journalism' and the concepts of 'Media Bias' and 'Objectivity' are crucial for the understanding of the research questions (RQs) that this thesis is investigating (see chapter one for RQs). A discussion on public opinion follows.

### 2.4.1 Public Opinion

Answering RQ5 (see chapter one) requires analysis of literature on public opinion (amongst Dagombas) on the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict to apply to my empirical data. However. there is no academic literature on public opinion on media reportage of the Dagbon conflict. A search on public response to the media reportage on the Dagbon conflict from February 2 to 9, 2017 on 'Proquest' produced no literature on the issue. The following key words were used; 'peoples' perception about media coverage on Dagbon chieftaincy crisis', 'media coverage on Dagbon chieftaincy crisis' and 'opinion polls on media coverage of Dagbon chieftaincy crisis'. This therefore reveals a gap in literature on peoples' perception about media coverage on the Dagbon chieftaincy crisis and the propaganda and censorship of the media. I address this gap by soliciting responses from opinion-leaders to the issue.

As early as the 1940s, scholars like Paul Lazarsfeld have realized the significance of opinion leaders in 'shaping public preferences, informing fellow citizens, and altering behaviour' (Nisbet and Kotcher, 2009, pp.329). In a study on decision making, Lazarsfeld et al. identifies certain individuals (opinion leaders) who paid close attention to an issue in the media, 'frequently discussed the issue and considered themselves more persuasive in convincing others to adopt an opinion or course of action' (ibid). Lazarsfeld et al.'s (1948, pp.1) goal was to determine how media and interpersonal factors influenced how people

voted the way they did in the 1940 U.S. presidential elections. Those individuals (opinion leaders) were discovered to be politically engaged and knowledgeable people who used media, interested in the presidential campaigns and were perceived to be trustworthy and influential people to whom others turned for information and advice (ibid, pp.1-2). Their study revealed that political information was diffused in a 'two-step-flow' direction (Turcotte, 2015, pp.522). Lazarsfeld et al. explained the two-step-flow communication theory as a process by which political ideas flow from the media to opinion leaders (first step) who then pass it on to the less active sections of the society (second step), (1948, pp.151). Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955) found that information received by the opinion leaders in the media was modified before passing it on to the less active members of the society (cited in Stansberry, 2015, pp.2).

Rogers and Cartano define opinion leaders as those 'who exert personal influence upon a certain number of other people in certain situations' or 'individuals from whom others seek advice and information' (1962, pp.436-9). Corey (1971) defines 'opinion leaders' as 'trusted and informed people who exist in virtually all primary groups' and are 'models' of opinion, who can influence through 'word-of mouth communication to circles of relatives, friends, and acquaintances' cited in (Chaudhry and Irshad, 2013, pp.16).

These individuals are identified in several ways. Valente and Pumpuang (2007, pp.882-884) suggest the following ten basic techniques of identifying who an opinion leader is. 1. celebrities, 2. self-selection, 3. self-identification, 4. staff selected, 5. positional approach, 6. judges' ratings, 7. expert identification 8. Snowball method 9. sample socio-metric and 10. sociometric. Rogers and Cartano (1962 pp.438-439) suggest three ways by which an opinion leader can be identified. The socio-metric technique that consists of asking group members whom they go to for advice and information about an idea, key informants often selected by researchers subjectively as persons likely to know who the opinion leaders are and self-designating technique that consists of asking a respondent a series of questions to determine the degree to which he perceives himself as an opinion leader.

Katz (1957, pp.74) suggests that personal traits, competence and social position of an individual are key determinants of their opinion leadership status. He however adds that such persons should also be accessible as others may not seek their counsel based only on the three determinants above if they do not avail themselves (ibid). Since opinion leaders act as 'filters' of information before passing it on to individuals, they serve as the connective communication tissue that alerts their peers to what matter among political events and social issues (Nisbet and Kotcher, 2009, pp.329). Glock and Nicosia point out that opinion leaders 'act not only as channels of information' but also as 'source of social pressure toward a particular choice, and of social support to reinforce that choice once it has been made', (2013, pp.16).

However, 'opinion leaders' as modifiers of information or 'influencers' in the communication process has been challenged by several communication scholars. Burt (1999), Gitlin (1978), Harik (1971), Robinson (1976), Weiman (1982) have challenged the simplicity of the two-step flow module, which relies heavily on influencers as interpreters and disseminators of information (Stansberry, 2012, pp.17). Many studies on the two-step flow process have suggested that information tends to travel in multi-step flow processes with many different flow directions and iterations, Burt (1999), Harik (1971), Robinson (1976) Weimann (1982) cited in (Stansberry, 2012, pp.17). Bennett and Manheim argue even though the two-step flow module has dominated communication research in information dissemination for several decades, social and technological changes have created new theoretical challenges to the module broadly and the role of opinion leadership specifically (2006, pp.213-215). These challenges include the advent of the Internet and online micro-targeting techniques that allow professional communicators to produce and disseminate messages that appeal directly to individuals (ibid). Individuals are also becoming increasingly socially isolated reducing the tendency of opinion leaders influencing them in the two-step-flow process. Thus. opinion leaders who played a vital role in the two step flow paradigm are becoming less likely to lead and only likely to reinforce latent opinions than to reframe them (ibid). Consequently, they propose a 'one step flow' module of communication and refer to it as the 'new paradigm in communication flow theory' (2006, pp.228). However, the one-step-flow communication theory as a replacement for the two-step-flow in communication theory as argued by Bennett and Manheim (2006) has been criticised by scholars, including Mutz & Young (2011) and Forbes & Vespoli (2013). Forbes & Vespoli (2013) disagree with Bennett and Manheim that opinion leaders are less likely to lead and can only reinforce latent opinion in the era of the Internet. While admitting individuals may be physically separated than in previous decades, they suggest 'social network sites facilitate nuanced mediated-interpersonal communication over vast distances, providing novel settings for leader-follower interactions. Consequently '…users (of social media sites) often rely on friends for support recommendations' cited in Turcotte (2015, pp.523). (Mutz & Young, 2011) suggest today's media environment presents news consumers with expansive news choices and one important way individuals decide what to pay attention to is through recommendations that reach them through their online social networks (ibid). Consequently, Turcotte suggests in such a media environment, opinion-leaders still play increasingly important roles in facilitating exposure to information (Turcotte, 2015, pp.524). Turcotte's suggestion situates in the Dagbon case where opinion leaders still influence people's opinions as will be demonstrated later in this study. Katz's (1957, pp.74) suggests that personal traits, competence and social position of an individual as well as their accessibility determine their opinion leadership status. His suggestion informed my decision to choose and solicit

views from opinion leaders in the Abudu and Andani royal families on their opinions about media reportage of the Dagbon conflict. Peace journalism is discussed next.

### 2.4.2 Peace Journalism

The origin of Peace Journalism can be traced to the mid 1960s when Johan Galtung and Meri Ruge analysed the newsworthiness of foreign news in the Norwegian press. Galtung and Ruge (1965) criticized the conventional news values of Norwegian media's reportage of international conflicts. They conclude that the five major factors of newsworthiness in the Norwegian media are as follows: 'threshold, frequency, negativity, unexpectedness and unambiguity', (Abdul Nabi, 2015, pp.272). Peace journalism is a form of journalism that is committed to discovering root causes of conflicts to create opportunities for solutions. Lynch and McGoldrick (2015) define peace journalism as 'when editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report, and how to report them – that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict (pp.5). Galtung coined the concept of peace journalism because 'war journalism not only legitimizes violence, but it is violent in and of itself', Galtung (1986, 1998) cited in Abdul-Nabi, (2015, pp.272). In response to the values of peace journalism, Galtung (1986, 1998) classifies war journalism and peace journalism on four premises: (1) peace/war, (2) truth/propaganda, (3) people/elites and (4) solutions/victory (Abdul Nabi, 2015, pp.273). Ottosen (2010) offers an interpretation of Galtung's classification of peace journalism and war journalism. War journalism he argues contributes not only to the escalation of violence but also promotes war. Peace journalism on the other hand presents a choice for readers to identify other options (other than war) by identifying people centred, truth centred and solution-oriented approach that consequently could lead to possible suggestions for peace that conflicting parties might want to hide (pp.262). Peace centred journalism focuses on civilian casualties and thus gives voice to the voiceless while solution-oriented reveals untruths from all sides and focuses on propaganda that is used as a means of fuelling the war (ibid).

Nohrstedt and Ottosen (2015, pp.220) assume the general public by and large prefers peace, rather than war, in situations in which opinion has not been manipulated by massive war propaganda. They argue that peace journalism side of Galtung's module takes a moral and ethical point of departure. Acknowledging that media themselves play a role in the propaganda war, they argue that the Galtung's peace journalism module presents a conscious choice. Their explanation of the conscious choice concurs with Ottosen (2010, pp.262) that is to identify other options for the readers/viewers by offering a solution-oriented, people-oriented and truth-oriented approach. This, in turn, implies a focus on possible suggestions for peace that the parties to the conflict might have an interest in hiding, Nohrstedt and Ottosen (2015, pp.220). They suggest that the best method in

reporting conflicts is Galtung's module of peace journalism which is essential in addressing war and peace issues in a more comprehensive manner (ibid).

However, Hanitzsch (2007a,) Loyn (2003, 2007) and Wolfsfeld (2004) have criticized the peace journalism module for 'its simplistic epistemological assumptions, gross dualism, advocacy orientation, normative grounding and insufficient attention to the various constraints that shape the reality of news production' (cited in Tenenboim-Weinblatt et al. 2016, pp.152). Loyn (2003) argues the peace journalism approach 'could compromise the integrity of journalists and confuse their role as neutral disseminators of facts', (cited in Kempf, 2007, pp.2). Discussing its limitations, Loyn argues that 'truthfulness' and 'objectivity' should rather be the guiding principles for journalism practice. '...if we accept that objectivity is at least a worthy aspiration, even though not a tool to achieve the whole truth, then peace journalism fails a key test by imposing other expectations onto journalists' (Loyn, 2007, pp.5). He says the classification of reporting into 'peace journalism' and 'war journalism' by advocates of the Galtung module of peace journalism is an attempt to lump journalists, including those committed to objectivity and neutrality together with the likes of those who believe in 'Journalism of Attachment' (see 2.4.3). For Hanitzch (2007) peace journalism module is nothing short of 'journalism of attachment' that called for military intervention to stop the ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and that promoting peace is akin to practising public relations (pp.7). This is because the module misconstrues the standardised narrative schemes of modern news production (ibid). Hanitzch supports aspects of the peace journalism module like exposing lies and cover ups, reporting atrocities and civilian suffering in war situations and calls those aspects 'good journalism' practice (ibid). Kempf argues peace journalism could be rendered a public relations practice and propaganda if it is misconstrued to mean advocacy journalism and cautions this could 'squander the trust bonus its recipients grant for peace journalism' (2007b, pp.7).

Irvan (2006, pp.36) argues there are three obstacles to peace journalism; the individual journalist obstacle, media institutional level obstacle and ideological level obstacle. At the individual level two types of values come to play; professional and news values. At the professional level journalists assume a neutral disseminator role and that influences story choices that dissuade them from compromising on facts to achieve peace reporting. Quoting Shinar (2004) he argues that at the institutional level media organisations are interested more in profit and thus engage in high news values and ratings that have preference for war. At the ideological level journalists prefer to follow the official line as 'it protects them from criticisms and helps them to 'frame' the conflict in a consensual manner' (ibid). The obstacles notwithstanding Irvan agrees that peace journalism could be a desirable alternative to traditional journalism and suggests an ethical code that addresses

current problematic areas in news coverage like labeling and demonization amongst others (ibid, pp.37).

Notwithstanding its criticisms there is experiential evidence that the peace journalism module has been used in much of the war reporting in mainstream media (Ottosen, 2010 pp.263). Ottosen argues that empirical findings from scholars such as Hackett, Schroeder and Lynch are living attestation that Galtung's module is indeed a useful research tool (ibid). Again. notwithstanding their criticisms, Hanitzch (2007) and Irvan (2006) as argued above have also agreed that some aspects of peace journalism are necessary for journalistic practice.

The Galtung's module provides a framework for this study and I choose to use it because it encourages possible suggestions for peace and reveals untruths from all sides as a means of ending a conflict. Interwoven in peace journalism scholarship is media bias and objectivity which are discussed next.

### 2.4.3 Media Bias

This section looks at media bias in news reportage. Entman classifies media bias into content bias and decision-making bias. Content bias he argues refers to 'consistently slanted framing of mediated communication that promotes the success of a specific interest, party or ideology in competitions to control government power' (Entman, 2007 cited in Entman, 2010, pp.393). Detecting content bias requires demonstrating patterns of slant that regularly promotes support for some interests or actors who seek power-and disapproval of their opponents (bid). See also Entman (1996, pp.163). He suggests that 'scholars should employ the term media bias only when research demonstrates that slant holds over time, and pervades the most influential media outlets' (Entman, 2010, pp.393). The second form of bias he argues is decision making bias where journalists allow their ideologies to guide the news they produce (ibid).

Hackett, (1984, pp.322) sees media bias as the intrusion of subjective opinion by the reporter or news organization into what is purportedly a factual account. He mentions balance between competing viewpoints and distortion of reality as two moments in the determination of bias that are not entirely consistent (ibid). Beyond the general proposition by media experts of what constitutes bias as lack of space for competing parties, de-personalization, slant and wrong sources in news writing, McQuail (1977, pp.107) suggests several possible manifestations of bias; explicit argument and compilation of argument favouring one side (against the other), the use of fact and arguments without any explicit statement of reference, the use of argument which colours on otherwise factual report and conveys an implicit but clear value judgment and the omission of points favouring one side in an otherwise straight news report.

Media bias also includes excessive dependence on elite sources for news. Robinson and Culver (2019) in a study on how white reporters cover race in the U.S, found that community leaders, activists, and citizens 'questioned their excessive reliance on official sources, as this inherently privileges those in power' (pp.383). Excessive reliance on official sources for news as bias is also argued by (Goddard et al. 2008, pp10), Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Bennett (1990) (cited in Hammond, 2017, pp.80).

Biased reportage could constitute a substantial risk of aggravating a conflict. Consequently, Galtung (1986, 1998) coined the concept of peace journalism (PJ) to replace biased reporting in war and conflict situations. He classifies war journalism (WJ) and PJ on four premises: (see chapter one under 'Peace Journalism') (1) peace/war, (2) truth/propaganda, (3) people/elites and (4) solutions/victory. Galtung's argument is that a journalist in reporting conflict must focus on 'peace' 'truth' be 'people centred' and 'solution centred'. His treatise is supported by Lynch and McGoldrick (2005, pp.5) who argue that peace journalism is when 'editors and reporters make choices – of what stories to report, and how to report them–that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflicts' (see above under peace journalism). The next task is a look at objectivity in news reportage.

### 2.4.4. Objectivity in News Reportage

Media scholars, including Ward (2010) argue the media should be unbiased or objective in news coverage. Consequently, media bias can be discussed in the light of objectivity as lack of objectivity invariably constitutes bias. Ward (2010) defines objectivity as 'a web of norms standards and rules that govern practice' in order to eliminate journalistic biases from reporting (pp.142). Objectivity he argues is achieved through factuality, balance, fairness, non-bias, independence, non-interpretation and neutrality (ibid). Schudson (2001, pp.151) characterises objectivity as emphasis on verifiable facts, balanced and impartiality, reflecting accurate events in reporting, factual arrangement of the news, exercising professional detachment and impersonal point of view and the separation of news and editorial functions of the news organization.

Independence and neutrality as part of objectivity proposed by Ward is situated in the definition of objectivity by Robinson and Culver (2019). They propose what they term 'active objectivity' which requires journalists to 'defy institutionally entrenched routines and ideologies of production, as well as the structure of relations with sources, audiences, and other social institutions' (pp.389). They call for commitment from news organisation as 'no movement toward active objectivity is truly possible without commitment from the news organizations themselves to embrace active and interpretive approaches' (pp.383).

However, Martin Bell, a former BBC correspondent offers a thesis that challenges the notion of objectivity in news reportage as defined by Ward, especially during conflict situations. He calls it 'Journalism of Attachment', '...a journalism that cares as well as knows' (Bell, 1998, pp.16-18). Bell's treatise hinges on 'ethical conflict' which is significant in discussing objectivity in news reporting. For him, reporters whether they are reporting conflict or not must not stand 'neutrally between good and evil' or 'the victim and the oppressed' (ibid). What Bell is calling for is a journalism that will expose the suffering, intimidation, maltreatment and killings amongst others of the vulnerable, oppressed and less privileged in society or in a given conflict situation so that 'actors' like governments and the international community will act. Bell's concept was informed by situations where third party reporters from developed countries arriving in conflict zones report with little emotional attachment amid sufferings of the oppressed and vulnerable. Bell's concept partly concurs with Galtung's peace journalism module that also encourages journalists to expose suffering and civilian casualties in reporting conflicts. This aspect of his concept makes it still relevant, including in the Dagbon case where government failed to intervene in the crisis for three days, leading to civilian casualties and fatalities and the destruction of property. Government's inability or refusal to identify, arrest and prosecute the real architects of the canage in the midst of enormous evidence (see chapter six) also calls for the adoption of his concept in relation to his call on journalists not to remain neutral between good and evil or right and wrong but to push political authorities to act. These arguably make his concept applicable for adoption in reporting conflicts not only by third party reporters but also by journalists who are culturally located on one side of a conflict.

Bell's expose' has however been criticized by many media scholars, including Ward (1998, 2010). In his 1998 article '*An Answer to Martin Bell Objectivity and Attachment in Journalism*' Ward describes it as being too narrow a notion and that Bell ignores the potentially bad consequences of attachment. Ward (2010, pp146) advocates what he calls 'pragmatic journalistic objectivity' that cautions journalists not to serve as conduit between sources and audience but adopt an 'active interpretive cultural activity'. This he argues is 'not a move towards opinionated journalism but focuses on evidence, coherence with expertise and knowledge with the inclusion of diverse perspectives' (ibid). Ward's criticism notwithstanding James Cameron argues that objectivity is sometimes 'meaningless and impossible' and that the 'concept of objectivity' is 'arbitrary' and journalists trying to define a situation involving 'ethical conflict' cannot do so with 'demonstrable neutrality' (Bromley & O'Malley, 1997, pp.172). For him, a journalist is 'obliged to present his attitudes (facts) as vigorously and persuasively as he can', insisting that 'it is his attitudes, to be examined and criticized in the light of every contrary argument which he need not accept but must reveal' (Ibid). Zelizer and Allan (2002) have also challenged the notion of objectivity as they argue that 'journalists affected by traumatic events report under the weight of the trauma' (cited in Ginosar and Cohen, 2019, pp.7). A case in point is the September 11 attacks in the United

States when American journalists acted like ordinary American citizens rather than professional journalists (Ibid). They call this form of journalism 'Patriotic journalism' where journalists abandon the traditional mode of objective and neutral reporting and adopt 'solitary emphatic manner towards their nation or ethnic group in reporting crisis events' (Schudson, 2002 cited in Ginosar and Cohen 2019, pp.3-4). Patriotic journalism also encompasses journalists following government and military framing of events and conflicts and do not provide the public with alternative frames with their stories (ibid, pp.7). Patriotic Journalism, Peace Journalism and Journalism of Attachment concur in challenging the notion of objectivity. This is seen in the light of Bell's call on journalists to act in the face of civilian sufferings, Galtung's module that urges exposé on civilian casualties and Zelizer and Allan's position that in patriotic journalism, journalists affected by traumatic events report under the weight of the trauma.

Their arguments however differ from Hallin's (1996) 'sphere of consensus' and 'sphere of deviance' in which journalists serve the public consensus and the common narratives by not acting independently and not presenting opposite views or alternative narratives (Ginosar and Cohen 2019, pp.7). Hallin's 'spheres' are however also a challenge to objectivity. Thus, the above arguments suggest objectivity is unattainable. This view is supported by Mindich (1998), Tuchman (1972), Overholzer (2004) who argue objectivity is 'unattainable ideal, subjective convention and a mask for personal and political interests and thus a form of political bias cited in (Lichter, 2017, pp.403). Gaber (2008, pp2) also sees objectivity as unattainable concept and argues that even 'striving for objectivity is looking like an increasingly threadbare, and arguably dangerous, aspiration'. Objectivity he argues is a seductive concept that flatters to deceive because media practitioners as human as they are have a set of prejudices and an ingrained sense of professional values that colour the way they work (Ibid, pp8). As a result, any attempt by journalists to argue that they can 'put aside their beliefs, and feelings and become, or aspire to become, genuinely objective, strengthens a dangerous canard' as their own 'conscious and unconscious motivations are affecting how they report' (Ibid, pp8). He argues that the concepts of neutrality, fairness, balance, accuracy, truth, unbiased and impartiality are problematic and that journalists should rather recognise the unattainability of these concepts, inform their audiences about them and in doing so equip themselves to counteract them in their work (Ibid, pps9-14). Gaber's thesis notwithstanding, journalism is still measured against some standard of dispassionate reportage that calls for fairness, balance and impartiality (Schudson, 2001, pp.167).

Discussions on 'Media Bias' and 'Objectivity' and 'Peace Journalism' above constituted the yardstick in measuring biases in the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and the *Ghana News Agency* in chapter seven.

## 2.5 Overall conclusion

It is clear from the above discussion that the media's relation with governments, the military and the intelligence community over the past century (1914-2019) has been characterized by censorship and propaganda by the latter against the former. Literature on censorship and propaganda in conflict times abounds in the West and Africa. Literature on propaganda and censorship in chieftaincy conflicts is however missing. This reveals a gap in literature in African media, including the Ghanaian media in censorship and propaganda by governments, the military and the intelligence community during chieftaincy conflicts which this study aims to fill. Theories on public opinion, peace journalism and concepts of media bias and objectivity have also been explored to provide a framework for the study. Having revealed a gap in literature and how I intend to fill it, the next chapter discusses the methodology (which is qualitative research) that would be used in this study.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**METHODOLOGY**

## 3.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the methods used in identifying, selecting and analyzing data to answer the research questions. It specifically explores the use of qualitative methodology and relies on ethnography and reflexivity. It also explores data collection techniques like participant observation, textual analysis and interviews.

The advantages and disadvantages of qualitative methods are discussed as well as ethical issues and my interest in researching the Dagbon conflict. 56 respondents from the media, chieftaincy institution, civil society and academia were sampled in addition to official documents and media reports on the conflict to collect the data.

Structured and semi-structured interviews are discussed even though the interviews used are unstructured. Providing the framework for the collection and analysis of data was the research design. This design was achieved in line with the objectives and research questions being investigated (see below). Why I chose qualitative research design is discussed below.

## 3.1 Qualitative Research Design-Why qualitative study

Finch argues that qualitative research is taken to 'encompass techniques which are not statistically based but are especially suited to small-scale analyses. Here the researcher

> ...attempts to get to know the social world being studied at first hand, especially participant observation, and interviewing of an in-depth and unstructured or semi-structured variety supplemented where appropriate by the use of documentary sources (1986, pp.5).

Such techniques he notes are rooted in 'social anthropology where the emphasis is in studying social life in natural settings' (ibid). Qualitative research methods focus on discovering and understanding the experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of participants—that is, qualitative research explores meaning, purpose or reality (Hiatt, 1986, cited in Harwell, 2017, pp.148). In other words:

> ...qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world on to a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings...This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret phenomena in terms of the

meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, pp.3 cited in Harwell, 2017, pp.148).

Qualitative research is not to replicate or generalize studies but to allow for a detailed exploration of a topic of interest in which information is collected by a researcher through case studies, ethnographic work, interviews, and so on (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, cited in Harwell, 2017, pp.148). Inherent in this approach is the description of the interactions among participants and researchers in naturalistic settings with few boundaries, resulting in a flexible and open research process. These unique interactions imply that different results could be obtained from the same participant depending on who the researcher is, because results are created by a participant and researcher in a given situation (ibid).

Qualitative research is used in this study to explore in detail the use of propaganda and censorship against the media in Ghana in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict and how propaganda censorship and media bias are affecting efforts at reconciling the feuding gates. *There is no study on propaganda and censorship on the Dagbon conflict and so there is nothing to replicate* (see chapter two).

The use of qualitative method for this study therefore was apt since it offered an opportunity for an exploratory study on propaganda and censorship on the Dagbon conflict. To achieve this, I collected and analyzed data on the use of censorship and propaganda in certain media outlets in Ghana from 2002 to 2019. I also looked at how the media framed their stories on the conflict and how the conflicting factions perceived media reportage of the conflict within the same period. How propaganda and censorship is affecting efforts at reconciling the feuding factions within the same period was also looked at.

Informed by Finch (1986, pp.5-6) I used in-depth interview to encourage interaction between me and the respondents in a naturalistic manner to ensure an open and flexible research process. Qualitative methods like interviews '...allow a much greater flexibility in research design' (Ibid). Research designs are however identified before they are applied as argued below.

### 3.1.1 Research design

Clotty (1998) described four key features to consider in research design: the epistemology that informs the research, the philosophical stance underlying the methodology in question, the methodology itself and the techniques and procedures used in the research design to collect data, cited in Harwell (2017, pp.148). In this study my research design refers to the methodology itself and this provided the framework for the collection and analysis of data in line with my research questions.

Designing a qualitative method involves several approaches however Leedy and Ormrod (2001) recommend the following five: Case studies, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Content Analysis and Phenomenology (cited in Williams, 2007, pp.68}. This study used ethnographic approach to collect data because ethnography generates 'rich and nuanced understanding' of the research problem and 'minimal respondent bias' (Bhattacherjee, 2012, pp.40-41). I am also part of the Dagbon chieftaincy institution (being a royal Andani member) and so my choice of ethnography was to generate more understanding of the problem statement to generate better and more insightful responses from respondents. Ethnography is the next focus in this discussion.

### 3.1.2 Ethnography

Hoey (2014, pp.1) defines ethnography as 'both a qualitative research process and method (one conducts an ethnography) and product (the outcome of this process is an ethnography) whose aim is cultural interpretation'. The ethnographer he argues 'goes beyond reporting events and details of experience and attempts to explain how these represent what might be called webs of meaning, the cultural constructions, in which we live' (ibid). Ethnography is also an interpretive research design inspired by anthropology that emphasizes that research phenomenon must be studied within the context of its culture (Bhattacherjee, 2012, pp.40). The researcher is deeply immersed in a certain culture over an extended study period mostly between 8 months and 2 years and during that period, engages, observes, and records the daily life of the studied culture, and theorizes about the evolution and behaviours in that culture (ibid).

Data is collected primarily through observational techniques, formal and informal interaction with participants in that culture, and personal field notes while data analysis involves 'sense making' (ibid). The researchers narrate their experiences in great detail so that readers may experience that same culture without necessarily being there (ibid). Informed by Bhattacherjee, I spent six months collecting data through interviews, observations and interaction with the youth. The youth-ages between 18 and 25-constitute majority of the 'workforce' for politicians and opinion leaders from the two feuding factions and are often at the centre of violent conducts relating to chieftaincy and politics. I did same for the opinion leaders and chiefs in the Dagbon area while making a personal field notes on their daily encounters. In achieving this, I kept a log sheet detailing my encounters with the various groups and noting down my observations. I used both overt and covert means to collect the data. I used overt means to generate data from the interviews I had with the chiefs, journalists, academics, civil society and opinion leaders while covert means was employed to generate field notes through observations that I made of the various youth groups. For the covert research, notes were taken discreetly from where the youth sit (under trees, pavilions and open places) where my presence was not untoward.

I did not use devices like camera and tape recorder but wrote notes discreetly. Raw data was stored in an encrypted device. It was also transcribed and analyzed for this thesis. The decision to use covert means to generate data was because of perceived suspicion of the youth, especially the Abudus about my intention behind the data collection, given that I am Andani and have reported the conflict extensively (see chapters one and four). I therefore thought that if I employed overt research, I would not be able to improve the naturalistic data that I was gathering since some of the youth (especially the Abudu youth) would predictably not have opened in their interactions. As my quest to have audience with the Abudu chiefs reveal (see under negotiating access and challenges of data collection), the Abudus were highly suspicious of my intentions and the best way I thought was to use covert research in my interactions with the youth. Even though the Andani youth would not have posed any challenges if I used overt research to interact with them, I thought I should be fair to all the youth groups by using the same method to deal with both Abudu and Andani youth hence the covert research.

Given the fact that covert research arguably infringes on participants' consent I did not include the names and locations of these youth groups in this study so that readers may not be able to identify them. I also submitted and got approval ethical form for covert ethnography in line with the Bangor University Ethics Committee's standards. Long-term engagement in the field setting or place where the ethnography takes place is called participant observation (Hoey, 2014, pp.2). The advantages of this approach are its sensitiveness to the context, the rich and nuanced understanding it generates, and minimal respondent bias (Bhattacherjee, 2012, pp.40-41).

I observed that the conflict has continued to tear Dagombas apart notwithstanding the length of time (March 2002 since the Yaa Naa murder). Many of the youth and opinion leaders' groups I visited continued to sit according to chieftaincy lines where they discussed politics, chieftaincy and social issues and to a lesser extent religion. They variously sit under trees, mosques and or make-shift pavilions. The pavilions are constructed for them by the two main political parties-the National Democratic Congress (NDC) for the Andanis and the New Patriotic Party (NPP) for the Abudus. It is common knowledge, as I also observed, that politics and chieftaincy in Dagbon are so synchronized that virtually all Abudus are NPP and Andanis NDC because of the support these political parties give to them (see introduction).

Interwoven in politics and chieftaincy is religion. With Dagombas largely Muslim, the people are also divided along two main sects of the Islamic religion-the Tijaniya sect for the Abudus and the Sunni sect for the Andanis. Sunni mosques are largely patronized by the Andanis who are largely also NDC and Tijaniya mosques are attendees of Abudus who are largely NPP. Significantly, in times of renewed clashes, sitting under a particular shed could endanger one's life as one risk being attacked by a mob using as their yardstick the sitting

place to measure your loyalty or where you belong. Simply put; one risks being pigeonholed depending on who you associate with. A retired broadcaster and journalist I interviewed had this to say on the divisions:

> In Tamale the chieftaincy issue has also taken a religious dimension. One part of the chieftaincy divide belongs to one religious sect while the other belongs to the other. That one too is a factor. If you were not being attacked because of chieftaincy you were being attacked because of religion but all bothered on nothing but the chieftaincy issue (interview with respondent, July 20, 2017).

Interestingly it is difficult for a stranger to realize these differences at first hand as life circle events like weddings, funerals and other social events bring them together and once issues of chieftaincy and politics crop up the differences emerge. This is further enhanced during traditional festivals like the Damba and Bugum (fire) festivals where largely Abudus follow Abudu chiefs and Andanis follow Andani chiefs to celebrate.

Of late there is also division in the patronage of music composed by the youth. A classic example is the '69 music' group, believed to be associated with the NPP and Abudus and 'Gadam Nation' group believed to be NDC and Andani. 'Gadan Nation' outdoor events are largely patronized by NDC and Andanis and so is '69 group' by NPP and Abudus.

Some Dagombas however, mostly intellectuals, the middle class and the youth (mostly educated) who are not so attached to politics and chieftaincy and are interested in 'bread and butter' issues have managed to stay out of this divisiveness. They mingle together despite differences in politics, religion and chieftaincy and discuss matters of mutual interests and concerns.

The life of a typical youth in Dagbon mostly illiterate or less educated and or unemployed (and these are the people the politicians and opinion leaders use to fan chieftaincy and political conflicts as indicated above) begins with a search for daily bread mostly from relatives, friends, sympathizers or do menial jobs like merchandising amongst others. By mid day they begin to gather together at their 'bases' where they discuss mostly politics and chieftaincy issues. They observe four out of the five daily muslim prayers there and occasionally rush out to attend to other issues of importance to them. They leave to their various homes at sun set and reconvene at night until mid night or dawn. At night they continue their discussions while sipping 'Ataya'-a herbal tea popular amongst the Arabs and Hausas believed to have medicinal properties that aid digestion and facilitate free discharge of the human excreta.

Due to their poverty, arising out of joblessness coupled with their gullibility, politicians and some opinion leaders use them for their selfish ends mostly in violent activities against their opponents. This is often more pronounced during electioneering campaigns as they

are often brainwashed by these politicians that a loss of political power would undermine their chieftaincy interests.

Having lived and worked in Dagbon for nearly fifty years I can say with certainty that these extreme divisions amongst the Dagomba people were less existent prior to the murder of the Yaa Naa in March 2002. Even though the conflict started in 1948 it was the murder of the Yaa Naa and the way it was poorly managed by state authorities at the time (see introduction) that opened the floodgate of divisions.

Close exploration of several sources of data enhances ethnographic understanding as the ethnographer uses these data as sources of foundation, to rely on a cultural frame of analysis (Hoey, 2014, pp.2). Informed by this, I collected data from interviews, newspaper reports and official documents on the Dagbon conflict, including reports of news conferences and other correspondences between various governments and the two feuding gates (Abudus and Andanis) and between the two gates.

However, ethnographic study has some limitations; it is time consuming and demands intensive resources given that the researcher will have to be in the setting for between 8 months and two years (see above). Findings are also specific to a given culture and thus cannot be generalized to other cultures (Bhattacherjee, 2012, pp.41).

I am already familiar with the culture and tradition of the Dagomba people (being a Dagomba myself), have lived in the area since childhood and have worked as a journalist there for 18 years. Spending less than between 8 months and 2 years as stated by Bhattacherjee did not in any way diminish or inhibit my ability to 'narrate experiences in great detail so that readers may experience that same culture without being there' (2012, pp.40). This study is also located within the framework of participant observation, reflexivity and auto-ethnography which is discuss next.

### 3.1.3 Theorizing Auto-ethnography

Auto-ethnography is an emerging qualitative research method that allows the author to write in a highly personalized style, drawing on his or her experiences to extend understanding about a societal phenomenon (Wall, 2006, pp.146). The intent of auto-ethnography is to acknowledge the inextricable link between the personal and the cultural and to make room for non-traditional forms of inquiry and expression (ibid).

Auto-ethnographers differ in their emphasis on auto-(self)-ethno-(the socio-cultural connection), and-graphy-(the application of the research process), (Reed-Danahay, 1997). Whiles some presume personal narrative to be the same as an auto-ethnography (Ellis & Bochner, 2000), others use auto-ethnography as a means of linking concepts from the literature to the narrated personal experience (Holt, 2001, Sparkes, 1996) and support an

approach as rigorously justifiable as any other form of inquiry (Duncan, 2004) cited in (Wall, 2008, pp.39). In this study I link my personal experiences as a conflict reporter in the Dagbon conflict to the concepts of auto-ethnography and notion of objectivity using Martin Bell's 'Journalism of Attachment'.

Ellis et al. (2011, pp.1) posits that researchers use tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write auto-ethnography. Thus, as a method, auto-ethnography is both process and product. It 'sensitizes readers to issues of identity politics, experiences shrouded in silence, and forms of representation that deepen people's capacity to empathize with people who are different from them' (Ellis & Bochner, 2000) cited in (Ellis et al. 2011, pp.3). As a research method an auto-ethnographer's job encompasses the 'scientist or practitioner performing narrative analysis' relating to themselves as closely related to a 'particular phenomenon' (McIlveen, 2008, pp.15). I explore my identity as a royal and narrate my experiences in reporting a conflict that was also my conflict and state how I dealt with ethical issues that emerged in the reportage of the conflict. As a result, auto-ethnography is used by researchers to 'acknowledge and accommodate subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on research, rather than hiding from these matters or assuming they do not exist' (McIlveen, 2008, pp.15).

Auto-ethnographers must not only use their methodological tools and research literature to analyze experiences, but also must consider ways through which others may experience similar epiphanies; (remembered moments). They must use personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience, and in so doing, make characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders and outsiders. To accomplish this might require comparing and contrasting personal experiences against existing research (ibid, pp.9).

In a conceptual framework to his book 'Auto-ethnography As Method', Chang (2008, pp.15) describes auto-ethnography as an 'excellent instrumental tool to help not only social scientists but also practitioners…gain profound understanding of self and others' and that 'it functions more effectively with others from diverse cultural backgrounds'. When researchers write auto-ethnographies, they seek to produce aesthetic and evocative thick descriptions of personal and interpersonal experiences. They accomplish this by first discerning patterns of cultural experience evidenced by field notes, interviews, and/or artefacts, and then describing these patterns using facets of storytelling (e.g. character and plot development), showing and telling and alterations of authorial voice (Ellis et al. 2011, pp.14). In this study I described my personal and interpersonal experiences in reporting the Dagbon conflict and backed them with published works, field notes and interviews with respondents.

Thus, the auto-ethnographer not only tries to make personal experience meaningful and cultural experience engaging, but also by producing accessible texts. She or he may be able

to reach wider and more diverse mass audiences that traditional research usually disregards, a move that can make personal and social change possible for more people (Bochner, 1997, Ellis, 1995, Goodall, 2006, Hooks, 1994 cited in Ellis et al. 2011, pp.14).

Auto-ethnography however has some limitations.

Auto-ethnography is criticized for either being too artful and not scientific, or too scientific and not sufficiently artful. (Ellis et al. 2011, pp.36). It uses supposedly biased data…and do not fulfil scholarly obligations of hypothesizing, analyzing, and theorizing (Ibid, pp.37).

These limitations notwithstanding, I used auto-ethnography to narrate in detail what I went through reporting my own conflict (belonging to one side of the factions) and the consequences I had to suffer. I backed my claims with concepts of auto-ethnography, published works and interviews with respondents. Mine is to present the facts as I know them. Posterity and the reader are the best judges. For my experiences in reporting the conflict as a journalist, my identity as an Andani reporting my own conflict, ethical dilemmas in reporting the conflict and the consequences therein, see chapter four for details. Reflexivity is another element of ethnography and is discussed below.

### 3.1.4 Reflexivity

Another key element of ethnography aside 'participant observation' is reflexivity. Doing qualitative research is by nature a reflective and recursive process, (Ely et al. 1991, cited in Hughes, 2014 page not cited).

> …the process of reflexivity is an attempt to identify, do something about, and acknowledge the limitations of the research: its location, its subjects, its process, its theoretical context, its data, its analysis and how accounts recognize that the construction of knowledge takes place in the world and not apart from it… Being reflexive in doing research is part of being honest and ethically mature in research practice (Ruby, 1980 cited in Hughes, 2014, page not cited).

I am a native of Dagbon, a nephew of the slain king and a journalist who has covered the conflict from 2002 to 2016. The implications of the Dagbon conflict therefore affect me in many ways. Firstly, as a nephew of the slain king I was traumatized by news of his death, especially the gory nature his body was mutilated. I wondered how a people would kill their king, dismember and burn his body. As a journalist, I saw it not only as a human rights issue that should be investigated by me (and other journalists) to unearth the truth for the perpetrators to be apprehended and punished but also a part of a failure on the part of government to ensure security of the individual Ghanaian. With events unfolding, I was convinced (like many other Ghanaians) that government did nothing to protect the Yaa Naa

because the Abudus (who arguably killed the Yaa Naa) are political allies of the NPP government (see above) that was in power.

Subsequently my passion to unearth the truth and my identity as an Andani led to a situation of ethical conflict as I saw myself as part of the conflict that I was reporting. Bell (1998, pp.16-18) offers a treatise that hinges on ethical conflict. He calls it 'Journalism of Attachment'… 'a journalism that cares as well as knows' (see 2.4.3). Bell calls for a journalism that will expose the suffering, intimidation, maltreatment and killings of the vulnerable, oppressed and less privileged in society or in conflict situation so that actors like governments and the international community will act. Even though Bell's thesis was in response to third-party reporters reporting other peoples' conflict with little emotional attachment to the suffering masses, his thesis is still relevant for reporters located in one side of the conflict because of his call for action to stop human suffering. I was part of the conflict I was reporting, being an Andani, and I made use of Bell's concept to call on authorities to stop the harassment, intimidation and suffering of the less previlaged and oppressed in Dagbon. In the Dagbon conflict, the bereaved-the Andanis-did not only lose a king but also were arrested, detained and tortured by the security services for daring to act in reprisal in the wake of the murder of the Yaa Naa. Scores of Andani youth and opinion leaders in Tamale were taken to the military barracks, tortured and beaten by the military for allegedly attacking and or instigating attacks on Abudus and NPP supporters. While it is true that some of the Andanis engaged in disturbing acts against the Abudus, including burning of their properties (houses), others were picked up on mere suspicion. Series of 'cordon and search' were conducted largely on perceived Andani homes while the Abudus who killed the Yaa Naa had few of their premises searched. Moved by these events, I saw it a moral duty and decided to act. Informed by Bell, I chronicled every landmark event that occurred, including the police arrests and military brutalities of the Andanis and equally significant, attacks on Abudus by the Andanis so that the Ghanaian authorities could act. In doing so, I was guided by and acted according to the journalistic ethics of fairness, accuracy and balance as exposed by Ward (2010, pp.142).

Bell's expose' has however been criticized by Ward (1998) who describes it as too narrow a notion that ignores the potentially bad consequences of attachment (see 2.4.3). Bell did not however say that journalists should be subjective but that they should be moved by events and call for action. Bell's position is that it should be a moral duty of journalists to act on behalf of the voiceless and disadvantaged.

For Cameron, the 'concept of objectivity' is 'arbitrary' and that reporters in defining 'ethical conflict situation' cannot do so with 'demonstrable neutrality' (Bromley & O'Malley, 1997, pp.172). For him, a journalist is 'obliged to present his attitudes (facts) as vigorously and

persuasively as he can, insisting that it is his attitudes, to be examined and criticized in the light of every contrary argument which he need not accept but must reveal' (Ibid). Informed by Bell and Cameron, I reported what I saw how I saw it-reporting what I believed deserved attention from government, civil society and the general citizenry. For more on my reportage of the Dagbon conflict and challenges therein, see under Auto-ethnography in chapter four.

To facilitate the provision of 'naturalistic data', my interests implicit in this research is not to be biased but to enhance the findings of the research. It is hoped that the findings of this research will contribute towards the understanding and abating of the conflict I have chosen to investigate. Ruby, 1980 states that 'To not acknowledge the interests implicit in a critical agenda for the research, is to assume value-free positions of neutrality, is to assume an obscene and dishonest position' (cited in Hughes, 2014, page not cited).

I gathered data from both Abudus and Andanis and gave them ample interview time to answer the same research questions. Informed by Cameron, mine was to present the data as vigorously and persuasively as I could, to be examined and criticized in the light of every other divergent argument (Bromley & O'Malley, 1997, pp.172).

In addition to developing understanding of how to live in a setting, the researcher must both become a participant in the life of the setting while also maintaining the stance of an observer (Hoey, 2014, pp.2). This is because 'continuous reflective process and the researcher's own values, perceptions and behaviours, alongside those of their respondents', can affect data collection and analysis (Parahoo, 2006 cited in Lambert et al. 2010, pp.322). Morrow (2006) suggests reflexivity is a strategy that researchers can use for the purpose of understanding the phenomenon under exploration and accurately portraying the meaning made by participants and where self-examination allows assumptions and biases that could affect the study to be understood (cited in Lambert et al. 2010, pp.322). Listening to the Abudu youth on June 20, 2017, I gathered that they were hoping to get the kingship after the murder of Yaa Naa Yakubu II. They vowed to do anything and everything possible to ensure that the kingship did not return to the Andanis, especially to the eldest son of the slain king, Abdulai Yakubu Andani (Kampakuya naa). To the Abudu youth, the Andanis had remained on the throne for far too long from 1974 to 2002 for the slain Yaa Naa and from 2006 to 2017 and still counting for the acting king, kampakuya naa, never mind the king was murdered. To them 'might was right' and having overpowered the king it was their turn to rule Dagbon otherwise Dagbon would know no peace.

> …in the olding days our ancestors killed and took over the kingship…that is what we expect to happen…otherwise if it is given to the Andanis, we shall again kill until our concerns are met… (Covert research, June 20, 2017).

On another occasion on July 5, 2017, and following hints of the NPP government's intention to persuade the Andanis to allow for the funeral of Abdulai IV to be performed at the Gbewah palace in return for the kingship as part of a reconciliation measure, the Abudu youth expressed outrage and threatened to quit the NPP party. '…if the government disappoint us, we shall leave the NPP, we vote because of chieftaincy…afterall what do we get from the party…the president must be warned to desist from that plan…'. They again reasoned 'our leadership is interested in grabbing positions in government and not concerned about the kingship…voting time will come and we see if they can approach us'.

They touted their alliance with the ruling NPP government (see chapters one and eight) and reasoned that the government would accept their requests and allow them to perform the funeral of former Yaa Naa Abdulai IV at the Gbewah palace and install his first son, Abdulai Mahamadu as the new Yaa Naa and not to install any Andani chief.

> 'our party is now in power and so Nana (Ghana's President and NPP leader) cannot disaapoint us…he should just allow us to perform the funeral at the Gbewah palace and take over the kingship; it was a promise that must be fulfilled (Covert research, July 5, 2017).

As explained in chapter one the controversy over the funeral of former Yaa Naa Abdulai IV at the Gbewah palace was partly blamed for the Abudus attack on the slain Yaa Naa who refused to grant the Abudus access to the palace. The Abudu youth position was bolstered by the stance of the Abudu leadership, including at the Committee of Eminet Chiefs sitting that Abdulai IV died as former Yaa Naa and buried at the Gbewah palace and thus his funeral should be performed there (see chapter eight).

Even before a determination was made on who the next king should be, the Abudu youth were hoping they would win the contest and their new Yaa Naa would deskin all Andani chiefs who were enskinned by the Kampakuya Naa, because according to them the latter enskinned only Andanis to vacant skins (Covert research, July 27, 2017). The Kampakuya Naa did enskin chiefs to vacant skins once occupied by Andanis and those new chiefs were indeed Andanis. However, the Abudus refused to perform the funerals of Abudu chiefs who had passed on insisting they would only do so after a new Yaa Naa was found. Some of them feared the Kampakuya Naa would have given those vacant skins to the Andanis even though there is evidence that he enskinned some Abudus to vacant skins as well. These skins included Gundogu, Gnani, Kunkong and Zakoli amongst others. The Abudu youth also feared that an Andani Yaa Naa would hand over 'their skins' to Andanis after they perform the funerals of their chiefs and the only way to guarantee the safety of 'their skins' was to have an Abudu as Yaa Naa:

> We have been in opposition for a long time. If an Andani is chosen as the new Yaa Naa our skins will be given to Andani chiefs…should that happen, we shall resist it with

all our might and as usual we shall win…an adage in Dagbani says the man who wins a wrestling contest against you all the time is the one who swears by his father…(Ibid).

The Andanis on their part continued to count their loses notwithstanding the length of time with some of them hoping for an opportunity to relatiate while others thought they were cowards as the march 2002 incident was not the first time the Abudus killed their conpatriots and they remained helpless. They also vowed not to allow for the funeral of Abdulai IV to be performed at the palace otherwise the Yaa Naa would have died in vain since his refusal to allow the Abudus access to the palace was customary. They argued that if the state failed to arrest the perpetrators, the only way to atone for the Yaa Naa's death was to give the kingship to the Kampakuya Naa, also vowing to resist any attempts to give the kingship to any other person (Covert research, July 3, 2017). This was however not the view of the entire Andani youth as some, including me, thought the kinship should rather be given to the eldest qualified Andani chief.

They blamed the National Democratic Congress (NDC) party for failing to resolve the issue while in power from 2009-2016 and accused their intellectuals in the party of using the conflict to win parliamentary seats only to abandon the concerns of the Andani family. '…we are in this mess because the NDC failed to use political power to grant us the kingship…they claim to be on our side, but their actions do not reflect any support for us' (Covert research, June 29, 2017).

On another occasion on July 11, 2017, some of them vowed not to date or marry Abudu women as their loyalty will remain with the Abudu family and that could put their lives in danger. They encouraged one another to investigate the background of Dagomba women before dating them.

My reflexive role as a researcher was not to bias the study but to use the experience in my reportage of the conflict and the knowledge gained about the conflict to guide responses of respondents in order to generate more understanding of the research problem. The covert research helped me to appreciate the thoughts of the youth regarding the conflict and how that could generate concepts of propaganda for this study. It helped me to understand the occurrences and happenings of propaganda and censorship in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict to portray the meanings from the responses of respondents to the understanding of the research problem. I now discuss interviews, another method of data collection used in this study.

## 3.2 Interviews

This study used unstructured interview to collect data. Data was recorded using a voice recorder. Notes were taken in case the voice recorder failed or 'disappointed' amid interviewing. Interviews are a more personalized form of data collection method and are

conducted by trained interviewers (Bhattacherjee, 2012, pp.78). As a professional journalist I am trained to do interviews and that training was utilised in this study.

Questionnaire however is a research instrument consisting of a set of questions (items) intended to capture responses from respondents in a standardized manner (ibid). However, unlike a questionnaire, the interview script may contain special instructions for the interviewer that is not seen by respondents and may include space for the interviewer to record personal observations and comments (ibid). In addition, unlike mail surveys, the interviewer can clarify any issues raised by the respondent or ask probing or follow-up questions (ibid).

However, interviews are time consuming and resource intensive. In addition, special interviewing skills are needed on the part of the interviewer. The interviewer is also considered to be part of the measurement instrument and must proactively strive not to artificially bias the observed response (ibid). Questionnaires are inexpensive to administer but time consuming since respondents may not return the questionnaires on time. Questionnaire surveys are also not suitable for issues that require respondent clarification or detailed written responses. Longitudinal designs can be used to survey the same set of respondents at different times, but response rates tend to fall precipitously from one survey to another (ibid, 74).

This study used interviews because it offers respondents the opportunity to express themselves in their own manner unlike questionnaires that only restrict respondents to set of questions. This study discusses three types of interviews; structured unstructured and semi-structured interviews but uses unstructured interview as discussed below.

### 3.2.1 Structured, Semi-structured and Unstructured interviews

This study uses unstructured interview. Unstructured interview has the following characteristics as chronicled by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; (a research think-thank) based in the United States.

1.  The interviewer and respondents engage in a formal interview in that they have a scheduled time to sit and speak with each other and both parties recognize this to be an interview

2.  The interviewer has a clear plan in mind regarding the focus and goal of the interview and this guides the discussion.

3.  Ethnographic, in depth interviews are unstructured (RWJF, 2008)

In unstructured interview, emphasis is placed on the interviewee's thoughts while the researcher's role is to try not to be invasive while conducting the interview, Denscombe

(2003, pp.167). Unstructured and semi structured interviews are almost similar. Denscombe argues that in both cases interview will slide back and forth and that what separates these two types from structured interviews is their 'ability to allow respondents to use their own words and to develop their own thoughts in both interviews' (2003, pp.167). The two interviews are more of 'discovery rather than checking' and they lend themselves to in-depth investigations, particularly 'those which explore personal accounts of experiences and feelings' (ibid). This research amongst other things investigates the experiences and feelings of journalists in covering the Dagbon conflict during censorship and propaganda as well as the feelings of the public (Abudus and Andanis) towards media reportage of the conflict. Structured interviews on the other are rigid and the interviewer exercises control over 'the nature of the responses and the length of the answers allowed to the interviewee' (ibid).

Journalists in Ghana who covered the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict endured many challenges, including propaganda from both factions in the conflict and from government. Using structured interview will not give these respondents the opportunity and freedom to express themselves adequately on the matter to satisfy the demands of the questions posed by this study. Unstructured interview allowed the respondents to open up and express themselves in their own way regarding how they endured and dealt with the challenges. The interview questions can be found in appendix 'B'. The respondents were drawn from the academia, media, civil society the Abudus and the Andanis amongst others. The objectives of the study and the research questions follow.

The objectives of the study are:

1. To uncover the constraints journalists faced in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict from 2002 to 2019

2. To determine the extent to which journalists reacted to the issues of censorship and propaganda techniques by governments', security agencies and the intelligence community during the period under review and how these techniques affected media reportage of the conflict and the resolution of the conflict.

3. To determine whether there were biases in the media reportage of the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict

4. To determine how the feuding parties in the conflict responded to the media reportage on the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict and propaganda and censorship of the media

My research questions are:

Q1.    What censorship and propaganda techniques were apparent in the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict from 2002 to 2019?

Q2.    To what extent has propaganda and censorship contributed to the perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict from 2002 to 2019?

Q3     How biased was the media (Daily Graphic newspaper and Ghana News Agency) in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict from 2002 to 2019?

Q4     How did the media bias affect the practice of conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana from 2002 to 2019?

Q5      What opinion does the Andani and Abudu leadership hold of the media reportage of the conflict from 2002 to 2019?

Getting some of the respondents to answer the above questions was not entirely easy. How I negotiated and got access to these respondents is discussed below.

### 3.3 Negotiating Access and Challenges during Data collection

Getting access to these respondents was generally easy except for the side of the Abudu faction. The correspondents and editors are either former students of mine or colleagues or juniors in the journalism profession and I reported the conflict with them and so getting them to talk on the issues was not a challenge. Respondents from the academia are also colleagues and seniors in the journalism profession while some are good friends having reported them (not necessarily on Dagbon conflict) while a correspondent for JOY FM. Those from the civil society are also known faces I have worked with while a journalist and so did not experience challenges in terms of granting interviews. The Andani faction was elated because they believed that as victims, the world needed to know how and why their king was killed by the Abudus while the state failed to protect him. For them any project intended to inform the world about the Dagbon conflict was welcomed.

The Abudus however were sceptical about the import of the interviews given my background as an Andani and a journalist who recorded significant expose' on the Dagbon conflict. Even though I told them it was for academic purpose they would not grant me audience and kept asking me to go and come back, ostensibly to consult extensively with their intellectuals. In one of my interactions, an Abudu chief asked if I had spoken to any Abudu chief and when the answer was no, he asked me to go and come back. After three weeks of back and forth, I finally managed to get two gate keepers who led me to the chiefs before I could get them to answer my research questions. Having been convinced by the gate keepers that the interviews were not in any way implicating, the Abudu chiefs agreed to speak to me.

My data collection journey was generally successful except for financial constraints. When I started the data collection in May 2017, my sponsors, Ghana Education Trust Fund (GETFUND) had not paid my research allowance and so I had to rely on the monthly stipend (irregular though) they gave me. I spent it on food, fuel (as I had my own vehicle) and cola nuts-a fruit from cola tree used to facilitate a visit to a chief in the West Africa sub region. It is tradition to carry cola nuts when visiting a chief. Soon funds ran out and I had to rely on family and friends to be able to complete the exercise. The chunk of my resources went into purchase of fuel as the respondents lived far apart from each other in an area 9,611 square miles in size (see under background and history of conflict). I also visited some chiefs and opinion leaders for some important historical documents and that also took me to visit far and near places, thus increasing my fuel consumption. All this notwithstanding, the quality of data collected was not affected in anyway.

## 3.4 Challenges of Respondents-Misremembering and Disremembering

Given the fact that the conflict started as far back as 1948 and the Yaa Naa was killed in March 2002, some of the respondents had challenges recollecting exactly what had transpired in the past. Issues about names, dates and events were particularly of worry to some of them. Those respondents conceded that because the conflict had been long and the murder of the Yaa Naa occurred in 2002, they were unable to recollect exactly some of the important landmark events and the dates, including recollecting exactly what transpired in Yendi the day the Yaa Naa was killed. Due to my knowledge about the Dagbon crisis (having reported it extensively from 2002 till 2016), I was able to prompt such respondents and they picked up the pieces from there.

Majority of the respondents were however fluent and on point in answering my research questions. A classic example of misremembering and disremembering is explored in my interview with two survivors of the attack on the Gbewah palace. Their account of how the Yaa Naa died was different. Even though they both claimed to have been with the Yaa Naa at the last day of the attack, their accounts on how he died were different. While one claimed the king was hit by a bullet another insisted that he was not shot. Again, the Wuaku Commission's report stated that some of the witnesses that appeared before it gave evidence that contradicted what they told the police in the early days following the Yaa Naa murder.

All these notwithstanding, the data collected from the interviews and interactions with respondents were not compromised as I used only verifiable data based on my knowledge about the conflict and consultation with some of the most informed respondents as well as official documents like the Wuaku Commission report and the Supreme Court ruling of 1986 on the Dagbon conflict amongst others. I now discuss how the data was sampled.

### 3.5 Sampling

I used the purposive sampling technique to select and generate data from interviews, newspapers, official letters and documents for this study (see below). The interviews conducted were largely face to face but eight of them were conducted via phone after several failed attempts to conduct face to face interview with such respondents. These respondents were based outside my location area of Dagbon and so we eventually settled on telephone interview. Participant observation was used in all questions (except for RQ 3 that detected biases) because it is a key element in qualitative research.

### 3.5.1 Sampling Framework (Interviews)

56 respondents in Ghana were sampled for the study through the stratified purposive sampling strategy approach (see below). My choice of 56 respondents is informed by Saiful (2007, pp.17) who reports that a sample size lesser than 500 and larger than 30 is appropriate for a study. The respondents were drawn from the academia-universities and polytechnics (media and conflict expects from tertiary institutions), the media (reporters and news editors from various media houses in Ghana), opinion leaders from the Abudu and Andani factions and from civil society who work in the areas of media, conflict and security. The choice of these respondents reflects the problem statement of this study which seeks to investigate how propaganda and censorship worked against the media and how the media responded to them as well as public perception about the media reportage of the conflict. Stratified sampling is used to illustrate subgroups and facilitate comparison (Miles and Huberman, 1994, pp.28). In this study it was used to gauge concepts and techniques of propaganda and censorship by various agencies in government, the military and intelligence community as well as the chiefs and spokespersons of the feuding factions in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict.

### 3.5.2 Sampling Framework (Documents)

In this study I employed a combination of two purposive sampling strategies: critical case and stratified purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is the selection of important rich cases for in-depth study (Patton, 2015, pp.364). Studying information rich cases enables one to learn about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry and that yields in-depth understanding rather than empirical generalization (ibid). In critical case sampling, one selects a small number of important cases in order to, as Patton (2015) suggests, 'yield the most information and have the greatest impact on the development of knowledge' (pp.276). Patton cautions that studying a few critical cases does not technically permit broad generalizations to all possible cases but argues that logical generalizations can be made from the weight of evidence produced in studying a critical case (ibid). Informed by Patton, I limited the sampling to correspondences between government and the Abudus and Andanis as well as correspondences between Abudus and the Andanis on

the burial and performance of the funeral of Abdulai IV at the Gbewah palace (see chapter five). The sample also included Kuga Naa's letters to the Committee of Eminent Chiefs on the burial and performance of the funeral of Abdulai IV at the Gbewah palace (ibid). These documents provided a good source of scholarly evidence and also captured the main borne of contention (funeral of Abdulai IV at the Gbewah palace) between the feuding factions that arguably was responsible for the murder of the Yaa Naa and the re-ignition of the latest Dagbon crisis (see chapter one). Stratified purposive sampling was employed to facilitate comparison and establish variations in the way the factions (Abudus and Andanis) and the Kuga Naa (neutral arbiter) understood and explained the 1986 Supreme Court ruling on the status of Abdulai IV as former Yaa Naa since that together with his funeral performance at the Gbewah palace constituted the main borne of contention between the factions (see above). Stratified sampling is used to illustrate subgroups and facilitate comparison (Miles and Huberman, 1994, pp.28). In this study it was used to reveal the patterns, techniques and strategies of propaganda used by the factions in their correspondences on the burial and funeral of Abdulai IV (as can be seen in chapter five) which is one of the reasons for the latest conflict.

### 3.5.3 Sampling Framework (Daily Graphic Newspaper and Ghana News Agency)

The study sampled 227 hard news stories from the state-owned *Daily Graphic newspaper* and *the Ghana News Agency* through purposive sampling. 111 were sampled from the *Daily Graphic* while 116 were sampled from the *Ghana News Agency* from 2002 to 2019 (see below for the rationale for the choice of the two media outlets). Purposive sampling as explained above also known as subjective sampling is selection based on the characteristics of the population and object of the study. I utilised the combination of two purposive sampling strategies; critical case and stratified purposive sampling (see above 3.5.2). In this study stratified sampling was used to compare the two media houses reportage of the conflict in order to illustrate and establish variations along techniques of propaganda and censorship as well as media bias. This included lack of peace journalism, wrong sourcing and wrong attribution and over reliance on elite sources for news in their coverage of the Dagbon conflict. Critical case sampling (see above) was used to sample information from those publications that generated the concepts, techniques and strategies of propaganda censorship and media bias that are under investigation in this study. Those were reports from sittings of the Wuaku Commission and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs, the Yaa Naa's murder, the declaration of State of Emergency and imposition of dusk to dawn curfew. Included also were reports on the official declaration of censorship by government, government's responses to charges of official complicity from the opposition, civil society groups and the Andanis as well as press conferences by the Abudus and the Andanis. The rest were the Andanis initial reaction to the murder of the Yaa Naa and the Abudus denial of his murder. The media outlets were *c*hosen because they have the most archived stories

on the conflict and generated more and better examples of the concepts and techniques of media bias, propaganda and censorship. My RQ3 is, was the media (Daily Graphic Newspaper and Ghana News Agency) biased in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict from 2002 to 2019? Why I chose these two media houses is the next line of discussion.

### 3.5.4 Rationale for choosing *Daily Graphic* and *Ghana News Agency* (GNA)

The heavy reliance on the two media organizations reflects the following:

1. They are state owned media and generally believed by Ghanaians to be responsible and professional

2. They reported the conflict extensively and have the most archived written record on the conflict

3. They generated more and better examples of concepts and techniques of media bias

JOY FM was initially considered for the sample, but they had lost many of their archived stories on the Dagbon conflict that made it impossible to generate the concepts and techniques of propaganda and censorship that I was investigating.

JOY FM, operators of JOY ONLINE and JOY NEWS Television is part of the multi-media group in Ghana that also includes *Adon FM*, *Adom Television* and *LUV FM* in Kumasi in the Ashanti region of Ghana. It is also affiliated to regional FM radio stations across the country, including *Radio Justice* in Tamale and *Radio A1* in Bolgatanga in the Upper East region. It is privately owned and is considered one of the most critical and most independent of radio stations in Ghana. I also worked there as a regional correspondent for the Northern Region from 2002 to 2012 and reported extensively on the Dagbon conflict. JOY FM was the radio station that broke the story about the attack on the Yaa Naa on March 25, 2002 and his murder on March 27, 2002 (see chapter one).

International media including the *British Broadcasting Corporation* (BBC) and the Associated *Press* (AP) that also reported the conflict could also not be considered because their stories could also not generate enough techniques of censorship and propaganda that I was investigating.

The 227 stories gathered were through a purposive sampling technique of stories on the Dagbon conflict published by the two media organisations (Daily Graphic newspaper and Ghana News Agency) from 2002 to 2019. Even though not the entire archived stories, the 227 stories gathered on the conflict (111 stories from Daily Graphic and 116 from GNA) can arguably constitute a fairly representative sample for the assessment of Ghana's selected government media in reporting the Dagbon conflict, and this fair representativeness is grounded in Saiful (2007, pp.17) that a sample size of more than 30 and less than 500 is appropriate for a study. The choice of these media outlets will also offer the opportunity to see the extent to which government controlled *Daily Graphic* and

the *GNA* exercised their freedoms of choice and independence in reporting the conflict in the midst of official declaration of censorship and State of Emergency. The time frame (2002-2019) covers all the significant events (including the murder of the Yaa Naa and the Andanis and Abudus responses to it, civil society groups, opposition and government's reactions to it, the establishments of the Wuaku Commission and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs and the final report on the road map for peace in Dagbon by the Eminent Chiefs) that generated the concepts and techniques of propaganda censorship and media bias that this study is investigating. How the data was coded is discussed below.

## 3.6 Coding of Data

I used thematic coding to code the interview data, media texts, ethnographic accounts and documents. I first examined and coded them to detect patterns of propaganda, censorship and media bias. Then I categorised them into government propaganda, military propaganda, intelligence community propaganda, Andani propaganda and Abudu propaganda. I subcategorised them into types of propaganda like lies, deception, denial, etc. The same technique was used for censorship. In addition to including them in detecting propaganda and censorship, media texts were also categorised into peace insensitive journalism, imbalance, lack of proper attribution (attribution bias), use of value laden words, exaggeration and use of euphemism and how story actors were sourced. I further subcategorised them using examples from the data like 'fumed …cheeky response' 'denied but visibly fumbled' by the *Ghana News Agency* and 'flared up', 'reacted angrily' and 'joining in the confusion' by the *Daily Graphic* that portrayed the Andanis as violent people and liars as examples of the use of value laden words which is an example of peace insensitive journalism. See appendix 'D' for details. The media texts coding was conducted on *Daily Graphic* newspaper and *Ghana News Agency*. I now discuss thematic analysis and textual analysis that were used in analysing the data.

## 3.7 Thematic Analysis and Textual Analysis

I used both thematic analysis and textual analysis to answer all my research questions. Data from 227 stories from the *Daily Graphic* and the *GNA* spanning from March 2002 to May 2019 were used to answer RQ3 (see above). The stories sampled covered the significant events in the conflict. My choice of 227 is again informed by Saiful (2007, pp.17, see 3.5.4). The other RQs 1, 2, 4 and 5 were answered using media reports, including stories from the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and the *GNA* and responses from 56 respondents in key informant interviews as well as official documents and scholarly articles on the conflict. The responses from respondents hinged on issues of propaganda and censorship of the media as well as perception of the leadership of the Abudus and Andanis about the role of the media.

McKee (2003, pp.1) describes textual analysis as 'a methodology, a data-gathering process, for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are and of how they fit into the world in which they live' . According to him when textual analysis is performed on a text it 'makes an educated guess at some of the most likely interpretations that might be made of that text'. This is because it is a way for researchers to 'gather information about how other human beings make sense of the world' (ibid).

Mckee (2011, pp.2) posits that under textual analysis texts are analyzed using a form of 'forensic' analysis-treating them like clues (or traces) of how people have made sense of the world. There is however a problem with textual analysis because there is no single correct interpretation of any text. The ways in which members of different cultures may make sense of a text will vary just as much as the ways in which they make sense of the world around them (ibid). Doing textual analysis therefore imposes a duty on the researcher to remember that their texts would probably be interpreted in different ways by different groups (ibid). The above author's position is supported by Morley (1981b, pp.61) in his study of nationwide audience in 1980 about how different groups interpreted a British Current Affairs Programme 'Nationwide', about the 1977 British Budget. A group of shop stewards thought that it was 'biased', because it had so much sympathy for the middle class and did not address their concerns whiles a group of Black continuing students thought the programme was 'artificial' because '…they don't show conflict, fighting, things we know happen…' (ibid, pp.59).  Another problem about textual analysis is that if 'we have media texts as our only object of analysis, the conclusions we can make will be relevant only to those texts and not applicable to broader society' (Stokes, 2003, pp.56). In this study however it is not only the media texts that constitute my object of analysis as I have interviewed 56 respondents whose responses cut across all my RQs (see above).

However, in studying media texts, the researcher will be able to discuss an infinite number of themes and issues (Stokes, 2003, pp.56). Analyzing texts can also allow the researcher to 'investigate a wide range of hypotheses about the nature of media (2003, pp.56) and studying texts can improve understanding of cultural life of how things mean (2003, pp. 54). Textual analyses are often combined with other forms of analysis at both ends of the production/ reception continuum (ibid). Consequently, I combined textual analysis with thematic analysis to answer all my research questions because of their flexibility and the fact that they are both applicable across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches as stated by Braun and Clare (2006, pp.4-5) Stokes (2003, pp.54-56).

Braun and Clarke (2006, pp. 4-5) argue that one of the advantages of thematic analysis is its flexibility, essentially independent of theory and epistemology and applicable across a range of theoretical and epistemological approaches. Through this freedom, a flexible and

useful research tool that has the potential to provide a rich, detailed yet complex account of data can be obtained (ibid). However, an absence of clear and concise guidelines around thematic analysis means that the 'anything goes' critique of qualitative research may well apply in some instances (ibid). Thematic analysis consists of the analytical construction of codes, themes in qualitative verbal expressions and patterns of recurrence, evaluation or associations within these themes (Herzog et al. 2017, pp.2).

Thematic analysis is particularly suitable for analyzing experiences, perceptions and understandings. It can be used to analyze a large variety of qualitative data and is a flexible method which can be applied within various theoretical frameworks (ibid). I applied it to both the interviews and the texts from documents, interviews, archival records and newspaper reports because 'it is suitable for analyzing experiences, perceptions and understanding' (see Herzog et al. 2017, pp.2) of how propaganda censorship and media bias were apparent in the Dagbon conflict.

Schreier (2014) cited in (Herzog et al. 2017, pp.2) posits that thematic analysis has similarities with qualitative content analysis, which also follows a series of clearly defined steps on description. As such, it is suited for the analysis of large datasets (Ibid). Thematic analysis also involves interpretation and can be used to analyze small and medium-sized data sets (Braun & Clarke, 2013, pp.50). Thematic analysis is an empirical research method which is open-ended regarding any outcome. Thematic analysis is significant to media research using qualitative data for two reasons (ibid). First, it is widely applicable and often cost-effective means of exploratory research; second, one understanding of it is that it constitutes the essential starting point of virtually all qualitative data analysis in using thematic analysis (Herzog et al. 2017, pp.2).

Using thematic coding (see above) I first examined and recorded patterns of propaganda censorship and media bias within the relevant data using both inductive and deductive approaches (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000, pp.94-96). Creswell and Clark (2007, pp.23) define the inductive researcher as someone who works from the 'bottom up, using the participants views to build broader themes and generate a theory interconnecting the themes'. The inductive approach involves analyzing a news story to reveal possible frames, beginning with very loosely defined preconceptions of these frames, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000, pp.94-96). This approach they argue, can detect the many possible ways in which an issue can be structured, but is labour intensive and can be difficult to replicate. In this study, I gathered data from ethnographic study and interviewed 56 respondents on a wide range of issues, including media bias, propaganda and censorship of the media. Even though largely deductive, I also employed inductive elements by amending theories and approaches considering insights generated through the fieldwork. These data were analyzed thematically and textually.

A deductive approach involves predefining certain themes as content analytic variables to verify the extent to which these themes occur in the news, Semetko and Valkenburg (2000, pp.94-96). Creswell and Clark (2007, pp.23) again argue that a deductive researcher 'works from the 'top down', from a theory to hypotheses to data to add to or contradict the theory'. In this study, I also used existing theories in propaganda, censorship and media bias as content analytic variables to test the phenomenon that media bias together with propaganda and censorship of the media is largely responsible for the perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict. Below is example of a list of content analytic variables I used.

Table two- list of codes on propaganda and censorship

| Propaganda | Censorship | Media bias |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Information disorder<br>a. Disinformation (deliberate lies with intent to harm)<br>b misinformation (deliberate lies without intent to harm)<br>c. Malinformation (genuine information to cause harm)<br><br>2.Half truth<br><br>3 Censorship as propaganda tool<br><br>4. Inducement<br><br>5. Image manipulation<br><br>6.Use of 'word game' (glittering generality, band wagon, name calling, fear factor, transfer, plain folks, value laden)<br>7. Emphasis on war, propaganda, elite and victory instead of peace, truth, people and solution centred<br>8. Deception and denial<br>9. Deception through lying<br>10. Outright lies | 1. Inducement<br><br>2. Embedding<br><br>3.Pooling and denial of access<br><br>4.Harassment, threats and intimidation<br><br>5.Regulations and restrictions<br><br>6. Manipulations<br><br>7.Framing up journalists<br><br>8.Suppression of dissent<br><br>9.The use of national security interest<br><br>10. Injunctions | 1.Sourcing (whether the right sources are contacted)<br><br>2.Attribution (whether statements made are attributed to the factually correct sources)<br><br>3.Content bias (pattern of slant)<br><br>4.Decision making bias (journalists ideology guiding the news they produce)<br><br>5.imbalance (one sided, partial and preferential information)<br><br>6.Personalization (individual journalists failing to detach themselves from the news they produce)<br><br>7.the use of stance adverbs, belligerent vocabulary, exaggerations, value laden words, insulting slang or negative labelling and the use of euphemisms<br><br>8. lack of equal space for competing parties, groups |

| | | etc |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | | 9. Story placement (how stories on one side are placed against the other competing party) |

These variables are based on deductive theories on propaganda censorship and media bias.

The deductive approach makes it necessary to have a clear idea of the kinds of themes likely to be in the news, Creswell and Clark (2007, pp.23). This approach can be replicated easily, can cope with large samples, and can easily detect differences in framing between and within media (ibid).

I also used Galtung's module of 'Peace Journalism' as content analytic variables to analyze the data. Galtung (1986, 1998) classifies War journalism (WJ) and Peace Journalism (PJ) on four premises: (see under 'Peace Journalism' in chapter two). These are (1) peace/war, (2) truth/propaganda, (3) people/elites and (4) solutions/victory (see chapter two). Informed by Abdul-Nabi (2015) who used this module to analyze Al-Jazeera's coverage of Bahrain's uprising and Syria's chemical attack, I used the 'Peace Journalism' module to also analyze the media's coverage of the Dagbon conflict alongside existing theories of objectivity and media bias and propaganda and censorship using the thematic and textual analysis approaches.  For examples of thematic coding on propaganda, censorship and media bias, see *Appendix 'C'*.

## 3.8 Detecting Media Bias

Treatises from scholars of media studies have generally agreed that there are several ways of detecting biases in a news article. Such scholars include but not limited to Bakir (2017), Bennett (1990), Carruthers (2000), Entman (1996, 2010), Goddard et al. (2008), Hackett, (1984), Halin, (1986), Keeble (2017), Mcquail (1977), Taylor (1992) and Tumber and Palmer (2004). Media bias includes wrong sourcing, wrong attribution, imbalance, exaggeration and colourful language. Lack of equity in story and picture placement, lack of equal treatment of story actors, story frequency and presentation as well as story tone also constitute media bias. McQuail (1977, pp.107) argues that media bias emanates from imbalance in news presentation (for more on *News Bias* and *Objectivity* see 2.4.3, 2.4.4).

In conducting a coding framework for biases by the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and the *Ghana News Agency*, every story chosen constituted a unit of analysis and where stories had multiple subjects, I considered the one with the principal or main subject and ignored the rest. This coding technique is grounded in Goddard et al. (2008, pp.15) where in the study of British media coverage of the Iraqi war of 2003, 'subsidiary subjects that appeared in passing were ignored in the findings…'. Again, in this study the number of news actors

identified in the coding was reduced (Ibid). Actors like civil society groups, religious groups, Committee of Eminent Chiefs, the Wuaku Commission, Abudus, Andanis, the military, intelligence community and government officials were reduced to five. These are government/official/elite, the Abudus, the Andanis, the Wuaku Commission and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs. Since the military and intelligence agencies also worked to secure favourable coverage for government, they were considered official/ government/elite sources. Sittings of the Wuaku Commission received good coverage as correspondents were 'attached' to them. I coded the stories under the following categories:

1.  News sources-whether some story actors were cited in the news more than others

2.  Attribution-whether factually correct attributes were accorded the various actors of the news; e.g. names, titles. See for instance *Daily Graphic* (August 20, 21, 2002) reference to Abdulai Mahamadu, as 'Bolin Lana' which is a wrong attribute (see 7.3.1).

3.  Imbalance-whether the news story is slanted, preferential, one sided and partial (Bradley, 1974, pp.256), including unequal number of sentences, paragraphs and picture and story placements etc

4.  Exaggeration and the use of euphemism-whether reports were magnified or minimized by journalists, including the use of colourful language
5.  Peace Journalism (see Galtung above)-whether the story promoted peace, truth, was people centred and encouraged solutions or it promoted war, propaganda, was elite centred and suggested victors.

(See more on *News Bias* and *Objectivity under* 2.4.3, 2.4.4). I now discuss opinion leaders as influencers in society that is also crucial in this study.

## 3.9 Opinion Leaders as influencers

Regarding how opinion leaders from the Abudu and Andani factions perceived the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict (RQ5), six opinion leaders each from the two factions were interviewed. They included three chiefs and three spokespersons each from the two 'rival gates' (see chapter seven). As discussed in chapter two, Corey (1971) defines the term opinion leaders as 'trusted and informed people who exist in virtually all primary groups' and that they are 'models' of opinion, who can influence through 'word-of mouth communication to circles of relatives, friends, and acquaintances' cited in (Chaudhry and Irshad, 2013, pp.16). (See 2.4.1 for more on opinion leaders' literature including how I identified them). These opinion leaders served as useful respondents to the understanding of RQ5 because they still act as 'channels of information' and 'source of social pressure' in

Dagbon, including the case of the Dagbon conflict as evidenced in this study (see chapter two).

**3.10 Desktop and Archival Research**

I gathered primary data for this research through interviews (unstructured) and reflexivity and participant observation as indicated above. Secondary data was gathered using newspapers, public and historical documents like the 1992 constitution of Ghana, letters from Abudus and Andanis and online articles on the conflict. Secondary data is defined as pre-existing or pre-recorded data which were not collected for the specific ends of a researcher, Forcese &Richer (1973) cited in (Ruhanya, 2014, pp.112).

There are three types of data namely expressive documents, mass media reports and official reports (ibid). Expressive document as the name suggests like published memoirs reflects the writer's own perception and interpretation of events. Such document cannot be relied upon for secondary data since it reflects the interpretation of the author and is often low in resource.

Mass media reports are a reliable source of secondary data and avoid the mistakes of expressive document since editors, colleagues and the public sentiment serve as watchdog on the reporter to produce a report devoid of biases even though the reporter may have his or her biases (ibid). Mass media reports include newspapers, magazines, radio and television. Forcese and Richer (1973) argue that the writer remains a selector and interpreter of what he considers as relevant events, a fact that should be taken into consideration when using information from mass media reports (cited in Ruhanya, 2014, pp.113).

The last category of secondary data is official records that are 'the freest of selective recording and personal manipulation' and are thus 'highly reliable, allowing reasonable confidence in their levels of accuracy' (ibid). Such records include registration data, births, deaths, divorces, voting statistics and social service records or census data, or surveys done by non-state actors, business and organizational records (ibid).

Secondary data can be used in three ways; first they have been used as ends in themselves, as providing all the data for a complete study. They have been used as partial data for study; that is as 'fillers' or variables the researcher has decided not to collect themselves. They have been used to validate and check data gathered by the researcher (Forcese and Richer, 1973) cited in (Ruhanya, 2014, pp.113).

It however has limitations. A major limitation of secondary data is that it is sometimes difficult to obtain and there are probabilities of getting data that may have shortcomings. Some whole documents may be missing, or they might not contain the exact information

the research could be investigating, (Ruhanya, 2014, pp.113). There are other limitations of this design; the data might not adequately address the research questions of interest to the researcher and interval validity is problematic if the temporal precedence between cause and effect is unclear (Bhattacherjee, 2012, pp.39).

Notwithstanding its limitations, secondary data like media reports that avoid the mistakes of expressive documents and official records that are free from personal manipulation and selective recording (see above) was very relevant for the study. I analyzed the official records like the Wuaku Commission report, the 1986 Supreme Court ruling on the Dagbon Chieftaincy Affairs and government letters to the factions on Abdulai IV's funeral. I also analyzed media reports using the technique of text analysis to investigate propaganda and censorship of the media, the way the media framed their stories on the conflict and public perception about the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict.

Informed by Bangor University research ethical frameworks, I adhered to the tenants of ethical behaviour as discussed below.

## 3.11 Ethical Considerations

Doing a research imposes a duty on the researcher to adhere to the expected tenets of ethical behaviour before, during and after the investigations. These include voluntary participation and harmlessness, confidentiality and anonymity, and disclosure. These ethical considerations are driven from the World Health Organizations' guide for qualitative studies and have been tailored to suit the requirements of this study. These considerations are also influenced by the Bangor University research ethical frameworks.

## 3.12 Voluntary Participation and Harmlessness (Informed consent)

Respondents to investigations in a research project must be aware that their participation in the study is voluntary, that they have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any time without any unfavourable consequences, and they are not harmed as a result of their participation or non-participation in the project (Bhattacherjee, 2012, pp.138).

Bhattacherjee suggests the use of an 'informed consent' form that describes respondents' right to not participate and right to withdraw, before their responses in the study can be recorded (2012, pp.138). These forms he argues must be retained for three years after completion of the research in order to conform to the norms of scientific conduct in their discipline (ibid). In this study I constructed a 'participant's consent form' to guide the process of interviewing. In situations where the respondent is illiterate-as in the case of one chief- I relied on his spokesperson to do the interpretation.

### 3.13 Confidentiality and Anonymity

Informed by Bhattacherjee, (2012, pp.138), identities of respondents have been protected in order to protect their interests and future well-being. Even though some of them opted to have their identity known I thought that given the sensitive nature of the conflict it would be better not to disclose their identity. I achieved this by using the dual principles of anonymity and confidentiality (ibid). Anonymity implies that the researcher or readers of the final research report or paper cannot identify a given response with a specific respondent. Respondents should also be assured of insulation from law enforcement or other authorities who may have an interest in identifying and tracking them (ibid).

Respondents should also be guaranteed confidentiality, in which a researcher can identify a person's responses, but promises not to divulge the person's identity in any report, paper or public forum (ibid). The Dagbon conflict is a sensitive issue and making any pronouncement on the conflict can therefore be a dangerous venture unless the respondent is assured of protection. In this study respondents were guaranteed confidentiality and anonymity and readers cannot identify a given response to a specific respondent unless that respondent so wishes, granting the information given poses no threat at all to the respondent.

Some of the special features of his study are that it is the first to look into propaganda and censorship of the media in reporting chieftaincy conflicts not only in Dagbon but also Ghana as a whole. It is also the first comprehensive yard stick in measuring the performance of the media in reporting chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana, including the Dagbon conflict.

### 3.14 Disclosures

Bhattacherjee argues that researchers have an obligation to provide some information about their study to respondents before data collection to help them decide whether or not they wish to participate in the study. For instance, who is conducting the study, for what purpose, what outcomes are expected, and who will benefit from the results. However, in some cases, disclosing such information may potentially bias respondents' responses (2012, pp.138). I gave full disclosure about the rationale for the study by informing and assuring respondents that it was purely an academic exercise. Even though I informed them that it could be published later, I assured them that their comments would not be traced to them.

### 3.15 Transferability and Reliability

This study as discussed above draws data from observation, interviews, reflexivity and secondary data (newspapers and documents). This means that the data is partly influenced

by my reflections as a reporter reporting the Dagbon conflict and my knowledge about the crisis. The 56 respondents to my research questions were carefully selected (see chapter three) from academia, media, the chieftaincy institution and the warring factions-the Abudus and the Andanis. The exercise took six months to complete. All respondents demonstrated good knowledge about the questions posed to them. The secondary data collected were mainly from two credible media houses (see above). Unlike other conflicts in Ghana (and Africa), the Dagbon conflict is a chieftaincy conflict between descendants of two brothers (see chapter one) feuding over the kingship since 1948, a kinship conflict largely influenced by partisan politics. Many of the over one million people are passionate about chieftaincy, one of the reasons why the conflict is volatile (see above). The information collected was arguably sufficient to generate the concepts and strategies of propaganda, censorship and media bias and even though these techniques and strategies cannot lay claim to transferability in other conflicts in Africa and other non-Western cultures, aspects of it could be considered in the study of propaganda, censorship and media bias in some chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana. As discussed in chapter one, like the Dagbon conflict, the Bimbilla chieftaincy conflict has also been politicized, claimed the lives of dozens of people, including the king whose murder was also blamed on intelligence failure, has been a subject of litigation and the culprits have remained at large since the murders in 2014. Transferability is providing thick description and according to Lincoln & Guba (1985, pp.316), 'it is in summary not the naturalists task to provide an index of transferability, it is his or her responsibility to provide the database that makes transferability judgement possible on the part of potential appliers'. Informed by Lincoln and Guba, the above database could constitute a yard stick to determine whether concepts of propaganda, censorship and media bias generated in this study could be relied upon and could be replicated in other chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana (and Africa) like the Bimbilla chieftaincy conflict.

### 3.16 Limitations of the study

This study has some limitations. Firstly, the sampling framework has been constructed around two media houses; *Daily Graphic* newspaper and *Ghana News Agency* to detect media bias out of over ten media houses at the time of the beginning of the latest conflict in 2002 and 382 radio stations and over 35 newspapers' houses in the country now (National Media Commission report, 2017). This was a limitation since the inclusion of more media houses could have generated more examples of media bias. Comparing the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* (two government-controlled media organizations) to detect media bias in a study that involved government and some of its agencies like the military was also a limitation. This is because the inclusion of private independent media houses like *Joy FM, Citi FM, Radio Gold* and *The Insight newspaper* amongst others could have

arguably presented some interesting findings in terms of media independence in the reportage of the conflict.

Again, generating concepts of propaganda and censorship largely on government controlled *Daily Graphic* and *Ghana News Agency* reports could limit the study's ability to record more concepts, strategies and techniques of propaganda and censorship. This is because the inclusion of more private media houses could have given a more independent approach to the reportage of the conflict that could have generated some more interesting findings on concepts of propaganda and censorship.

The limitations notwithstanding the study has arguably demonstrated on a large scale the use of propaganda and censorship as well as media bias in the reportage of the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict in government-controlled media (see chapters eight and nine). Even though the use of the private media was very limited in the study-because of their inability to report extensively on the conflict and or keep their archived stories on the conflict-it did not inhibit this study from the generation of the concepts, techniques and strategies of propaganda, censorship and media bias to support the phenomenon that propaganda, censorship and media bias are responsible for the perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict. This is because in terms of influence, the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* that I relied heavily upon in this study (see chapter seven) are ahead of the private media. They are the most widely patronized media houses in Ghana and are generally preferred by Ghanaians to other media houses because of their wider coverage. The is informed by the fact that the *Daily Graphic* enjoys subscription from all government departments across the country as well as civil society organisations and individuals and is the most popular newspaper in Ghana and has a daily readership of 1.5 million, according to 2017 polls conducted by GeoPoll, a leading mobile surveying platform in Africa, Asia and the Middle East (see Graphic online, January 25, 2018). The survey that covered 15 popular newspapers in Ghana also found that the *Daily Graphic* established in 1950 had twice as many readers as its closest rival, the *Daily Guide* that had 726 readers daily (ibid).

The *Ghana News Agency* also covers the whole country and enjoys subscription from across all media houses in Ghana and is relied upon, especially by the private media who have inadequate resources to generate news from across the country. News coverage by these media houses arguably has significant reach to Ghanaians and can therefore be said to have had significant reach to the people of Dagbon in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict. Conversely the private media's reach is scarcely encouraging and the *Daily Guide* that has 726 readers was established in 1999 and was not in significant reach at the time the Yaa Naa was murdered in 2002. The *Ghanaian Chronicle* and *Daily Dispatch* together had only 300,000 readers while the *Crusading Guide,* the *Statesman, Daily Mail* and *Daily Heritage* that completed the list of private newspapers in the survey had 232,000 readers combined.

This therefore means that the private media could not have been able to reach a lot of readers through their publications as did the two government-controlled media.

The *Statesman, Daily Heritage* and the *Crusading Guide* had less than a quarter of the readership of the *Daily Graphic.* Even though the statistics are based on a recent survey, long after the Dagbon conflict was actively in the news, it has always been the case that the *Daily Graphic* has been the most widely read newspaper in Ghana because of its high subscription rate. In terms of influence, there is no study or survey on newspapers' influence over readers in Ghana. A search on 'Proquest' on newspapers influence on readers in Ghana from September 15, 2018 to September 27, 2018 on 'survey on Ghana newspapers influence on readers' and 'newspaper influence on readers in Ghana' produced no result. There is therefore a blind spot in literature on newspapers influence on readers in Ghana.

However, it can be argued that given the overwhelming readership gap between the *Daily Graphic* and the private media, the *Daily Graphic* arguably has the potential to influence more readers than the private media combined. The significance of generating concepts of propaganda censorship and media bias largely from news reports in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* (that also commands nationwide coverage) to test the phenomenon that propaganda, censorship and media bias are responsible for the perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict cannot therefore be overemphasized.

### 3.17 Conclusion

The above discussion explained the methodology used in this study. The use of qualitative research to collect data, through data collection techniques like observation and interviews amongst others has been discussed. Ethnography and reflexivity were also employed to collect data. 56 respondents drawn from media, civil society, the feuding factions, academia and journalists who reported the conflict were also interviewed to collect data through unstructured interview technique. In conducting the research, I applied the above ethical standards. I also read and understood the Bangor University research ethical frameworks and applied same in the research process. The next chapters will present auto-ethnography and analysis of the data collected for the study.

# CHAPTER FOUR

# AUTOETHNOGRAPHY

## 4.0 Introduction

I begin this chapter with the following quotation from Ellis and Bochner:

> I start with my personal life. I pay attention to my physical feelings, thoughts, and emotions. I use what I call systematic, sociological introspection and emotional recall to try to understand an experience I've lived through. Then I write my experience as a story. By exploring a particular life, I hope to understand a way of life (2000, pp.737).

The above quotation epitomizes what to expect in this chapter albeit not exactly the way Ellis and Bochner put it because mine is to concentrate on my work as a journalist in reporting the Dagbon conflict and not so much on my 'personal life'. This chapter will focus on my work as a journalist reporting the Dagbon conflict, my identity as a royal member of the Andani family and the attacks, intimidation, harassment and insults I endured and still endures for daring to report and comment on the conflict in a manner that made 'various actors' uncomfortable. The 'various actors' take the case of politicians, the Andanis, the Abudus, the security agencies, the various governments (NDC and NPP governments-see chapter one) and a section of the media and civil society.

## 4.1 The Task

I had returned from the United Kingdom (UK) in January 2002 where I successfully completed a Masters' Degree in Journalism Studies at Cardiff School of Journalism Media and Cultural Studies, Cardiff University. Prior to my departure to the UK in September 2000, I was assistant editor at the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC)-the nation's broadcaster-in Tamale, the Northern Regional capital of Ghana from 1998 after completing my national service there a year earlier.

I was privileged to work under one of the most distinguished, honest, hard working and intelligent editors, Mr. Alidu Baba (now retired) who upon noticing some potentials in me as a national service person decided to proceed on accumulated annual leave (for up to three months or so) for me to hold the forth in the newsroom at a period that I was almost done with my national service. GBC has high professional standards and as a cap reporter there was no way they would have allowed me to report without a substantive senior employee supervising my work. However, Alidu Baba's bill of confidence did the trick. He

did not tell me the reason, but I could deduce that he wanted all to know that I could work independently. So, when I applied to be employed at the GBC at the tail end of my national service the same year (1998) I got the job and I never disappointed him. Two years on I got admission to go to Cardiff University and knowing I had not served for minimum of three to five years I did not ask for study leave. Instead I took my two years annual leave and left for Cardiff. GBC later wrote to me to resume work even though while in Cardiff I wrote for the study leave 'with or without pay'. They declined my request and I abandoned the job.

When I returned in 2002, I was advised by the then Regional Director, Evans Acheampong (deceased) to re-apply but I declined wanting a reinstatement. The reason; re-applying meant I was going to start from the scratch while reinstatement meant I was going to continue with my old staff number so that my colleagues would not be ahead of me on the job position. I was then given a contract (locally) to help in writing and editing television and radio news stories while presenting some political programmes as my former boss, Alidu Baba had also returned to school at the University for Development Studies, Wa in the Upper West region. It was within this period that the Yaa Naa murder issue occurred.

## 4.2 Reporting the Dagbon conflict-getting involved with JOY FM

It was on a Wednesday morning (March 27, 2002) when a radio announcement was made calling all Andanis and the media to attend a meeting at the palace of Gukpegu in Tamale at the instance of the regent of Gukpegu, Alhaji Ziblim Abdulai. I called up JOY FM and asked if they wanted the story. They agreed. One of their editors, Matilda Asante a former colleague of mine at the *Ghana Institute of Journalism* in Accra (where I received my first journalism training) assured that they would stand by and receive the reports. By the time I got to the Gukpegu palace, sea of Andani supporters and sympathizers had flooded the precinct of the palace waiting for the Gukpegu regent to address the media. As reports of disturbances had filtered through from Yendi two days earlier but denied by the then Interior Minister, Malik Alhassan Yakubu (see chapter one), it was obvious (at least to the media and some Andanis) that the news conference was going to centre on the fate of the Yaa Naa. A few moments later Alhaji Ziblim started addressing the media, warning of mayhem in Dagbon should anything happen to the Yaa Naa. While he was still addressing the media, I received a call from JOY FM asking me to confirm the death of the Yaa Naa. That was around 10 am or there about on Wednesday March 27, 2002. JOY FM told me that a senior police officer in Yendi (whose name I will not mention for ethical reasons) had informed them that the Yaa Naa had been killed and his body dismembered and burned.
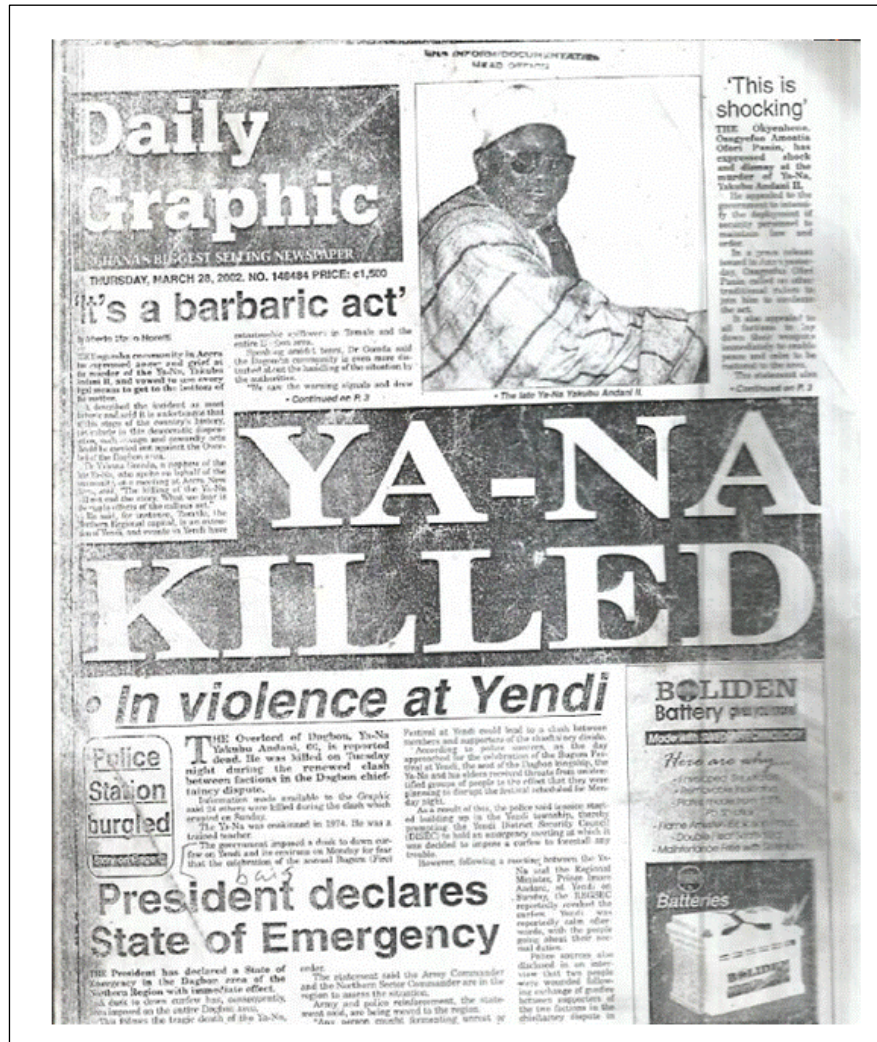
How the *Daily Graphic* reported the Yaa Naa murder

I immediately realised that trouble had come to Dagbon because it had never happened in the modern history of Dagbon. I immediately relayed the information about the death of the Yaa Naa to a sub-chief at the palace, Abdul-Latif Saha naa. He could not inform the Gukpegu regent immediately because the latter was still addressing the media.

JOY FM's decision to ask me to confirm the death of the king had professional implications-the listener is more likely to believe such a story if a correspondent on the ground reports it. It was also a due diligence mechanism to ensure that the information was correct. However, the radio station missed out on the following realities:

1.    I was not in Yendi myself and could therefore not have confirmed the story. Even if I had decided to contact the Yendi police to confirm and report the story, JOY FM and myself would have been quoting a single source which according to media experts under the 'two source rule' in news writing means speaking to one source (Hamilton, 2008, page not cited).

2.  According to Dagbon custom when a king dies, he is buried before his death is announced. Even though the Yaa Naa's case was different as he was killed in an attack it still had to take some elders of Dagbon to announce his death and not the media.

Armed with the above, I declined to confirm it until JOY FM broke the story in their 11am bulletin. The news about the king's murder did not reach the people of Dagbon as JOY FM transmission did not cover the northern region and they had no affiliate radio station to relay the news (in fact there was no private radio station in the north at the time the king was murdered). Speculations about his murder (though in dispute) were however rife as some Andanis in Accra had called their relations to tell them about the JOY FM story. In addition, some Andanis who fled Yendi after the king's murder confirmed that the Yaa Naa was indeed killed but would not go public on the matter because of its cultural implications (see above). What threw Dagbon into a state of shock (and settled the doubt about his murder) was the announcement (at the instance of the then Information Minister, Jake Obetsebe Lamptey) by the nation's broadcaster GBC that the Yaa Naa had been killed-a flagrant violation of Dagbon custom. It also declared a State of Emergency and a dusk to dawn curfew in all Dagbon districts. This announcement of the murder of the king was however disputed by the leadership of the Andanis as discussed below.

**4.3 Dispute over Yaa Naa's murder announcement**

In the morning of March 28, 2002, the media picked up information from Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama, a nephew and counsel of the Yaa Naa that the king was alive. The leadership of the Andanis led by Alhaji Mahama again told the media that the Yaa Naa was at a secrete place recuperating from injuries and would appear soon to address 'his people'. This claim did not only put smiles back on the faces of the Andanis who had wailed and cried overnight but caught the media 'pants down' as we reported same. That was my first personal encounter with propaganda in reporting violent conflicts of that magnitude. The first propaganda in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict was span by Malik Alhassan Yakubu, the then Interior Minister when he claimed on the 25th of March 2002 that Yendi was calm when intermittent firing at the palace was going on (see chapter one). Alhaji Mahama later told the Wuaku Commission that he 'lied' to 'avert bloodbath' (Daily Graphic, June 19, 2002) and that if the people had known then that the Yaa Naa was murdered 'Yendi would have burnt' (ibid). Below is how the *Daily Graphic* captured Alhaji Mahama's 'lie'.

Daily Graphic
GHANA'S BIGGEST SELLING NEWSPAPER
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 2002. NO. 148553 PRICE: ¢1,500

## 'Neglect of regulations can spell disaster'

By Albert Sam

**AN environmental consultant, Mr S. B. A. Akuffo has cautioned that any attempt by physical planners to neglect planning regulations will spell a disaster for the nation.**

He stated that the havoc being caused by the floods must prompt the nation to check and correct not only the indiscipline, but distortions in the country's development planning.

He was commenting on a statement by the Department of Town and Country Planning to the effect that the country has planning regulations, which are being flouting, resulting in the threat posed by the floods.

Mr Akuffo emphasised that Ghana does no operate any town and country regulations, con trary to assertions by the department that th Local Government Act 462 spells out the plar ning regulations.

"The fact is that Ghana does not operate an town and country regulations. For that reaso the wrong permit, building permit, has to b substituted with planning permit," he declare

He further described as false claims by th

• Continued on P. 3

## GWCL opens ive spillways of Weija Dam

Charles Benoni Okine

[illegible] Ghana Water Company Limited [illegible] has opened all the five gates of the [illegible] of the Weija Dam to reduce the [illegible] volume of water to prevent it from col[illegible]

This has been necessitated by the rise of the [illegible] maximum level of 48 feet.

Mr Napoleon Appiah-Danso, Area Public [illegible] Officer of the GWCL, who disclosed [illegible] in an interview in Accra yesterday, said as of [illegible] only three of the gates had been opened.

He said due to the increase in the volume of [illegible] from upstream, the company had no option [illegible] to open all the spillways to allow the excess [illegible] to flow to save the dam.

Mr Appiah-Danso said the engineers at the [illegible] are constantly monitoring the situation [illegible] its safety.

He said heavy rains are being experienced [illegible] the catchment areas of the tributaries of [illegible] River and should the trend continue, [illegible] company will be forced to keep the spillways [illegible] until further notice.

On the consequences of the action on residents [illegible] downstream the dam, he said the structures there have been illegally constructed and [illegible] company has very little to do about their [illegible]

Mr Appiah-Danso said the company has [illegible] them on a number of occasions about [illegible] of putting up houses in those areas [illegible] warnings have fallen on deaf ears.

He said before the rains started, the company [illegible] the residents of the consequences, [illegible] were fully aware of the effects of [illegible]

He said the company has not gone round the [illegible] the effect the spillage has had [illegible] the people.

[illegible] in a conversation with the acting [illegible] of the company, Mr [illegible] Nunoo, he said the company [illegible] for the damages that the [illegible] to the residents living down-[illegible]

[illegible] dam was washed away in July

• Continued on P. 3

## Ibrahim Mahama tells Wuaku Commission

# I TOLD A LIE

## • To avert bloodbat

From Samuel Kyei-Boateng & Kwame Asare Boadu, Sunyani

**THE solicitor of the late Ya Na, Mr Ibrahim Mahama, told the Wuaku Commission yesterday that he caused an announcement to be made on *Radio Savannah* at Tamale to the effect that the Ya-Na was not dead, even though a *Radio Ghana* news item on March 27, this year, indicating that the King had been killed and his body decapitated was true.**

He explained that he deliberately did that because if the people had immediately known that the King was dead, Yendi would have burnt.

Giving evidence before the commission inquiring into the Yendi crisis, Mr Mahama, who described the late Ya-Na as his uncle, however, said in an answer to a question that he did not consult the elders of Dagbon before making the announcement.

Asked by a member of the commission whether he is aware that people still believe that the Ya-Na is alive, he said he read from the newspapers that a witness had made that statement before the commission.

Mr Mahama denied a suggestion by the leading counsel for the Abudus, Nana Obiri Boahen, that on March 27, he sent a Benz bus loaded with warriors from Tamale to defend the Ya-Na.

He said he did nothing to help the Overlord of Dagbon during the upheaval.

A Tamale-based lawyer, Mr E. O. Appiah, joined Nana Boahen yesterday to defend the Abudus.

Mr Mahama described as absolutely false, an allegation that he took the Ya-Na to Tamale and asked him to come back to Yendi to fight.

Asked what he knew about the disturbances at Yendi from March 25 to 27, Mr Mahama said he heard of the attack on the Gbewaa Palace

• Continued on P. 3

## 'Don't be discouraged over Taifa incident'

[illegible] Commission on Human Rights and [illegible] Justice (CHRAJ) has [illegible] members of the public not to let [illegible] of the four men at Taifa dampen [illegible] the police to fight crime. [illegible] to continue to perform [illegible] the police to combat [illegible] society.

[illegible] CHRAJ in Accra yesterday [illegible] Commissioner, Mr Francis [illegible] government to appoint [illegible] to investigate [illegible] the death of the four [illegible] stories as to how [illegible]

[illegible] make recommenda[illegible] watch committees [illegible] the police in fighting [illegible]

[illegible] body is essential [illegible]

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It was the considered view of many Andanis, including me that if any reprisal attacks had occurred, the Andanis would have eventually suffered more casualties and or fatalities not because the Abudus are in the majority in Dagbon or more powerful but because the security would have come to their aid.

The above claim is bolstered by the actions of the security before during and after the murder of the king. For instance, the security in Yendi refused to go to the aid of the Yaa Naa when he was under attack for three days. Claims about their refusal to save the life of the Yaa Naa were further bolstered by comments by a Minister of State at the Presidency, Miss Elizabeth Ohene who told the *Ghana News Agency* that the security agencies 'lapsed into a sense of complacency', resulting in the death of Yaa-Naa Yakubu Andani (April 1, 2002). The Wuaku Commission report also found that the security agencies did nothing to avert the situation (Wuaku Commission report, 2002).

For the army, their excuse for failing to protect the Yaa Naa was that their armoured vehicle could not spark because of faulty battery (Wuaku Commission sitting in Daily Graphic, June 21, 2002), an excuse that provoked anger from the public, including the Andanis. These together with other pieces of circumstantial evidence, including the refusal of the NPP party to nominate Prof. Wayo Seini as presidential running mate prior to the 2000 general elections because he was Andani (see Mahama, 2009, pp.27-28) and the appointment of only Abudu members into the Kufuor government as well as the recognition of Abdulai Mahamadu as 'Bolin Lana' and a parallel 'Yaa Naa' by NPP appointees, (Mahama, 2009, pp.40-41) were enough for many to conclude that the NPP government was fully in support of the Abudus against the Andanis. See also the pattern of political support the Abudus have enjoyed from the United Party (UP) tradition since the 1960s (the offshoot of which is the NPP) in chapter one and admission by an Abudu secretary that the NPP are their allies (see chapter eight). Others include the cordon and search exercises conducted in Tamale on mainly Andanis' premises and the admonition by former President Rawlings to the late Yaa Naa Yakubu II that 'the Kufuor government did not wish him and his people well' (Mahama, 2009, pp.42). Mahama (2009, pp.35) captures how the *Ghanaian Chronicle* newspaper reported the NPP government's support for the Abudus lucidly:

> There have been gaps of incredulity with the information that almost the entire echelon of the national security apparatus is composed of members of one gate ...especially the Abudu gate. General Hamidu and the respected former minister of the interior honourable Malik Alhassan are Abudus. The former 'blowman' of Reece Regiment, Major Sulemana...is also in the senior position at the office of national security. The vice president who by virtue of the constitutional dictates heads the Security Council is also a Dagomba affiliated to the Abudu gate. Only the chief Director (of interior ministry) and the national security co-coordinator are Akans (an ethnic group in Ghana). It is an imbalance that is a recipe for problems (May 7, 2002, cited in Mahama, 2009, pp.35).

The *Ghanaian Chronicle* concludes 'Right under these men the nation watched as the horrors of Yendi were visited on us' (ibid). It can therefore be argued that Alhaji Mahama's 'desired intent' to put the Yaa Naa's murder in doubt was to prevent an escalation of the situation between Andanis and Abudus. Given the level of support the Abudus had in government, it can be further argued that his intention was to safeguard the Andanis from harassment, intimidation, arrests and or even killings by the security that were controlled mainly by the Abudus in government (see above). The fact that he himself escaped to Burkina Faso on exile (see back cover page of 'Murder of an African King Ya Na Yakubu II', 2009) after his residence was raided by the security is ample evidence to back my claim.

His 'lie' fits into the treatise on propaganda by Wardle and Derakhshan (2017, pp.5-6, see chapter two) who argue that propaganda includes misinformation where false information is shared, but no harm is meant. My claim that Alhaji Mahama meant no harm in lying is supported by his submission at the Wuaku Commission sitting that he 'lied to avert bloodbath (Daily Graphic, June 19, 2002). By the time it was clear to all that the Yaa Naa was indeed killed by the Abudus, security had flooded the whole of Dagbon and in the midst of State of Emergency, cordon and search operation was launched and large assembling of people outlawed, making it difficult for reprisal attacks to occur. This arguably produced a 'harmless' atmosphere among law abiding citizens in Dagbon. Alhaji Mahama's lie was also an example of 'deception through lying' as argued by (Bakir et al. pp.22, see chapter two). This is because at the time he lied, the government and some Andanis and Abudus knew that the Yaa Naa was indeed killed. Alhaji Mahama succeeded in misleading many of the people into believing that the Yaa Naa was still alive-even though he was dead-to achieve his 'desired intent' of preventing a bloodbath and protecting the Andanis.

## 4.4 My identity and the reportage

I am indeed a direct descendant of the founder of the Andani family (Andani I). He gave birth to Kpating Lana Mahamadu who gave birth to my grandfather Zangbalun-Naa Yakubu who then gave birth to my mother, Hajia Mariama Yakubu Mahama. My late father Mahama Sayibu Mahami affectionately called M. S. Mahami, a former magistrate was not only a senior adviser to the slain Yaa Naa but also a direct descendant of Yaa Naa Sigli whose sons, grandsons and great grandsons occupied the skins of Zugu, Zoggu, Sing, Tugu and Dipali amongst others (all reserved for only sons, grand and great grandsons of a Yaa Naa) and lastly Nyankpala, a skin that can be occupied by whom the Yaa Naa pleases. Even though my father never laid claim to any of those skins (notwithstanding his influence at the Yaa Naa palace) his contribution to the positive development of Dagbon received commendation during one of the sittings of the Committee of Eminent Chiefs for his positive role in critical decisions aimed at ending the Abudu Andani crisis that started in 1948. Coming from this background, I was reporting a conflict that was also my conflict but for two significant reasons I was not under pressure to skew my reports in favour of the Andanis.

Firstly, I did not have background knowledge about myself in the chieftaincy set-up thus all I knew was that I was Andani and could be a chief (and this was true of many more youth before the conflict). This is because neither my father nor my mother ever told me anything about chieftaincy and I got to know who I really am a couple of months after the murder of the Yaa Naa when literature (both oral and written) emerging from the Andanis alerted me to investigate my identity. As a matter of fact, I got the first hint from one of my sisters and

so there was no motivation to be biased. Secondly, I knew I had a responsibility to be fair, accurate and balanced in my reportage. I now discuss experiences in reporting the conflict.

## 4.5 Reporting from the frontline

Reporting the Dagbon conflict was a very difficult task for me. Firstly, there was lack of background information about the conflict except that a king had been killed. Reporting a conflict in 'culturally valued oriented society' demands of a journalist to learn some cultural background to the conflict you are reporting in order not to provoke the very people you are reporting. Unfortunately, in the Dagbon case it was difficult if not almost impossible to verify traditional sources regarding the background information since almost all Dagombas were caught in the 'web of division' and were thus predisposed to skewing information to suit their agenda. Both the Abudus and the Andanis gave different accounts of the history of the conflict and since verification was a challenge, reporting the conflict was a difficult task. Trying to find out what was happening and presenting a fair and impartial account was a challenge and so the first few days and weeks after the king's murder the media relied heavily on government and security agencies' sources while also reporting press conferences by both the Abudus and the Andanis.

There were threats of physical dangers as reporters whose reports did not suit either side risked being attacked. Some reporters, including me were harassed by supporters of the factions. An Abudu secretary told me the Abudus attacked some journalists (Interview, June 11, 2017) while a management member of *North Star* said the Andanis attacked their station severally (Interview, June 16, 2017). As will be demonstrated later in this chapter I faced a lot of physical dangers and verbal attacks. For me, the most difficult task was trying to find out who the planners and or killers of the Yaa Naa were. As I followed various 'leads' I ran into my second encounter with propaganda. I was told by a 'trusted source' (a non Dagomba) that Major Sulemana (see above) was spotted crossing the Ghana border to Burkina Faso with some mercenaries who were hired to kill the Yaa Naa. I carried the story after verifying it from some other sources only for it to be disputed by Major Sulemana. Even though Major Sulemana denied the allegation, he was confronted with a similar allegation at the Wuaku Commission sitting to the effect that he had hired mercenaries to kill the Yaa Naa and that he had a meeting to that effect with some people in Bawku in the Upper East region (Daily Graphic, August 29, 2002, 1). Again, he dismissed the allegations.

The 'allegation' I reported about Major Sulemana attracted the wrath of the Abudus who 'tagged' me as 'an enemy reporter'. As the allegations against Major Sulemana continued to be murky, JOY FM did not retract the story. However, it was the considered view of government and some of the Abudus that the story was false. An Abudu spokesperson had this to say:

...if you look at the way it was reported that some Liberian mercenaries, foreigners were sighted in Yendi that is not true. No foreigner ever came...unfortunately you are one of them who played a major role in that I will tell you. Those days I craved for an opportunity to meet you because there was the perception that the Abudus were hostile to people from the other side (Interview, June11, 2017, Yendi).

However, Mahama (2009, pp.141) insists that there were 'terrorists' in Yendi who were still guarding Abdulai Mahamadu (whom the Abudus consider as their leader) after the murder of the king:

Soon after the murder of the Ya Na some members of the (Andani) family saw some of the terrorists still guarding the 'Bolin lana'...they informed head of military task force in Tamale. They volunteered to lead men of military intelligence under cover to Yendi...the military intelligence saw the terrorists... the terrorists were not arrested...

At the time of writing up this thesis in 2019, Mahama's treatise on the foreigners guarding Abdulai Mahamadu or 'Bolin lana' is yet to be disputed by the military intelligence in Ghana. However, when the Andani leadership accused Major Sulemana and two others of masterminding the murder of the Yaa Naa, those Andanis were sued, lost the case and damages awarded against them.

My reportage on major Sulemana and subsequent reports on government's alleged complicity attracted the wrath of the Abudus who warned me not to set foot on Yendi or risk being attacked. My mobile phone was inundated with threatening messages from Yendi and in Tamale. While I did not visit Yendi at the heat of the threats, areas in Tamale where the Abudus are dominant like Abuabu and Zogbeli were also areas I was sceptical about visiting for fear of being attacked by the Abudus who had vowed to beat me up. As will be demonstrated later in this chapter, the consequences of my reportage of the Dagbon conflict was later to cost me my job at *Radio Justice*, a local radio station in Tamale where I worked alongside JOY FM.

I observed that government was more interested in doing 'damage control' and 'imposing peace' on Dagbon rather than ensuring justice for the Andani family who had lost scores of people, including the Yaa Naa in a manner that could have been avoided. I was part of a team of journalists that visited Yendi to cover a government delegation's visit to the crime scene 48 hours after the murder and having listened to and observed the actions of members of the delegation, I was convinced that I needed to do more as a journalist than just exercising the 'routine ritual' of reporting what government official would say. For instance, at a meeting with the Abudus as part of its fact-finding mission the delegation was

told by one Abudu spokesperson named Iddirisu Zalinko lana Yihing that 'for 28 years that the Yaa Naa was king the Abudus had known no peace'. An Andani chief confirmed this claim by Iddirisu in an interview on June 17, 2017. The claim is also cited in (Mahama, 2009, pp.75). As a reporter I thought this was incriminating evidence against the spokesperson, but he was not questioned by the delegation or the security agencies for those comments, a thought Mahama also harbours (2009, pp.75).

Earlier at the palace of the Yaa Naa (that had been reduced to debris) journalists were warned not to take pictures because it would offend the sensibilities of viewers. The delegation that included the Information Minister, Jake Obetsebi Lamptey and his special assistant Ferdinan Ayim, ensured that they imposed 'post censorship' on us (see discussion on censorship in chapter six), as we saw evidence of bullet marks that suggested the use of sophisticated arms in the attack on the palace but were persuaded from reporting it. Ballistic missile expert and Head of the Police Investigation Team, Chief Superintendant David Asante Apeatu confirmed the use of these sophisticated arms to attack the palace, (Ghana News Agency, June 26, 2002). Interestingly when he appeared before the Wuaku Commission as head of the investigation team that also visited Yendi the same period, he could not tell which direction the arms were fired from and told the commission that their mandate was the immediate crime scene (Gbewah palace) but that they also covered about a 100 meter radius around the palace. It is important to state that the residence where the 'Bolin lana' resided was not far from the Gbewah palace but more than a100 meters from the palace and it was generally believed that the attackers emerged from there. *The Wuaku Commission recommended the prosecution of some Abudus for murder and conspiracy to murder the Yaa Naa and others* (see Executive Summary of the Wuaku Commission's report, 2002). The ballistic missile expert however told the commission how they discovered armoury at the Yaa Naa palace (ibid), see also testimony of a soldier at the same sitting on the Yaa Naa armoury issue (Daily Graphic, June 21, 2002, 1). With evidence that their search did not include Bolin lana's residential area and the argument by Mahama (2006) that terrorists were guarding the Bolin lana's palace after the Yaa Naa murder, was the security trying to 'shield' the Bolin lana? Were they by their testimony about the Yaa Naa armoury suggesting that the Yaa Naa was prepared for war? David Asante Apeatu who led the team of investigators later served as Inspector General of Police (IGP) in Ghana under the same NPP government led by Akufu Addo and retired in 2019. The IGP position in Ghana is partisan.

Recently in my interview with a journalist who was also part of the delegation he had this to say about the censorship measures:

> I was working in Accra...what I saw there still haunts me as a reporter...they
> warned us when we were in the flight that whoever reports anything that we

saw will be sanctioned because they will let the military and the police follow us …whilst we were in the aircraft going back to Accra, the then information minister and then one person who was his aid ordered all the photo reporters to delete every picture they took in Yendi… I reported whatever I saw but to my surprise when the story came out, they deleted whatever they thought was not proper but that was the truth (Interview, May 17, 2017).

Under these circumstances I realized that the truth about the murder of the Yaa Naa was about to be buried so I decided that I was not going to be a 'transmission vehicle' or 'conveyer belt' for government officials to achieve that but to go further to try to uncover events to inform the world about true happenings associated with the conflict.

I noticed a certain pattern of inequalities in the manner the state security was conducted. I observed that many more Andanis were arrested for violating the law than Abudus in Tamale. The cordon and search operations were conducted more on Andani homes than the Abudus in Tamale while in Yendi (Abudu stronghold) where the conflict took place no efforts were made to retrieve arms there. The Wuaku Commission later recommended that efforts be made by government to embark on a 'thorough sustained and impartial exercise' to retrieve unlicensed weapons in the Dagbon area and that it should be considered 'a priority' by government since it had national security implications (Executive Summary, Wuaku Commission report 2002). In one instance and upon a tip off I saw an Abudu youth hide a rifle in a kiosk and I reported the matter to a security officer hoping that an arrest would be made for me to get a story out of it. He later told me he could not arrest the young man. No reasons were given. This was just one of several instances where some Abudu and NPP youth brandished riffles and engaged in acts of lawlessness with impunity. I was not the only media personnel who made this observation '…You could hear the firing of guns even daytime…it was the NPP guys who were doing this because they were in power …' (interview with media personnel, July 16, 2017).

### 4.6 The Issah Mobila murder

Issah Mobila was a transport owner, a philanthropist, chairman of the opposition Convention Peoples' Party in the Northern Region and a sympathizer of the Andani family. He was known to have contributed significantly to the upkeep of the many widows of the slain Yaa Naa Yakubu II. Mobila was killed on December 9, 2004, by the military after he was transferred to the Kamina Army barracks from the Tamale main police station. He was accused of harbouring arms in his vehicle and had reported himself there upon information that he was being sought for. In the early hours of December 10, I got a call from a source that informed me that Issah Mobila had been killed the previous night and his body dumped at the mortuary. I headed to the mortuary immediately and verified his death. A

mortuary attendant had told a few people assembled there that he refused to take the body when the soldiers came and asked that the body be taken to the casualty ward for doctors to certify his death before he could claim it but the military in a 'Rambo style' threw the body on the ground and left with their vehicle. I again set out to establish the facts surrounding his death. A source at the military barracks had told me that he was tortured to death by some soldiers but the Northern Regional Security Council (NRSC) issued a statement and claimed he died of stomach pains after sipping water. I contradicted the NRSC statement and reported on JOY FM that he had been killed by soldiers and that the NRSC was being disingenuous. Government was incensed about my reportage and the presidential spokesperson then, Kwabena Agyepong challenged me on 'Radio Gold' an Accra based radio station to prove that Mobila was indeed killed by the military. I knew with time he would retreat from his comments and indeed he did as will be demonstrated below.

While government continued to deny my story publicly, efforts were being made discreetly by government to bury Issah Mobila 'in line with the muslim custom'. I picked up the hint that the then Northern Regional Minister, Ernest Debrah was in league with some members of Mobila's family and indeed some Andani elders to get him buried quickly. I was shocked because it was generally believed that Issah Mobila was killed because of his support for the Andani family even though he was not a Dagomba. I remember in a chat with one of the Andani elders, he justified the 'rush burial' of Mobila because according to him, once pictures were taken of Mobila with visible signs of torture on his body it was enough evidence to warrant investigations into the matter. In an era where 'photo shopping' is common, I wondered whether the elder knew the likely implications of his thoughts. Indeed I thought that the opinions of those selected few elders of the Andani and that of the slain Issah Mobila on the matter were 'elderly and dilapidated' and needed to be 'quarantined' to exorcise a potential of setting a dangerous precedent for the security forces to continue to kill and get away with the killings. This is because the motivation of government was arguably not to satisfy this 'muslim custom' but rather to bury evidence since they knew that an autopsy report would expose them and that *once buried the body of a muslim is highly unlikely to be exhumed for whatever reasons.* My thoughts were later to assume 'prophetic significance' as government through the Attorney General continued to claim in court that Mobila sipped water, collapsed and died (see chapter five).

This was not the only time the military brutalized civilians in the most savage manner under a democratic dispensation. In 2007 some youth of both the ruling NPP and main opposition NDC were brutalized in Tamale by the military for engaging in 'a political clash' which also had 'a deep root' in chieftaincy. This was how I detailed the brutalities for JOYNEWS:

46 people have been arrested at Changli, a suburb of Tamale in connection with a clash between supporters of the National Democratic Congress (NDC) and the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP)...The army then moved in and indiscriminately arrested those on sight...the suspects include some butchers who were offloading cattle, a mason and a tailor who all fell prey to the brutalities. They were subjected to severe beatings, forced to lie on their backs with their eyes fixed to the scorching sun as the soldiers continued to brutalize them in a style reminiscent of the revolutionary military brutalities...At the time of filing this report...No charges have been preferred against them yet and those who have sustained gunshot wounds are undergoing local treatment, according to family members.

Critical reasoning finally prevailed, and the two families eventually refused government's 'gimmicks' to inter Mobila but instead backed calls for an autopsy that later established that he was indeed killed by soldiers at the Kamina barracks in Tamale. Government's posture on the matter before the autopsy had led me to suspect that they would not make the cause of his death public so I contacted a source at the tribunal since it was a coroner's inquest and was bound to be presented to the court (then the Tamale Community Tribunal). Later I received a call from the source that made available to me a hand-written copy of the coroner's inquest report. It took courage for me to rely on the report since it was not the original copy (or photo copy of the original) but I knew that the contents of the report would not have been far from the gory nature my military source had narrated his death to me earlier. In addition, earlier while the autopsy was going on at the Tamale Teaching hospital mortuary, I visited the place 'under cover' and got a gist of what might have caused Mobila's death. Emboldened by the above, I took the risk. I immediately relayed the report to JOY FM that first broke the story. The autopsy report amongst others, indicated that Issah Mobila had 'multiple abrasions all over his body and fractured ribs' and attributed the cause of death to 'collapse in the left lung, fractured ribs and multiple abrasions'. (See also Ghana News Agency, online report on the testimony in court of the pathologist, Dr. Kofi Adomanko Boateng, March 31, 2010). This autopsy report suggested that the deceased was 'tortured to death' but did not fit into government's claim that he complained of stomach pains and when he was given water, he sipped the water and collapsed and died.

Details about brutalities meted out to Mobila incensed the general public compelling government to arrest some soldiers who were on guard duty at the time Mobila was killed. Mr. Agyepong, the presidential spokesperson did not make further public comments on the matter. He had run away from his comments on the matter but that was not the first time government had done that.

In the heat of the attack on the palace, while the secretary to the Yaa Naa was communicating to the media in Accra about the attacks, telephone lines were cut at the Ghana Telecom (government's telecommunication outfit) substation in Sang, near Yendi. This was seen by many as a deliberate act to prevent the world from knowing the truth about what was happening in Yendi. As there were no private telecom services operating and or covering the Yendi district then, the truncation of the telephone lines did not only suffocate information from Yendi but also aided the propagandistic pronouncements of the Interior Minister, Malik Alhassan Yakubu that 'Yendi was calm' (see chapter one) since there was no other means of verification from outside Yendi. After the murder of the Yaa Naa the telephone lines were immediately restored.

I again set out to find out why telephone communication had ceased and only restored after the king was murdered. I found out that the lines were deliberately cut at Sang so I reported it. Again, government communication team at the Information Ministry dismissed the report. Upon request from JOY FM I obtained the Information Services Department's written report on the illegal disconnection of the telephone lines from a source at the Department in Tamale who 'blew the whistle to me'. I faxed the copy to JOY FM and when they read and questioned the ministry on the report again, they admitted but explained that at the time of filing my report the office had not received the information from Tamale. How incredible that was! Was government again lying on the matter? *Looking back, I am inclined to believe that government thought it was dealing with an 'inexperienced reporter' or perhaps they did not know how to manage information.*

*Indeed on the Issah Mobila murder, it is my conviction that if I had not challenged the NRSC on the cause of his death or reported government's surreptitious moves to get his body interred or published the autopsy report, the truth about his death would have been as mucky as that of Yaa Naa Yakubu II.*

On February 18, 2013 nine years after his death three soldiers were convicted for his murder (see Kessben FM online, February 18, 2013). It was not only under the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government that I pushed for justice for the Yaa Naa and Issah Mobila. The National Democratic Congress (NDC) had won the 2008 elections and prior to that had promised to find the killers of the Yaa Naa. Once they won power they failed to deliver. The Andani youth set out to compel the NDC to deliver and I again gave them the needed publicity. In fact, it got to a time that the NDC that revered me in the past started to revile me. I will explore this later in this chapter.

**4.7 Harrassment and Intimidation against me**

My reportage caused a lot of hatred for me at the corridors of political power and within the two chieftaincy gates, the Abudus and the Andanis. Government's quest to discredit me in the Yaa Naa and Issah Mobila murders having failed decided to exclude me in some of their programmes in order to starve me of news-one of the fundamentals of dealing with non cooperating media. This did not prevent me from reporting as I always found something relevant to report on, some of them follow-ups on the very programmes that I was excluded from attending. *It takes an experienced reporter to remain relevant in the face of censorship and propaganda*. I noticed that some of my colleagues who were 'in bed' with government were spying on me giving hints about stories that they thought I was investigating that could make government look bad. Some government appointees occasionally rebuked me on some of my reports.

This exclusion and harassment were not confined to government officials alone. Indeed, ruling party (NPP) supporters had threatened to beat me up on several occasions; face to face and through phone calls, accusing me of wanting to bring their government down through my reportage. This happened throughout their stay in power (2002-2009). In the latter part of 2006, when I visited the offices of the Northern Regional Co-ordinating Council (RCC) in Tamale to interview government and NPP officials who had arrived from the nation's capital Accra for a program, I was physically assaulted by some NPP thugs within the precinct of the RCC, damaging the fuel tank of my motorbike. In another incident at Chagli another surburb of Tamale I was chased away, and my vehicle damaged in the process by some NPP youth whiles there to investigate a story involving a clash between some NDC and NPP youth. The leader of the NPP youth later bore the cost of repairs on my vehicle to persuade me from reporting the matter to the police. I asked one Agricultural Scientist as part of my data collection whether he could recall any attacks on journalists in reporting the Dagbon conflict and this was what he said: 'unfortunately, the real one I can recall is you...you were the single person who then called a spade a spade...' (Interview, June 10, 2017).

Perhaps my luckiest moment was when I was General Manager of Radio Justice in 2003 (a private radio station in Tamale where I worked concurrently with JOY FM). I had closed from work at about 7: 30 pm and was descending the stairs of the one-story building when a young man in his late 20s stopped me and pleaded that I listened to him. He told me of plans by some NPP supporters to call me up later in the night and that I should decline because they did not mean well for me. According to him they had taken a decision to harm me earlier in the evening at Zogbeli a suburb of Tamale and that late in the night I will receive a phone call. I thanked him and left the office thinking it was a joke or some antics aimed at instilling fear in me (as various ways were employed by the NPP to silence me). Then at about 11 pm while I was attending a cocktail party at Mariam Hotel in Tamale, I

received a call from a man I never expected would be involved in such a scheme.  This was a man whose press releases I had worked on severally in the past (while the NPP was in opposition) while he was a constituency executive of the NPP. His posture all along suggested his admiration for me for my bravery and alacrity in the discharge of my duty. His residence was also not far from *Radio Justice* building where I was working. As he called me up on phone, he demanded to see me immediately and asked my whereabouts. I told him I was at Kukuo, another suburb far apart from Marian Hotel. When he demanded to know the exact location, I posed a question to him; can't it wait till tomorrow? Don't you reside close to my office? What is it that you cannot tell me on phone? He was still adamant then I posed the last question; are you the one they have tasked to lure me so I could be lynched, or do you not know that I know about the meeting you held a few hours ago? Then he started panting, recounting the friendship between us and how he would never stoop low to want to hurt me and then the line dropped. My scepticism of those around me was further enhanced. I did not disclose it to the police since it was a recurring threat and I had become used to it. In any case I had no confidence in the police to do a good job under the prevailing political climate.

My job at *Radio Justice* had to come to an end in 2004 after a series of verbal attacks on me and persistent complaints to the owner of the radio station about my 'conduct'. For instance, in the early 2004, a man calling himself an NPP youth chairman verbally assaulted me just outside the premises of the radio station accusing me of churning out anti-government stories on the radio station. A few days later while driving around town a group of NPP youth again verbally assaulted me with the same accusations compelling my driver to speed off to avoid a physical attack on us. While these attacks were going on, I learned that some powerful personalities in government had threatened to close the radio station if the owner, Francis Teteh did not get rid of me.  At the radio station itself I later learnt that the NPP infiltrated the staff, planted their sympathisers amongst the staff on me who reported on my daily movements in and around the radio station to government functionaries. One of the reporters at the station whom I trusted so much was later to betray me as I learned after I left the station that some of the decisions we took at the managerial level that had to do with 'keeping government on its toes' to arrest the killers of the Yaa Naa and Issah Mobila were leaked to the NPP. In the light of this and given the fact that I am Andani, any unfavourable news item about government that was broadcasted on the radio station was attributed to my influence, thus setting me up as one who was bent on making the NPP government unpopular.  One day while I was in my office, the owner of the radio station walked in and told me he was moving me from my office into another office-a smaller room-and that he was going to use my office henceforth. Given the above machinations against me, I knew he was pushing me to quit the job. The decision was not a surprise to me. I immediately rejected his decision and told him I was leaving the radio station. He left my office without further comments. The following day I handed in my

resignation letter and left the station. When news of my resignation was communicated to the public, pressure mounted on the owner of the station to rescind his decision and call me back. Traditional rulers and opinion leaders tried to intervene, but Francis Teteh would not rescind, and so would I. We were both entrenched in our positions.

Supporters of the NPP and the Abudus were so elated about my exit. They however chose to spin my exit by suggesting that I was sacked in yet another attempt to embarrass me, but the truth was so loud that they failed. I however remained working for JOY FM and as demonstrated later in this chapter the NPP's strategy of getting me out of JOY NEWS could not succeed.

Once they took office in 2009, the National Democratic Congress that promised to establish a presidential commission to investigate the Yaa Naa murder while in opposition but failed, also took issues with me for publishing reminders from the Andani youth of their (NDC) own electoral promises. They also let their thugs loose on me verbally and physically. On at least two occasions, I vigorously defended myself from physical attacks and reported the cases to the police. One of the two cases went to court and I was awarded damages while the other was settled after the assailants apologised.

Unlike the NPP, the NDC often found frivolous reasons for their attacks, distancing them from the conflict because they knew they would have lost the sympathy of some Andanis if it was clear that the attacks were linked to my giving voices to the Andani family.

Another strategy the NDC employed was to use family and friends as well as opinion leaders in the Andani family to convince me to 'tone down' on my reports critical of them. One such opinion leaders called me to his house and told me that the Andani family was better off under an NDC government and that I should tone down on my reportage on them that were considered critical. I did not agree. He never called me again on that issue. I was not the only reporter they tried to compromise in that manner. A journalist with Andani roots working with a private media told me about the ordeals he always went through akin to my experiences any time he filed a report on the Dagbon issue that sought to question the NDC's failure to identify and punish the killers of the Yaa Naa. '...and they (NDC) will make sure they report you to an elder in the family or the wider Andani family to talk to you that I think is unfair because I am only a conveyer belt...' (Interview, May 6. 2018). Verbal assaults and character assassination from some members of these two political parties were and still are (at the time of writing this thesis) virtually a daily affair.

However. the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) in Tamale also did not leave me out. I once ran a commentary on *Radio Justice* calling on the security to drive out the Abudus who had once again besieged the Gbewah palace (palace of the Yaa Naa) threatening to occupy it after it was declared a restricted area by government, following the murder of the Yaa Naa. This was in 2003. The BNI called me to their office and asked me to produce a recording of

my commentary, claiming I made remarks that were potentially explosive. I provided the recording and apparently finding nothing incriminating, they decided to play the 'fear factor'-word game in propaganda terms- (see chapter five on propaganda) by inviting me again later. I declined and asked them to see my lawyer. The BNI retreated and told me to forget about the invite. This intimidating tactics by the BNI came as a surprise because some of their staff had always contacted me for information that bothered on matters of security in the region and urged me to always inform them before I published same since some of my reports were undermining their prompt reporting of security issues to their national office in Accra.

In the heat of the conflict and following my incessant reports of harassment of citizens by the security agencies, I was told in confidence by one of the BNI staff that I was tagged a 'security threat' and that I should tread cautiously. I did not agree. My interview with a peace building expert perhaps tells it all:

> ...I heard about journalists being beaten threatened...some people were seen giving out information that they (security agencies and government) thought they should not have gone out ...are you not one of them? I remember the situation very well and that time you were working with JOY FM (interview, June 6, 2017).

**4.7.1 Framing Me Up**

Following the acquittal and discharge of some fifteen Abudus in 2010 held for the murder of the Yaa Naa, some Andani youth started mounting blockages and burning tyres on some principal streets of Tamale and I was there to report it. I later learnt that I was being framed up by some NDC activists for instigating the disturbances and that the BNI would 'pick me up' at night. I rushed to a BNI friend who admitted receipt of the complaint but said they were there when the disturbances started and that I was in no way to be implicated. I then realized that my role in publishing reminders about the NDC's failed promise of instituting a presidential commission into the Yaa Naa murder could be the reason behind the frame. Earlier in 2003, the then NPP Northern Regional Minister, Ernest Debrah upon receipt of complaints from NPP youth about my reportage and commentaries on the Dagbon conflict, called me to his residence and to the disappointment of the NPP youth, he rather pleaded with me to help him 'keep Tamale calm'. I still did not stop. I was not the only journalist the Regional Minister invited on the Yaa Naa issue. A talk show host working at one of the private radio stations in Tamale was also invited by the minister to try to stop him from discussing the Yaa Naa murder issue (interview, July 15, 2017). He also declined but later lost his job at the radio station (ibid).

**4.7.2 Name Calling**

Having failed to silence me through threats, intimidation, lobbying and physical attacks, supporters of the two political regimes (NPP and NDC) decided to resort to 'name calling' (another propaganda technique-see chapter two on word game), to tarnish my reputation. Each side accused me of being influenced with money by the other side to crusade on the Yaa Naa murder. This accusation was fuelled by the believe that journalists in Ghana take bribe in the discharge of their duties. Even though my crusade on the Yaa Naa murder saga was not influenced by money but by my desire to ensure justice for the Yaa Naa, myself and other journalists covering the conflict sometimes did get money from organisers of programmes to facilitate publication. These monies sometimes made it difficult for some journalists to be critical in their reportage and those of us who were critical were either often not invited for programmes or not given any money. Respondents, including a security expert and a humanitarian worker told me they gave monies to journalists for transport and food. The security expert said:

> Yes, we give out money for transport and food not to influence journalists but to facilitate their movement to the place since they do not have transport… from 20 Ghana cedis (about 3 British pounds) media houses, including GTV (Ghana Television) do not have vehicles.

The humanitarian worker also said:

> There are some CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) which will never have media coverage because they don't treat the media well. There are occasions when two CSOs are inviting the media, they will look at your resources and the possibility of them getting something…If it is within town, normally **we pay** 20 Ghana cedis, provide snack and then lunch to each person. If it is outside, they will be fewer, so we give 40 Ghana cedis, provide themwith lunch and then we get back to town, we pay for their transport back to their offices…

A journalist with an Accra private newspaper said due to their quests to have their information published, the feuding factions gave them money to report on their press conferences (Interview with reporter, May 30, 2017). Given the above, it was not a surprise that my motivation for reporting to ensure justice was misconstrued.  Unprintable words were used to describe me but that did not deter me from doing my job. Several lies were peddled against me to JOY FM by these activists, but none stood the test of credibility. On the contrary, management of the radio station renewed their confidence in me and continued to use me as their correspondent until I resigned.

## 4.8 Conclusion

The challenges that confronted me in my reportage of the Dagbon conflict persuaded me to look for opportunities for further studies not so much to 'escape' the rough terrain of working as a journalist in Dagbon but to share my experiences with student journalists and academics in media and conflict. It is my hope that the experiences shared will add up to the existing debates about media freedom and censorship and propaganda in Africa, including Ghana and Dagbon. In reporting the Dagbon conflict, and notwithstanding my identity as Andani, I exercised accuracy, fairness and balance to all facts in the conflict as exposued by Ward (2010, see chapter two). The reader remains the sole judge whether I acheived fairness, accuracy and balance. The next chapter in this thesis will discuss propaganda and the Ghanaian media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict from 2002 to 2019.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## PROPAGANDA AND THE MEDIA

### 5.0 Introduction

The front cover page of Phillip Knightley's '*The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Iraq*' partly reads, '…in war truth is the first casualty'. This quote is arguably traced to the Greek dramatist, Aeschylus (525 BC-456 BC), see ('The quotations page'). While contributing to Knightley's book (2004 edition), John Pilger, a British and veteran journalist quotes former British Prime Minister, David Lloyd George as saying about the First World War that 'if people really knew (the truth) the war would be stopped tomorrow' (Knightley, 2004, pp.XI). This is the exactitude of the current Dagbon chieftaincy conflict which was reignited by the murder of the Yaa Naa on March 27, 2002. This chapter looks at how propaganda was used in the media by governments, intelligence community and the military as well as the Abudus and the Andanis (see chapter two for discussion on theories of propaganda). Government propaganda is divided into two phases-the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government (2002-2009) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government (2009-2016).

### 5.1 NPP Government's propaganda and the media: the first casualty in the Yaa Naa murder.

This section will investigate the use of propaganda to manage the conflict in the Yaa Naa murder saga by the NPP administration led by John Kufour who was President of Ghana from 2001 to 2009. In the build up to the murder of the Yaa Naa, secretary to the Yaa Naa told JOY FM on March 26, 2002 that the palace was under attack by the Abudus but the Interior Minister who was also Member of Parliament for Yendi denied the news reports and claimed that 'Yendi is calm' (Myjoyonline.com, March 30, 2002). Narrating how they covered the conflict, they wrote as thus 'At the time JOY FM spoke to the Ya Na's secretary on Tuesday, fighting was still going on, but the police were nowhere to be found' (ibid). They again stated:

> …Despite the warning signals, government officials still insisted and even broadcast on national radio that Yendi was calm. Not even alarm signals from the advisor of the Dagbon king pushed government officials to action. Government rather accused JOY News of mischief. The flurry of activity that followed was to develop into concise reportage of the country's worst chieftaincy feud in recent times (ibid).

The Interior Minister's claim fits into the concept of propaganda outlined in Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, pp.1) treatise on propaganda who define propaganda as 'a communication that attempts to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist (the one behind the propaganda idea)'. The matter of the funeral of Abdulai IV became a political campaign issue in the 2000 presidential elections in Ghana as the NPP promised to facilitate it once they won power. A Minister of State at the Presidency, Ms. Elizabeth Ohene speaking on JOY FM revealed that the NPP had promised to assist the Abudu gate to perform the funeral and for that to have happened, the Yaa Naa 'would have had to vacate the Gbewah palace' (JOY FM Front Page programme, March 29, 2002) Malik Alhassan Yakubu himself also made to the Wuaku Commission of Inquiry the same revelation, (Mahama, 2009, pp.37-38). See also *Daily Graphic*, (August 22, 2002, pp.1-3).

The submissions by the two ministers above suggest that government and the Abudus had agreed for the Abudus to perform the funeral of Abdulai IV at the Gbewah palace. It can therefore be argued that government's decision to dismiss JOY FM's report was to create an avenue for the Abudus to occupy the Gbewah palace to perform the funeral of Abdulai IV against the backdrop that the Yaa Naa was opposed to it as argued in chapter one.  Malik Alhassan Yakubu and other government officials who insisted (in the heat of battle) that Yendi was calm were therefore arguably the propagandists whose 'desired intent' was to discredit the media reports and to ensure the performance of the funeral of Abdulai IV.

The Interior Minister's claim also fits into Bakir et al. definition of deception through lying. They contend that deception through lying, arises when one makes a statement that is known or suspected to be untrue in order to mislead (2018, pp.22). The Northern Regional Security Council (REGSEC) earlier on March 25, 2002 imposed dusk to dawn curfew on the Yendi township (See Daily Graphic, March 26, 2002, pp.1) following reports of simmering tensions between the Abudus and the Andanis. As Interior Minister, it is highly unlikely that he was unaware of the disturbances and the curfew. His comments at the Wuaku Commission of Inquiry (Daily Graphic, August 22, 2002 pp.1-3) confirmed that his office sanctioned the imposition of the curfew by the REGSEC based on the simmering tensions in Yendi. Arguably therefore he knew Yendi was not calm. Was his claim that Yendi was calm not an act of deception through lying? Did it not suggest that he dismissed reports of tension in the area in order to mislead the Ghanaian people to facilitate the Abudus' attachment to the Gbewah palace to perform the funeral of Abdulai IV as part of the NPP's campaign promise? Malik's action can also be termed as outright lies. Lawrence (2000) in a review of *The Politics of Lying: Implications for Democracy,* by Lionel Cliffe, Maureen Ramsey and David Bartlett offers a treatise on lying. He defines lying as 'a conscious act or omission, deliberately contradicting what is thought to be truthful, or colluding in falsehood, by word, gesture, discreet...'. Here, what is thought to be truthful was the simmering tension in Yendi based upon which Malik's own home security office sanctioned

the imposition of dusk to dawn curfew. His denial of fighting (as reported by JOY NEWS) was therefore arguably a conscious and deliberate act that contradicted the truth that there was fighting in Yendi. The conscious act or intentionality on the part of Malik to lie is arguably understood in the context that the action his office took (sanctioning the imposition of dusk to dawn curfew) was based on the very information of disturbances that he later disputed and rejected. Was Malik therefore not engaged in deception through lying and outright lies?

Reacting to the murder of Issah Mobila, an Andani sympathizer killed in military custody on December 9, 2004 (arguably in connection with the Dagbon conflict, see chapter four), the Regional Security Council headed by a government minister claimed that he 'sipped water, collapsed and died'. An autopsy report however revealed that he was tortured to death by the military while in their custody (see chapter four). This claim was repeated by other government functionaries, including the press secretary to the President at the time, Kwabena Agyepong (see chapter four on how government reacted to the news of the murder of Issah Mobila). The claim by government that he 'sipped water, collapsed and died' which was repeated by state prosecutors in court (see Kessben FM online, February 18, 2013) was not only an act of deception-wanting Ghanaians to believe in something that was not true- Godson et al. (2011, pp.1-3), but also an act of denial by trying to 'create an alternative reality' (ibid). Here the reality was that Mobila was killed by the military and the alternative reality as created by government was that he collapsed and died after sipping water. Government's 'alternative reality' was also an act of deception through lying. Deception through lying is defined as making a statement that is known or suspected to be untrue in order to mislead (Bakir et al. 2018, pp.22). I submit that with visible signs of torture all over his body, government knew he was tortured to death by the military and even tried to go to the aid of the military by engaging in surreptitious moves to bury him quickly in order to bury evidence (see chapter four). Government's position that he died after sipping water was therefore an act of deception through lying to mislead the public into thinking his death was 'natural'. Government also engaged in dis-information by forging Mobila's death as 'natural' and Bakir et al. (2018, pp.22) note that in using deception through lying, disinformation may also be used, by forging and stage-managing events.

Government's claim also suggested a case of outright lies on its part. Not only did the autopsy report (see chapter four) and the military enquiry report (see under military propaganda below) contradict government's claim but also its attempt to surreptitiously influence the swift internment of the remains of Mobila (see chapter four) was only a conscious attempt to contradict the truth and hold on to its claim about his cause of death as 'natural'. This is because government knew that as a muslim once buried his body was unlikely to be exhumed. Here the intentionality to lie on the part of government is also

understood largely in its repeated claim about his cause of death as 'natural' while surreptitiously pushing for the rapid internment of his remains ahead of the release of the autopsy report. Government knew that the autopsy report in addition to visible marks on his body constituted a substantial risk of weighing far more convincing argument (in the court of public opinion) in favour of 'torture' than its claim about his death as 'natural'. On this occasion government did not only engage in deception, disinformation, denial and deception through lying but also in outright lies.

Soon after the death of the Yaa Naa and in a bid to extricate itself from the 'mess' as argued above, government employed more propaganda techniques in order to dictate and control information flow. They achieved this by putting in place censorship measures. (See next chapter on censorship). Various reporters who covered the conflict that I spoke to, as part of my data collection, were unanimous on this claim. Doob (1948) cited in (Black, 2001, pp.124) identifies one of the characteristics of propaganda as 'a heavy or undue reliance on authority figures and spokespersons, rather than empirical validation, to establish its truths, conclusions, or impressions'. Undue reliance on authority figures was prominent in the media reportage of the conflict (see chapter seven) and this was concurred with by one of the senior journalists who covered the conflict:

> They (government officials) will say talk to this man, talk to that man, talk to this woman, talk to that young man so your hands are tied sort of…when we reached there (Yendi) we were part of the government delegation just like any other media house, they gave us sources to speak to …(interview, June 24, 2017, Tamale).

Another correspondent who travelled with the high powered government delegation to Yendi from Accra on March 29, 2002 also narrated how government controlled the flow of information from the Gbewah palace just two days after the demise of the Yaa Naa; '…they warned us when we were in the flight that whoever reports anything that we saw will be sanctioned because they will let the military and the police follow us…', (Interview, May 17, 2017).

In an online compilation of treatises on propaganda by various authors, including Phillip Knightley, author of *'The First Casualty: The War Correspondent as Hero and Myth-Maker from the Crimea to Iraq'*, Jackall (1995) cited in Harb (2011, pp.27) describes how 'Word Game' is used in mobilization propaganda. These include 'the fear factor' 'Glittering Generality', 'Name Calling', 'Transfer', 'Testimony', 'Plain Folks' and 'Band Wagon' amongst others. Harb argues that when a person warns an audience that disaster will result if they fail to follow a particular line of action, that person is employing the fear factor to achieve a specific result about how the audience should behave (ibid). Significantly, government

officials used the fear factor in the above situation to secure favourable coverage of the Dagbon conflict. However. the 'word game' was not employed by only government information managers or 'spin doctors' alone. The President's first reaction to the conflict and later his nationwide broadcast about the conflict was flooded with 'word game' techniques as discussed below.

## 5.1.1 President Kufour's first speech after the murder of Yaa Naa

The President's first speech (and some subsequent ones) after the murder of the Yaa Naa which declared a State of Emergency in the Dagbon area was accompanied by threats and intimidation as he hinted of reinforcement of the police and military to the Dagbon area and warned that 'anybody caught fomenting unrest or advocating violence in anyway will be severely dealt with' (Daily Graphic, March 28, 2002, 1). This was arguably part of the fear factor employed by the President to restrain, especially the Andanis from any possible reprisal attacks on the Abudus for killing the Yaa Naa and scores of Andanis.

Later in a nationwide broadcast President Kufour again warned that anyone or group that tried to 'take advantage of the present difficulties will be *swiftly* and *decisively dealt with* under the full rigors of the law (fear factor), (Daily Graphic April 1, 2002, pp.3). He asked the media to be '*sensitive* to culture and tradition in their coverage of the *unfortunate* and *tragic event*' (transfer factor), (ibid). 'Transfer' is a device by which the propagandist transfers the authority, sanction, and prestige of something we revere and respect to something he would have us accept, Harb (2011, pp.27). Here the President was transferring the reverence and respect the Ghanaian people have for culture and the sympathy the Ghanaian people have for the Andanis-because of the murder of their king-to his government. This was arguably to have the Ghanaian people accept his sympathy for the Dagbon people as a result of the tragedy that had befallen them. Ironically the same government earlier announced the death of the Yaa Naa on radio and television *in violation of Dagbon custom and without recourse to 'sensitivity to the culture and tradition'* President Kufour referred to.

In justifying the imposition of the 'State of Emergency', the President evoked the 'Plain Folks' technique when he declared that his government had to do that 'to preserve public peace and to protect lives and property' (Daily Graphic, April 1, 2002, pp.1). By using 'Plain Folks' technique, speakers try to convince the audience that they (the speakers) and their ideas are of the people (Harb, 2011, pp.27).

The Presidency in December 2002 while receiving the Wuaku Commission findings arguably embarked on a 'demonization drive' by employing the 'name calling' and 'transfer' techniques against counsel for the late Yaa Naa, Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama, using the

commission's finding against him that 'he established a training camp' and 'recruited and sponsored warriors for the Yaa Naa' (Wuaku Commission report, 2002). Name Calling is a technique used by propagandists to label a person negatively hoping the person will be rejected by the audience based on the negative labelling, instead of considering available evidence (Harb, 2011, pp.27). Reference to him as 'potential suspect' (Government White Paper on Wuaku Commission report, 2002) in the 'sponsoring of warriors and the establishment of a training camp' to train them connotes terrorism, thus labelling Alhaji Mahama a 'terrorist' in a typical name calling technique of propaganda. The use of transfer here was in the negative sense to destroy his credibility by transferring to him, the activities of 'warlords' or 'terrorists' who often establish such camps in times of conflicts and wars. The commission had also 'found' that Alhaji Mahama had 'suborned witnesses' during its sittings and referred his conduct to Ghana's General Legal Council. In its White Paper on the Wuaku Commission report, the government said:

> Having found as a fact that he recruited and sponsored warriors for the Ya Na...the Commission recommends merely that his conduct should be reported to the General Legal Council for necessary action for suborning witnesses (Government's White Paper on Wuaku Commission, December 23, 2002).

Government further stated:

> Having regard to the recommendation that the availability in the area of several sophisticated weapons (AK 47, G3 etc.) discovered after the March crisis, and the evidence of the existence of training camps for weapon handling should alarm government, government is at a loss to appreciate why a potential suspect in the creation of such training camps should have been so lightly treated (ibid).

It is argued that the above position of government was not only a witch-hunting exercise but also suggested a 'demonizing drive' against Alhaji Mahama manufactured with dubious legality in consent with the Wuaku Commission. This argument is premised on the following:

1.  Even though government also directed the police to investigate his establishment of training camps for weapon handling since December 2002, the police are yet to submit a report to that effect (at the time of submitting this thesis in 2019). Thus, the claim by the commission that he established a military camp to train persons on weapons handling is still arguably contestable. Indeed, all the security persons who were factually correct and competent sources to make such a disclosure did not corroborate the claim when they appeared before the commission.

2. The allegation that he established a military camp was made by counsel for the Abudu family, Nana Obiri Boahen in its sittings on June 18, 2002 (see Daily Graphic, June 19, 2002, pp.1) which was later upheld by the commission. This finding was arguably not based on fact but 'contrived confessions' by the Abudus, as was widely believed.

3. The credibility of the commission itself was questioned as the Andanis boycotted its sittings when its chairman, Justice I.N.K. Wuaku openly called Andani witnesses liars and also rejected some key witnesses from the Andani family compelling the Andanis to activate the boycott (Daily Graphic, September, 18, 2002, pp.3). They also rejected its final report (see their press conference, January 8, 2003, Accra cited in Ghanaweb.com, January 8, 2003) while government also disagreed with some of its findings (Government's White Paper on Wuaku Commission, December 23, 2002) and failed to implement its final report.

4. Even though the commission found him guilty of establishing a training camp for weapon handling, it did not prefer charges to that effect except to refer his conduct to the General Legal Council. Was it therefore surprising that government failed to implement its final report?

5. The commission itself was established with 'dispute over its legality', arguably a contravention of the 1992 constitution since an instrument to that effect was not laid before parliament in accordance with Article 11 clauses 7 (a) and (b). Indeed article 11 clauses (a) and (b) stipulate that 'Any Order, Rule or Regulation made by a person or authority under a power conferred by this (Ghana) Constitution or any other law shall:

    (a)  be laid before Parliament:

    (b)  be published in the Gazette on the day it is laid before Parliament (See 1992 Constitution, pp. 9).

When lawyers for the Andanis raised the issue at the commission's sittings, the chairman Justice Wuaku told them to go to the Supreme Court (Daily Graphic, September 18, 2002, pp.1). In view of these it was widely believed that the commission owed its loyalty to the government and not to the Ghanaian people.

Can it therefore be argued that government only tried to demonize Alhaji Mahama using the techniques of 'Name Calling' and 'transfer' to portray him as a 'warlord' and or a 'terrorist' in the conflict because he was counsel to the slain king and considered one of the 'flag bearers' of the Andani family? The fact that he later escaped to Burkina Faso on exile

(see Mahama, 2009, back cover page) speaks volume of how he was targeted by the Kufour led NPP government.

The Information Ministry also made use of the 'word game'. In imposing censorship on the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict, the Minister, Jake Obetsebi Lamptey made use of the 'transfer factor' when he said '…I am with the authority of the president serving you notice…clear any other news in Dagbon affairs with the ministry'(Daly Graphic, April 1, 2002, pp.1). Evoking the authority of the President was an example of 'transfer', (see above) and reminded journalists of the 'declaration of the State of Emergency in the Dagbon area', (ibid) with the view to scaring them away from performing their watchdog role, (fear factor). A week later he 'commended' journalists for their cooperation and assured them of government's commitment to 'expand the frontiers of press freedom' in the country (Daily Graphic, April 8, 2002, pp.1)-an example of Plain folks (see above),

The fear factor was also employed by the ministry when they were transporting journalists from Accra to Yendi 48 hours after the Yaa Naa murder. Government spin doctors 'warned us when we were in the flight that whoever reports anything that we saw will be sanctioned because they will let the military and the police follow us…' (Interview, May 17, 2017). While in Yendi and at the Gbewah palace journalists were warned (fear factor) from taking pictures because 'it would offend the sensibilities of viewers' (see chapter four).

Government after compelling its security capos, Malik Alhassan Yakubu and Major retired Joshua Hamidu to resign (see Palavar newspaper cited in Ghanaweb, 21 May 2002) over their actions and inactions that led to the Yaa Naa murder, tended to engage in glittering generality and deception. In accepting the 'resignation' of Joshua Hamidu, it claimed it was doing so with 'deep regret' and thanked him for his 'loyal and dedicated' service to the country. Considering the fact that Hamidu as National Security Advisor had refused to act and or pass on critical intelligence about the Yendi disturbances to the President and had forced his Director of BNI to resign, (see below under intelligence community propaganda) reference to him as loyal and dedicated servant was arguable. Government's claim of 'loyal' and 'dedicated service' was therefore arguably an example of glittering generality. Glittering generality is when a speaker tries to make people approve and accept an idea or a person without examining the available evidence (Harb, 2011, pp.27). It is also an 'attempt to pacify the audience in order to make an unpleasant reality more palatable' (ibid). Here the NPP government tried to convince Ghanaians that the former security boss was a good man who discharged his duties well when available evidence suggests that he failed in his duty and that caused the state of Dagbon valuable lives. It is also an example of card stacking where government tried to build an overwhelming case on one side of an issue (portraying him as loyal and dedicated servant) while concealing the other (his negligence of duty leading to the carnage).

Government's claim that it accepted the resignation with 'deep regret' was a clear case of deception since it forced Hamidu to resign. The deception here is that government sought to suggest that Hamidu resigned on his own volition when information available to the Ghanaian media stated that the president had to prevail on the Ghana Bar Association (GBA) to call for Hamidu's sack before he would ask him to resign (see above). See also (Ghana News Agency report, cited in modernghana.com, May 12, 2002 on the GBA's call for Hamidu's removal).

A professor of communications in Ghana corroborated government's prevalence on the GBA to get Hamidu out, 'I can tell you for a fact that Kufuor had to talk to the Ghana Bar Association to issue a statement indicting Hamidu before he will then tell him to resign' (interview, June 3, 2017). In its white paper on the Wuaku Commission report, government accepted the commission's commendation on Malik Alhassan Yakubu for 'the speed and timeliness of his interventions in the crisis, (see Government White Paper on Wuaku Commission). Again government sought to present Malik in good light-an example of glittering generality and card stacking-notwithstanding the fact that he lied (see above) about the security situation in Yendi at the beginning of the disturbances there, a lie that in no doubt contributed significantly to the carnage at Yendi.

Government's propaganda was not confined to the above alone. In fact, government also 'framed' the attack on the Yaa Naa by referring to it as 'ancient rivalries that had bedevilled their (Dagombas) kingdom' (Daily Graphic, April 1, 2002, pp.3). Entman says frames involve 'selection and salience'. To frame is to 'select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described' (1993, pp.52). Goffman (1974) concurs with Entman that 'frames select and call attention to particular aspects of the reality described' and argues 'which logically means frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects' cited in (Turk et al. 1998, pp.763). Even though the present crisis started as far back as 1948, the Supreme Court ruling of 1986 had settled the matter and reinstated the rotational system of succession between the Abudus and the Andanis (see chapter one). By referring to it as ancient, the President arguably tried to divert attention or as (Goffman, 1974) cited in (Turk et al. 1998, pp.763) put it, 'direct attention away' from the sudden attack on the palace and the security blunder engineered by the creative deceit of his Interior Minister to exonerate his government from any culpability. 'Evoking' history (of the conflict) was to persuade the nation that his government could not be held responsible after all it was a long-standing dispute. I argue my claim also premising it on the characteristics of propaganda as espoused by (Doob, 1948) that 'a reduction of situations

into simplistic and readily identifiable cause and effect relations', ignoring 'multiple causality of events' cited in (Black, 2001, pp.124).

Informed by Black's treatise, it can be argued that President Kufour reduced the criminal activity of murder of Yaa Naa and scores of his retinue to simply a long-standing dispute between the Abudus and the Andanis. In doing so, he ignored the contributory factors of the Abudus decision to challenge the Yaa Naa's authority by performing certain traditional rites associated with the fire festival (the performance of which is the sole preserve of the Yaa Naa in Yendi) (see Wuaku Commission report 2002). In addition to the above was their quest to perform the funeral of the deposed Yaa Naa, Abdulai IV at the Gbewah palace (see chapter one). Indeed, it was this disagreement between the two factions that caused the disturbances (Tonah, 2012, pp.8).

Government in its White Paper on the Wuaku Commission report referred to the attack on the Yaa Naa as 'a three day war' in furtherance of its propaganda moves to frame the conflict as a war and not an attack on the king (see Government's White Paper on Wuaku Commission, December 23, 2002). My observation is supported by an interview I had with a university professor in Ghana on June 3, 2017. The professor said:

> … government successfully reframed the conflict as an act of war…no wonder the reframes were those that were repeated at the Wuaku Commission. I personally remember telling the lawyer for the Andani that…It is not a war; tell the commission that you cannot start on the premise of a war. It was a regicide because the Yaa-Naa's palace is not a war front …in Ghana when your home is attacked and you are killed, it is never called a war because your home is not a war front…

President Kufour 'inadvertently' admitted that the disturbances in Yendi had continued for days leading to the loss of lives. '…over the last few days, there has been extreme violence resulting in many deaths in and around Yendi…' (Daily Graphic, April 1, 2002, pp.1). This was in sharp contrast to what his government officials led by the Interior Minister, Malik Alhassan Yakubu claimed when JOY FM reported the beginning of hostilities in Yendi (see above). The use of 'few days' suggested that government was in the know that there was fighting in Yendi for days but did nothing to stop it. This reinforces the claim by some Andanis and some other Ghanaians that government deliberately refused to go to the aid of the Yaa Naa hoping that he would vacate the palace to enable the Abudus occupy it and perform the funeral of Abdulai IV to fulfil the NPP's electoral campaign promise. The result of this was the loss of several lives, including the king of Dagbon, Yaa Naa Yakubu II and injuries to scores of people.

*Is it farfetched to state that JOY FM's insistence that there was an attack on the Gbewah palace and NPP government's denial of it is the direct opposite of what happened in Rwanda? In Rwanda, the media was used by the Hutus to demonize and mobilize public support against their opponents (Tutsis). They used outright lies and half truths, leading to the genocide (Carruthers, 2011, pp.19-21). Conversely, in the Ghana Dagbon case, the death of the Yaa Naa and his elders could have been avoided if government had listened to the media and not lied about the state of security in Yendi. Like the Rwanda case that has become a constant reminder for journalists (especially in Africa), with abundant literature on it by Western writers of media and conflict, the Gbewah palace attack incident should also trigger debate. Media and conflict scholars (especially in the West) as well as governments and the civil society should debate about how the Ghanaian (NPP) government rejected warning signs from the media (regarding an attack on a king's palace) leading to a carnage unprecedented in the history of Ghana's Dagbon and indeed the rest of the country in recent times (see chapter nine).*

Government contradicted itself regarding security response to the crisis. Miss Elizabeth Ohene, a Presidential Spokesperson told the media that 'the security lapsed into a sense of complacency, leading to the death of the Yaa Naa' (see above). A ministerial team report issued by the Information Minister (24 hours later) however said that the security was able to contain the situation in the face of overwhelming firepower:

> ...the team found that the security services, in the face of the overwhelming firepower, had been able to contain the conflict within the immediate vicinity of the Ya-Na's Palace at Yendi thereby preventing the conflict from spreading to other areas... (Ghana News Agency, April 2, 2002).

These contradictory statements coming from two government ministers in charge of communication within 24 hours show the level of convolution and confusion that had gripped the government in terms of information management. The military that claimed to have failed to rescue the Yaa Naa because of battery failure of its armoured vehicle was the same military the ministerial team wanted Ghanaians to believe contained the situation 'in the face of overwhelming fire power' within the immediate vicinity of the Yaa Naa's palace. This is another classic example of grey propaganda where the accuracy of information is uncertain (see above).

Consequently, can it not be argued that the conflict did not spread to other parts of Yendi not because the security contained it but because the attackers did not extend it further? Arguably if the security had wanted to stop the conflict even in the face of 'overwhelming fire power' they could have done so since the attacks on the palace were erratic and not

continuous for the three days period. Again, if it was the intention of the Abudus to attack other Andanis in Yendi they could have done so within the three-day period since they are in the majority in Yendi even though minority in the whole of Dagbon. The fact that the Abudus did not spread the attacks beyond the palace is yet another proof that the whole exercise was an orchestrated attack on the Yaa Naa and not a war between the Abudus and the Andanis as government tried to record. The fact that the ministerial team report was issued a day after a government minister, Miss Elizabeth Ohene 'implicated' the security for suggesting they 'lapsed into a sense of complacency' suggests the ministerial team report was also used to 'right the wrong' of Miss Elizabeth Ohene and by extension the government. Arguably therefore, the ministerial team's claim above was another move in the government's attempt to frame the attack on the Yaa Naa as a war between the Abudus and the Andanis instead of an attack on the Gbewah palace. The ministerial team's report that the security agencies prevented the spread of the conflict to other parts of Yendi was therefore disturbingly suspicious and again fits into Wardle and Derakhshan (2017, pp.5-6) disinformation theory (see above).

Government also turned itself into a 'funeral coordinator' (see interview with respondent below) by indicating its intention to rebuild the Gbewah palace just a week after the carnage, instead of concentrating on arresting the culprits in the Yaa Naa murder. This move was seen by many as deliberate in order to divert attention from the criminal aspect of the conflict. It is significant to state that once the palace was razed down during the attack, it had to be rebuilt before a regent could be enskinned, *but this was to be at the instance of the Dagbon Traditional Council and not government*. One of the respondents had this to say:

> I remember very well that immediately it was known that the Yaa-Naa was killed, the government decided to start acting as if it was a funeral coordinator and actually lost sight of the fact that it had no mandate to do such a thing, it had a mandate to enforce law and order not cultural practices (interview June 3, 2017).

State owned *Daily Graphic* newspaper that carried the story under the banner headline 'Govt To Rebuild The Gbewah Palace' also reported that the Yendi conflict mediation team got '...assurances from President Kufour that the on-going criminal investigations...into...the incident at Yendi is comprehensive...' (April 6, 2002). The President's assurances suggest that he knew that the Dagbon people expected his government to pursue the killers and not to veer into matters of tradition. In veering into traditional matters, he needed to 'chip in' the issue of investigating the criminal aspect of the conflict. Given that they subsequently failed to find the murderers notwithstanding enormous evidence, including the return of the severed head and arm of the king (see chapter one) is another testimony that government deemphasized the criminal aspect of

the conflict. It was arguably only giving public assurances to convince the nation that it was committed to finding the killers. My claim is supported by Mahama (2009) who had this to say about the 'uncovering' of the severed arm and head of the Yaa Naa:

> Nobody saw the head "walking" or "flying" to that place. But from the day of decapitation up to the seventh day when the head was found "sitting" or lying exactly where it had been severed from the body of the Ya-na, soldiers and police were on guard duty 24 hours. Further curfew had been in place from 6pm to 6am during the seven days (pp.134).

He further stated:

> The government want us the Andani family ...to believe this fantastic fable. Government and security services certainly know how the head and arm of the Ya-na got to the Gbewah palace. They also know where "they" spent the seven days and with whom they spent the seven days and who took the arm and head back to the Gbewah palace (ibid).

It is significant to note that the President's assurance came just two days after the head and arm of the Yaa Naa were 'allegedly' found. Can it therefore be argued that the President's assurance was a diversionary tactic aimed at shifting the focus on the uncovering of the 'body parts' of the slain king? Was it aimed at patronizing the Dagbon people especially the Andanis that government cared about the status of the Gbewah palace-the symbol of Dagbon kingdom-and was willing to help rebuild it? G*overnment was less committed to finding the culprits from the evidence above.* The President's assurance can therefore only find a place in 'plain folks' technique of propaganda where speakers try to convince their audience that they (the speakers) and their ideas are of the people (Harb, 2011, pp.27).

Government's establishment of the Wuaku Commission of inquiry was also suspected by many, including the Andanis as diversionary. Many Andanis believed that government used the establishment of the commission to 'divert attention away' from calls by the Andanis for the apprehension of the culprits in the Yaa Naa murder. The Wuaku Commission's final report was not only rejected by the Andanis (see above) but government itself failed to implement its recommendations. For example, the report recommended the transfer of Mohammed Habib Tijani, the Yendi Municipal Chief Executive at the time but government failed to do that. All those charged with murder, conspiracy to murder, illegal possession of arms and arson amongst other crimes were not prosecuted. Indeed, only two people (who were arrested before the commission was established) were prosecuted on a charge of murder but were acquitted and discharged. All these suggest the commission's findings were not useful to the NPP government and the disputants. The establishment of the commission arguably  lays claim to (Goffman, 1974) discussion on frames that 'frames

select and call attention to particular aspects of the reality described' and argues it 'logically means frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects' cited in (Turk et al. 1998, pp.763). Arguably therefore President Kufour used the establishment of the Wuaku Commission to direct attention away from expectations by Ghanaians and calls by Andanis for justice for the Yendi murders.

Government propaganda of the media under the New Patriotic Party (NPP) regime (March 2002 to January 2009) in the Dagbon conflict took a certain pattern. The use of deliberate and fabricated lies (disinformation), deception through lying, misinformation, censorship as tool for propaganda and intimidation and threats of journalists. The use of frames as propaganda tool and the use of 'word game' like the fear factor, transfer, name calling, glittering generality and plain folks were also employed. I now discuss government propaganda of the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict under the National Democratic Congress (NDC) regime (January 2009-September 2016). I choose to do so because the NDC used the Yaa Naa murder as a political campaign issue in both the 2004 and 2008 elections, promising to deliver justice to the Andanis but failed as can be seen below.

## 5.2 NDC Government and Propaganda of the media

The NDC party that came into government on January 7, 2009 had the Yaa Naa murder issue hanging on their neck like an albatross not only because it was bequeathed to them as new managers of the state by the NPP but also because the party promised to arrest and prosecute the killers of the Yaa Naa and his elders, a promise the Andanis expected to be fulfilled. Like the NPP, the NDC also deployed propaganda techniques. Two significant developments accounted for the expectations of the Andanis; the 'Rawlings tape saga' and the 'NDC 2008 manifesto' as discussed below.

## 5.2.1 The Rawlings' tape saga

Former President and founder of the NDC, Jerry John Rawlings prior to the 2008 elections was purported to have in his possession a video tape recording detailing how the Yaa Naa was murdered that could facilitate the arrest and prosecution of the culprits in the murder of the Yaa Naa. Even though he did not make a public pronouncement to that effect, the claim was rife amongst party functionaries and the Andanis and the latter bought into the claim voting amass for the NDC in the 2008 elections. After the victory of the NDC in the 2008 elections and after 15 Abudus (the NDC government arrested based on the Wuaku Commission recommendations) were acquitted and discharged in 2011 for lack of evidence in connection with the Yaa Naa murder, the Andanis were angry. They reminded government of the 'Rawlings tape' but were told that the said tape only 'contained a recording of a narration (of what happened on the day the king was killed) between a

former aide to Rawlings, Victor Smith and a relative of the Yaa Naa' (myjoyonline, cited in ghanaweb.com, June 13, 2011). This was in sharp contrast to what the Andanis were told before the elections- that the video tape contained 'details about how the Yaa Naa was killed'.

Even though the claim about the existence of 'a video tape' was verified after the elections, the content of the 'tape' as was speculated at the time of the 2008 election campaigns was different. This is a classic example of grey propaganda where the accuracy of the information is uncertain (Jowett and O'Donnell, 2012, pp.17-23). It fits into the treatise on 'Strategic Denial and Deception' as espoused by Godson et al. (2011, pp.1-3), who argue that deception is when a propagandist makes effort to cause someone to believe in something that is not true, thus leading him to behave in a way that serves the propagandist interest rather than the propagandee. Here the NDC succeeded in making the Andanis believe that the 'video tape' contained hardcore evidence that turned out to be false while courting the Andanis support in the 2008 elections. One of the spokespersons of the Andani family said, 'it was the Dagbon crisis that brought the NDC to power and unfortunately they betrayed the trust that the people entrusted to them' (interview with respondent, July 19, 2017). The element of denial here is that the Andanis did not see the video tape and Godson et al. argue that denial includes 'an attempt to block information by which a target could learn the truth. Was the NDC's desired intent to mobilize the Andanis for political support using as bait 'the Rawlings' tape'? See Jowett and O'Donnell, (2012, pp.1 on desired intent and propaganda).

**5.2.2 NDC 2008 Manifesto Promise**

The Rawlings' tape was not the only propaganda technique the NDC employed in the Yaa Naa murder case. Indeed, they also promised in their 2008 manifesto to 'Set up a truly non-partisan, competent independent commission on the murder of the Yaa Naa, Yakubu Andani II and his elders for long lasting peace in Ghana' (NDC Manifesto, 2008, pp.34). *This manifesto promise was never delivered.* Instead they used the Wuaku Commission report to arrest some 15 people indicted by the commission, tried them and lost the case. Godson et al. argue that deception includes 'creating an alternative reality'. The NDC used the Wuaku Commission's report to pursue the killers of the Yaa Naa instead of establishing an independent commission as promised in their manifesto. This act was to suggest that they had 'fulfilled the promise' of pursuing the killers even though short of establishing the independent commission. The arrests and prosecutions of the 15 suspects based on the Wuaku Commission report were therefore arguably the 'alternative reality' as promised in their manifesto. The reality as contained in their manifesto would have been to establish the independent commission of enquiry into the Yaa Naa murder. This did not come as a surprise to some leading members of the Andani family. One of their spokespersons had this to say about NDC's promise of setting up a new commission:

...It is betrayal and if you recall some of us had already cautioned and I think that it is the front of the Andani family too, they gave the NDC the opportunity to treat this matter so shabbily. They portrayed themselves as sympathizers of Andani. Unfortunately, ...when they came to power, they were not even interested in people reminding them about what they promised (Interview with respondent, July 19, 2017).

About the acquittal and discharge of the 15 Abudus who were tried based on the 'disputed Wuaku Commission report' he stated:

...you will recall the individuals who were arrested and arraigned before court, they (NDC) took it as if they had initiated a whole process even then they knew that they didn't have a strong case, they were just doing propaganda to show that they have done something but it was clear that they had just set-up the whole court proceedings to fail...it was a clear betrayal on the part of the NDC...(interview with respondent, July 19, 2017).

The arrests of the Abudus were even triggered by a strong worded letter to President Mills (2009-2012) by sons and daughters of the Yaa Naa who accused the regime of cashing in on the Yaa Naa murder for political expediency (Letter to President Mills, January 19, 2010).

Interestingly while in opposition the NDC led by its minority leader in parliament, Alban Bagbin while contributing to a debate on the extension of the State of Emergency on Dagbon called on the NPP government to 'set up a high powered independent judicial inquiry into the conflict to dig out (uncover) the root causes and forestall an escalation of the situation', (Ghana News Agency, April 5, 2002). The party again repeated the call as part of a resolution adopted at the end of its fifth National Delegates Congress in Accra, the nation's capital, (Daily Graphic, April 30, 2002, pp.12). Can it therefore be argued that the fact that they failed to do so when they won power was proof of how they were bent on using the Dagbon crisis to their advantage?

The NDC's propaganda techniques took the pattern of lies, half truths, strategic denials and deception. I now discuss military propaganda and the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict.

## 5.3 Military propaganda and media reportage of the Dagbon conflict

Military propaganda of the Ghanaian media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict was not as pronounced as government propaganda above. Notwithstanding, the media endured some propaganda from the military. A commanding officer at the 6th Infantry Battalion (Kamina barracks) in Tamale, Lieutenant Colonel W. Omane Agyekum while commenting on recommendations of a military enquiry report into the death of Mobila (Andani

sympathizer believed to have been targeted partly because of his support for the Andanis) (see chapter four) that implicated him, claimed his death was 'purely accidental' (The *Insight newspaper* cited in peacefmonline.com, February 17, 2010). His comments were made on 31st December 2004 (ibid). The military enquiry board had established that the deceased died in military custody at the Kamina barracks three hours after he was sent there a healthy man and indicted seven top military officers, including Lieutenant Colonel W. Omane Agyekum (The Ghanaian Chronicle, cited in allafrica.com, June I, 2012). However, the military high command did not make the report public.

Colonel Agyekum while reacting to the report made claims that contradicted the autopsy report on the death of Mobila. *I initially decided not to discuss his response given the fact that the military command eventually told the truth (five years on) after a change of government and after it was subpoenaed before a fast track high court in Accra*. However, I am persuaded to do so because of the proximity of his response to that of the NPP government whose regime Mobila was killed. My persuasion also stems from the fact that it had to take the court under a different political regime to compel the military command to make the disclosure as well as its implications on censorship that is discussed in the next chapter. In a country where some state institutions are perceptibly politicized, it was no wonder that his claims on 31st December 2004 were scarcely rebutted until after five years when the NDC government came into office on January 7, 2009 and reopened investigations into the Mobila case later that same year.

In his reaction Lieutenant Colonel W. Omane Agyekum told the media that the deceased died when he fell from the guardroom and broke his ribs. He said he was a 'supporter of the Andani family in the chieftaincy dispute' and was also 'suspected of distributing arms to some people to harm others as part of planned post election violence' (a position the NPP also held) and concluded that 'because of his stands he was likely to have had enemies who might have harmed him and inflicted marks on his body even before his arrest by the civil police' (The Insight newspaper cited in peacefmonline.com, February 17, 2010). Describing the deceased as a 'foreigner', he said some section of the general public had blamed the military for his death even before the autopsy and that such people who had 'unlimited access to his body could have tempered with it in order to implicate the military (ibid). It is unclear why he later leaked his response to the service enquiry to the media. Was his desired intent to 'sway the emotions' of the general public who were fuming with rage with information about the military's involvement in Mobila's death? His response was not only incongruous but also dotted with hate propaganda and 'word game' techniques (see under 5.1.1 above) smeared with contradictions. I back my claims with the following analysis.

Mobila was born and bred in Ghana and even rose to become Regional Chairman of the opposition Convention Peoples' Party (CPP), (see chapter four). In Ghana foreigners are not entitled to register to vote in political elections and Mobila could not have been chairman of CPP if he was not a registered voter. In Ghana like some other countries, including the USA, the constitution does not contemplate the right to citizenship by birth and it is highly unlikely that as a colonel in the army he (Agyekum) was unaware of this fact. His claim that Issah Mobila was a 'foreigner' was therefore untrue that can situate in Bakir et al. (2018, pp.22) treatise on deception through lying (see above).

It was a lie-colluding in falsehood (see above) his claim that his death was 'purely accidental' and that 'his ribs were broken when he fell from the guardroom after being unconscious'. This was a lie because the autopsy report clearly detailed that he suffered 'multiple abrasions all over his body and fractured ribs' and attributed the cause of his death to 'collapse in the left lung, fractured ribs and multiple abrasions' (see chapter four). The military service inquiry report also concluded that Mobila was taken to the Kamina barracks 'a healthy man' (see above). Here he again concurred with the NPP government (in contradicting the truth) that also claimed that Mobila sipped water and fell unconscious and died (see above). Like the NPP government the military officer can be said to have contradicted the truth and colluded in falsehood and thus engaged in outright lies as argued by Lawrence (see 5.1).

He contradicted himself when he claimed that Mobila was likely to have had enemies who might have harmed him and inflicted marks on his body even before his arrest by the police while at the same time he claimed that some section of the general public who had 'unlimited access to his (dead) body could have tempered with it in order to implicate the military'. This is a paradox that arguably epitomizes his desperation to cover up a crime that was committed under his watch. In order words his detractors (before his death) and sympathizers (after his death) caused extensive damage to his body. The fact is that Issah Mobila reported himself to the police (see chapter four) a healthy person and was carted out of the station a healthy man. In any case the military enquiry report (that was not published at the time he made those comments) had established that he was taken to the barracks 'a healthy man' (see above).

Secondly it was not until a decision was taken to inter his body that it was released to the family. One can only wonder how possible it could have been for some members of the general public (his sympathizers) to gain access to the body when it was lying in the freezer and in the custody of the mortuary unit of the Tamale hospital. Adding to this contradiction is again his claim that his ribs were broken after he fell unconscious while in the military guardroom. So, was it this 'fall from unconsciousness' or 'the temper of his body by his sympathizers' or 'his enemies who might have harmed him and inflicted the wounds on his

body' that caused his death? This was indeed clear propaganda that is grounded in Wardle and Derakhshan's (2017, pp.5-6) misinformation and disinformation treatise on 'information disorder' (see chapter two under propaganda). *Misinformation because he was peddling false information and disinformation because the act was deliberate.* Reference to him as a 'foreigner' and a 'distributor of arms' to cause violence do not only exemplify 'name calling' but also 'hate propaganda' in order to present his image in bad light arguably to erode the sympathy the deceased was getting from Ghanaians because of the way he was killed by the military under his command (the first in the history of Ghana under the 1992 constitutional democracy).

While addressing the media in Tamale, the Northern Regional capital of Ghana, a week after the Yaa Naa murder, Ghana's Army commander at the time, Major General Clayton Yaache employed the fear factor when he 'cautioned the media to be circumspect in their reportage' and that the current situation was an 'uneasy calm and must not be taken for granted' (Daily Graphic, April 2, 2002 pp.1-3). He also said the army had instituted 'a mechanism to contain any unforeseen circumstances' and announced that '23 officers and 421 men were deplored in the area under the State of Emergency' (ibid, pp.3). He added 'effort of the ground troops would be complemented by *daily air surveillance* in the Dagbon area', (Ghana News Agency, April 2, 2002). These were intended to instil fear in order to cow the media and the people of Dagbon into submission. Some of the successful fear appeals are 'threats' and 'a recommendation about how the people should behave' (see chapter two on theories of propaganda).

The military command also used facilitative communication which is defined as a sub-propaganda by Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, pp.27-29), (see chapter two), by donating 10 bales of used clothing to some of the victims of the conflict in Yendi (Daily Graphic, August 10, 2002, pp.3). Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, pp.27-29) argue that such gestures are designed to render a positive attitude towards potential propagandists.

In their numerous visits to the Dagbon area, the military command provided journalists (who were attached to them) with transport and food-an example of inducement as propaganda tool. Commenting on inducement as propaganda tool, Frederick Plamer of the *New York Herald* said during World War I their conducting officers were 'paying for our quarters (and) food…and having written their dispatches turned them over…for censorship', (Hallin, 1989, pp.127). A senior reporter who covered the Dagbon conflict extensively told me the experiences the media went through that are almost akin to Frederick Plamer's:

> Ideally the media houses do not have their own transport, so what happens is
> that transport is arranged by the government with the assistance of the military

command, they arrange transport for reporters to the conflict arena and sometimes *food is arranged for the reporters and other things are facilitated* for them to feel comfortable and to report (Interview with respondent, June 24, 2017).

When I asked him what he meant by 'other things are facilitated', he added 'they will say talk to this man, talk to that man, and talk to this woman…' (Ibid). His experience is partly exemplified in Keeble (2017, pp.11) who says the system of pooling reporters with frontline troops since (after) the Vietnam War has served to reinforce the corporate media's role as 'propagandists for the state in times of conflict'.

It is significant to state that unlike their western counterparts, journalists covering the Dagbon conflict were not embedded in the 'strict sense of the word and concept' of embedding. In the West embedded journalists spend weeks, months or years with the military with the latter protecting them and sharing food clothing and shelter with them (see Hallin above). They also obey ground rules from the military (see chapters six and nine). The Ghanaian journalists only spent a day in every visit with the military to the front line. Even though they were often protected, transported and fed by the military, they were not obliged to obey any ground rules, nor did they spend several days with the military to develop camaraderie. *Arguably therefore there was no embedding of journalists by the military in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict in the strict sense of embedding as a censorship technique.* Journalists were therefore arguably 'attached' in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict, which is a normal routine that cuts across journalism practice.

Military propaganda in the Dagbon conflict reportage took the pattern of lies, facilitative communication, fear factor, hate propaganda and name calling. I now discuss intelligence community propaganda and the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict.

## 5.4 Intelligence community propaganda and the media

The most effective propaganda tool employed by the intelligence community in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict was the 'fear factor'. Unlike the military and government propaganda where this factor was effectively used against the journalists, the 'first casualty' of this fear factor relating to intelligence community propaganda was the Director of the Bureau of National Investigations (BNI) in Ghana, Owusu Forduor. He was forced to resign his position after relations between him and the National Security Advisor, Major (rtd) Joshua Hamidu strained. Owusu Fordjour was reported to have by-passed him and sent important intelligence information on the death of the Yaa-Naa and his elders, directly to the President. This was after Major Hamidu 'sat on' intelligence reports on the build up to the Yaa Naa murder, leading to the carnage in Yendi. The state-owned *Daily Graphic* newspaper was later to report on Mr. Forduor's resignation as thus:

...Mr. Owusu Forduor's frustrations began when reports on the events in Yendi sent to him by the Yendi BNI officer (Farouk) which he forwarded to the National Security Adviser for action, were allegedly not acted upon. The subsequent detailed reports from Yendi which allegedly bordered on the complicity of some people in the tragedy and for which the National Security Adviser was believed not to be well disposed to acting on, were therefore, sent directly to the top. When the information on this level of reporting eventually got to General Hamidu, he flew into a rage, and accused Mr. Owusu Fordjuor of disloyalty and back-stabbing and said that he could no longer work with him (Daily Graphic; May 6, 2002, pp1-3).

The Yendi BNI officer-Farouk-who was transferred from Yendi to Wa in the Upper West region of Ghana was later to die in a motor accident described by the media as under bizarre circumstances. Hamidu was also later forced to resign by the President (see above under NPP government propaganda) after incessant pressure from NPP party members, following the Andani family allegations about his alleged involvement in the plot to murder the Yaa Naa.

The Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of the Ghana Police was also not left out and also employed the fear factor against its own. An investigator working on the Issah Mobila murder was threatened by his superior on several occasions for 'doing a good job'. Detective Sgt George Mensah who released Issah Mobila to the military and claimed to have been present at the time Mobila was being tortured by the military told an Accra Fast Track High Court that he captured the torture in his report but was ordered by his superior to delete it because it was very 'incriminating' (Joyonline, cited in modernghana.com, March 23, 2010). Consequently, his rank was reduced, and another officer sacked after they appeared before a service inquiry for allegedly failing to take instructions from their bosses (The Ghanaian Chronicle, cited in allafrica.com, June 1, 2012). See also (ivybenson's blog). The fear factor was also employed against the Andani family and the media. One of its (Andani) spokespersons had this to say:

Anytime we had meeting somewhere, some unidentified vehicles will always be in the vicinity and telephone calls, threats and security were following you and there was one time an attempted poisoning... (interview, June 19, 2017).

In Tamale, hosts of local language (Dagbani) talk-show programs were severally invited by the BNI and warned to 'tone down' on their programs relating to the conflict:

BNI will call us and we were recording our programs so whenever they asked us about anything, we just produced a cassette to them... so they did that severally

but we were not perturbed...they will just call us...how people are not comfortable with us because the issues we are raising are very hot... (interview with respondent, July 16, 2002).

The above quotes from the Andani and the journalist epitomize the psychological warfare employed by the intelligence community in their quest to ensure favourable coverage from the media in the Dagbon conflict. This is exemplified in Bakir (2017, pp.245) who whiles identifying three key strategies employed by the intelligence community in the West to manipulate the press, mentions amongst others the use of psychological warfare techniques, based on forgeries, fabrications and deception. On the above occasion, the intelligence community did not only employ psychological warfare (by questioning the journalists on their discussions as well as threatening and following the Andani spokespersons around) but also deception to the effect that 'people were not comfortable with issues raised' by the radio stations because those issues 'were very hot'. I argue that this 'uncomfortable' claim was based on their value judgment and part of the psychological warfare in furtherance of their quest to control the media. Indeed, some other journalists I interviewed were unanimous on the BNI 'interfering' in their work using the fear factor (see also my experience with the BNI in my reportage of the Dagbon conflict in chapter four). The fear factor includes threats and a specific recommendation about how the audience should behave (see above). Here the intelligence community employed the fear factor 'to compel their own to be in line' with government's position on the Yaa Naa and Issah Mobila murders. Journalists and the Andanis were also threatened for making and publishing comments that could make government look bad in the eyes of the Ghanaian citizenry.

The intelligence community also employed facilitative communication. A special investigative team from the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of the Ghana Police Service announced a reward of 10 million old Ghana cedis or 1000 Ghana cedis (about 150 pounds) for anyone who could provide information leading to the arrest of the murderers of the Yaa Naa (Daily Graphic, April 2, 2002, pp.3). Facilitative communication is a communication desired to render a positive attitude towards a potential propagandist and it takes the form of gifts and financial aids amongst others, Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, pp. 27-29). Here the CID wanted to induce information about the Yaa Naa murder from the people using money as bait to facilitate it.

Another propaganda technique employed by the intelligence community was noticeable in the way and manner they communicated the 'uncovering' or 'return' of the severed arm and head of the Yaa Naa to the Gbewah palace. The leader of the 'crack investigation team', David Asante Apeatu who lead intelligence officers to Yendi to investigate the issue claimed that the severed head and arm of the Yaa Naa were uncovered a few days later at the same

spot they were severed on March 27, 2002. This revelation to the pathologist who performed autopsy on the body of the Yaa Naa did not state who brought the 'body parts' of the late king even though the palace was guarded by the police and military under 24/7 and under dusk to dawn curfew (see Mahama, 2009, pp.134). The area had also been declared a restricted area by government (see chapter six). Yet the intelligence officers who were in Yendi to investigate the issue had no clue about how the severed head and arm of the late king got to that spot. Mahama (2009) was later to lament:

> Nobody saw the head "walking" or "flying" to that place. But from the day of decapitation up to the seventh day when the head was found "sitting" or lying exactly where it had been severed from the body of the Ya-na, soldiers and police were on guard duty 24 hours. Further curfew had been in place from 6pm to 6am during the seven days (pp.134).

He further stated:

> The government want us the Andani family …to believe this fantastic fable. Government and security services certainly know how the head and arm of the Ya-na got to the Gbewah palace. They also know where "they" spent the seven days and with whom they spent the seven days and who took the arm and head back to the Gbewah palace (ibid).

An Andani chief also had this to say:

> Apeatu was the same person who reported to the army officer that was taken from the 37 military hospital to perform autopsy…He reported to him that they had found on the night of 31st March the severed arm and the head of the king. How could that happen? It appears to me that Apeatu knew where they were and if this did not come to the government with excitement because that was a clear lead to establish those who were part of the plan then it makes me believe that government sent a team to bury rather than expose the truth (interview, June 19, 2017).

The inability (or failure) of the intelligence community to disclose how the severed arm and head of the Yaa Naa got to the spot was claimed by Mahama and the Andani chief above as a scheme to bury the truth. Bakir et al. contend that deception through lying arises when one makes a statement that is known or suspected to be untrue in order to mislead (2018, pp.22). Here their claim was not only suspected by the Andanis to be untrue but also was highly unlikely to be true. I submit that there was no way anybody could have returned the severed arm and head without the security noticing because the area was cordoned off by the security 24/7 from the very day the Yaa Naa was murdered. Can it therefore be argued that the investigators lied through deception about how Yaa Naa's 'body parts' were

uncovered? This is arguably a clear case of black propaganda, disinformation and deception. Black propaganda is where the source of an information is concealed or credited to a false authority and spread lies, including creative deceit, Jowett and O'Donnell (2012, pp.17-23). I further submit that the intelligence community concealed the identity of the one or those who returned the severed arm and head and credited it to an unknown person. It is also an example of deception because deception arises with an effort by a propagandist to cause a target (propagandee) to believe in something that is not true, (see chapter two). The intelligence community wanted the Andanis and the rest of the Ghanaian population to believe as Mahama (2009) puts it 'this fantastic fable' (see above) that the head and arm suddenly appeared on that spot. One can also premise this on Wardle and Derakhshan (2017, pp.5-6) definition of disinformation where false information is knowingly shared to cause harm. Here again the intelligence community arguably lied to derail the cause of justice, thus causing harm to the investigative process and consequently the rule of law.

The intelligence community also used censorship as a tool of propaganda. An Andani chief told me in an interview about how the BNI 'edited' some of their press statements 'that were considered sensitive by government' ahead of their media encounters, 'in one or two occasions we had our press conferences they looked at it and some parts were deleted' (interview, June 17, 2017). This was however not confined to the Andanis alone as an Abudu chief also in an interview told me about how the Abudus had their press statements 'checked' by the BNI ahead of their press conferences 'What I can remember, so many occasions they (Abudu youth) organized press conferences and it didn't come on just because BNI interrupted…' (Interview, May 25, 2002).

It is clear from the above discussion that the intelligence community did not record much propaganda as the government did. This is partly as a result of their 'service culture' in Ghana where they are not required to speak to journalists on security matters but rather report such matters to the political wing of government (the politicians). It can be argued that it was perhaps as a result of this 'service culture' that the former BNI Director, Owusu Forduor could not speak to or confirm media reports about the Gbewah palace disturbances in Yendi even though he knew what the security situation was at the time. His inability to speak (due to the service culture) further bolstered government's claim about the security situation that Yendi was calm, leading to the carnage. *This notwithstanding, their propaganda techniques have had serious implications for the rule of law, (see above) especially in the case of the uncovering of the severed head and arm of the late Yaa Naa.* Andani and Abudu propaganda and the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict are discussed below.

**5.5 Propaganda and the two royal gates**

I start this section with the following quotation from one of the seasoned journalists in Dagbon who has witnessed the crisis for over five decades:

> Nobody is prepared to speak the truth. The radio stations are constrained because they don't want to speak the truth, chiefs don't want to speak the truth and religious leaders don't want to speak the truth and that is what the issue of Dagbon is. It is a problem simply because nobody wants to speak the truth. Your truth depends on where you are. If you are an Andani you have Andani truth, the Abudus same the religious bodies are divided the politicians want to use the issue to garner votes (Interview, June 16, 2017).

The above submission epitomizes the critical role propaganda has played and continues to play in the Dagbon conflict by various groups in their quests to pursue their agendas. This section will however discuss Abudu and Andani propaganda (having already discussed the role politicians have played in propagandizing the conflict in the media).

**5.5.1 Andani Propaganda and the media reportage of the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict**

One of the striking propaganda techniques in the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict was the Andanis decision to put the Yaa Naa murder in doubt. After government announced the murder of the Yaa Naa, the Andani family led by Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama quickly dismissed government's announcement about the death of the king and said he was alive and recuperating from injury as a result of the attack on him. For details on this and its implications on propaganda see discussions on 4.3 in chapter four.

Another propaganda technique employed by the Andanis was the number of fatalities in the wake of the Yaa Naa murder. The Andanis claimed that 40 people died alongside the king in the attack, but this claim was rejected by government that initially maintained that 27 people were killed and later changed the figure to 31. Later at a news conference to react to government's While Paper on the Wuaku Commission report, the Andanis referred to the fatalities as 'All the thirty or so deaths were from the Andani side', (Ghanaweb.com, January 9, 2003). It is important to state however that there has been no unanimity on the actual number of deaths even though the figure of the Andanis was claimed by the NPP government to have been hyped. In addition, none of the figures released by the state institutions was near the figure provided by the Andanis making one question how they arrived at that higher figure (even though the state institutions also disputed in their figures). Was this a classic example of atrocity propaganda that was intended to win more sympathy for the Andanis?

### 5.5.2 Abudu propaganda and media reportage of the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict

The Abudus also engaged in atrocity propaganda by failing to admit any fatalities. Even though rumours were rife that they suffered casualties and fatalities and secretly buried their dead, it was not reported in the media because verification was very difficult due to accessibility issues to the area. This was coupled with journalists' fear for their lives (see chapter four). Indeed. all the fatality figures provided by government, the military and the Wuaku Commission were from the Andani side of the conflict. Even though the Abudus held news conferences later, they never spoke about fatalities. However, in an interview I had with one of the secretaries to the Abudus as part of my data collection, he claimed that they also suffered deaths and injuries and claimed the media did not focus on that:

> The media as at that time were not fair to the Abudu royal family. All their reports were geared towards the idea that the Abudus murdered the Yaa Naa but the issue wasn't murder but rather a fight between two families…the reporting was geared towards one side just because the other side had much casualty so they (the media) were not fair…Oh yes, some Abudus died and they were more than three. As for casualty, a lot of them had casualties (Interview, June 11, 2017).

Even though they held media briefings, the Abudus failed to mention their losses. Was their decision to hide casualty figures at the heat of the conflict intended to demonstrate how heroic they were having killed scores of Andanis but 'remained unhurt'? One of the survivors of the Gbewah palace attack and an Andani perhaps has an answer:

> Frankly speaking, if the Abudus said none of them died I will say it is a fallacy because they are trying to say they defeated the Yaa-Naa meanwhile much people from their side also died, even at the point as we were in the main pavilion, one of us came out and they were exchanging guns (gunshots) you could see most of them falling down as a result… I can confirm that more than 20 people were seen falling from that shooting (Interview, June 30, 2017).

His claim on Abudus casualty figures and that of the Abudus secretary's claim above are conflicting and that further demonstrates the level of propaganda these two factions employed in communicating the number of casualties and fatalities in the Yaa Naa palace attack. Another propaganda technique employed in the conflict is how the Abudus have successfully 'crowned' the eldest son of Abdulai IV, Abdulai Mahamadu as 'Bolin Lana'. Bolin Lana is a chieftaincy title and given to the eldest son of a Yaa Naa who *is not a chief at the time of the death of his father*. This enables the eldest son to see his father before burial (as he cannot see his dead father as an ordinary man, according to tradition). He then

assumes the position of acting Yaa Naa until his father's funeral is performed and a new Yaa Naa installed. 'Bolin Lana's father Abdulai IV died in 1988 not as a Yaa Naa but as a former Yaa Naa having been removed as Yaa Naa earlier in 1974 by the Ollenu committee because of wrongful ascension to the throne. This verdict was upheld by Ghana's Supreme Court ruling in 1986 (See chapter one). Abdulai Mahamadu's status cannot therefore be likened to a Bolin Lana since a Bolin Lana can only be the son of a Yaa Naa who died in office. The Abudus' continues reference to him as such is therefore an example of glittering generality-according him a status that is not his status. It is also an act of deception as he is being portrayed as a chief the fact of which is not true. The Andanis and Abudus propaganda is not limited to deception and atrocity propaganda alone. Even more apparent is their argument about the status of Abdulai IV as former Yaa Naa (based on the 1986 Supreme Court ruling) and the performance of his funeral.

### 5.5.3 'Yaa Naa' or 'former Yaa Naa'-the case of Abdulai IV and its propaganda

One of the issues fuelling propaganda of the Dagbon conflict is the Supreme Court ruling of 1986 on the status of Abdulai IV. Having upheld the ruling of the Ollenu Committee's report (see chapter one) the Supreme Court proceeded to issue consequential orders one of which stated thus:

> Having regard to the Dagomba Constitution that deskinment is unknown in (Dagbon), all persons who have ever occupied the Nam of Yendi shall without regard to how they ceased to be Ya Na be regarded as former Ya-Nas. Consequently, their sons do qualify for appointment to the gate skins of Savulugu, Karaga and Mion (Tsikata and Seini, 2004, pp.39).

This consequential order has arguably contributed significantly to the propaganda and perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict and provided a platform for the two gates to explain the 'order' differently. The Andanis continue to maintain that the concept of 'former Yaa Naa'…'with the conferred rights and privileges was conceived in a scheme of delicate balances to promote peace and reconciliation and not to set up a dual authority' (See Yaa Naa's letter to Provisional National Defence Council (P.N.D.C.) Regional Secretary, John Bawa, October 19, 1988). The Abudus on the other hand argued that the order meant that Abdulai IV was a Yaa Naa and must be accorded all rights and privileges of a Yaa Naa (see Abudus' letter to Yaa Naa Yakubu II, May 19, 2000). These rights included his burial and funeral rites and installation of his regent at the Gbewah palace.

The Abudus position on former Yaa Naa Abdulai IV's funeral was inconsistent as evidence abounded that they agreed to perform his funeral at his family house and not at the Gbewah palace only to make a 'U turn' later after his burial. A letter by P.N.D.C. Secretary, John Bawah addressed to the Yaa Naa Yakubu II reads:

With regards to the agreement that the funeral celebrations should take place in former Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai's family house, which is subject of your letter dated 19th October 1988, I wish to say that the decision was immediately conveyed to the bereaved family through the Mion Lana and they agreed. The bereaved family led by Karaga na, Mion Lana and Tolon na agreed that after the burial in Katinidu (Royal Mausoleum) the remaining funeral rites shall not be performed in the palace. They stated that the rites shall be performed in the family house of former Ya Na Mahamadu Abdulai... (P.N.D.C. letter, October 25, 1988).

The letter further states:

... the story related in your letter that the bereaved family is planning to (a) celebrate the funeral in the palace (b) request you to vacate the palace for the purpose is not only preposterous but also destructive of the whole purpose of reconciliation (ibid).

Even though the P.N.D.C. government earlier intervened for Abdulai IV's body to be interred at the royal mausoleum (katini duu), it stated that it would not support Abudus moves to remove Yaa Naa Yakubu II from the palace to perform former Yaa Naa Abdulai IV's funeral. This was when the Yaa Naa expressed concerns to that effect (Ibid). The insistence of the Abudus to perform the funeral of Abdulai IV at the Gbewah palace (See 5.1 above) only portrays them as a disingenuous faction that employed deception to achieve their desired intent. Was their initial agreement not to perform the funeral at the palace a ploy to persuade the political authorities and the Yaa Naa to allow for Abdulai IV's body to be interred at the palace? The Yaa Naa Yakubu II had indicated that he was opposed to the Abudus request to perform Abdulai IV's funeral at the palace (See John Bawah's letter to Yaa Naa above). His decision to allow for the internment of the remains of Abdulai IV at the palace was contingent on that position (ibid). However, once he was buried there, the Abudus insisted that activities relating to his funeral and installation of his regent be conducted there. They argued their stands based on the Supreme Court ruling that Abdulai IV was a former Yaa Naa. The fact that they eventually succeeded in performing all the rites at the Gbewah palace (courtesy the final peace road map by the Committee of Eminent Chiefs) shows how tactical the Abudus are in negotiating their interests. Given that they changed their position from *not to perform the funeral of Abdulai IV at the palace* (before his burial) to demanding to perform it (after his burial), it shows how they employed deception to achieve their desired intent. T*he fact that part of the reason for the murder of the Yaa Naa was because of Abdulai IV's funeral performance at the Gbewah palace (See 5.1 above) and that the Abudus used the Supreme Court ruling to back their demands for his*

*funeral performance at the palace show how the court ruling has contributed to propaganda and chaos and in no doubt to the present crisis.*

Statement by the Supreme Court that 'deskinment is unknown in Dagbon' is even being contested by historical facts. Dahamani Kulkarijie a sitting Yaa Naa was driven away by the Germans in 1899 (Mahama, 2009, pp.38). In a letter to the Committee of Eminent Kings, the chief custodian of Dagbon, the Kuga naa wrote:

> Yaa Naa Alhassani, the biological father of Yaa Na Abdulai II sowed a seed of discord when he caused the deskinment of Yaa Naa Dahamani Kulkarijie. The ramification of that breach of custom is the latter annulment of former Yaa Naa Mahamadu Abdulai by soldiers. Otherwise Dagbon could still maintain the belief that there is no deskinment in Dagbon (October 27, 2006).

The soldiers above take the case of a military regime under General I. K. Acheampong (see chapter one) that set up the Ollenu committee (whose report ousted Abdulai IV from power in 1974, a report which was later upheld by the Supreme Court in 1986). The above statement by the Kuga naa clearly shows that prior to the Supreme Court ruling in 1986 there was precedence that deskinment was in fact known in Dagbon even though it is a breach of Dagbon custom. Whether the Supreme Court failed to consider the above fact, or its attention was not drawn to it is another matter.

## 5.6 Conclusion

Conclusively, it can be argued that the use of propaganda by governments, the military the intelligence community and the Abudus and Andanis in the media reportage of Ghana's Dagbon chieftaincy conflict cannot be discounted. Propaganda took the form of lies, misinformation, disinformation, deception, facilitative communication, denial and deception through lying. The rest were censorship as tool for propaganda, intimidation and threats of journalists, frames as propaganda tool and the use of 'word game' like the fear factor, transfer, name calling, glittering generality and plain folks. Amongst these propaganda techniques, lies and deception through lying were widespread, especially in the use of government propaganda. However, whereas government propaganda dominated in almost all the above techniques, military propaganda and intelligence community propaganda were less prevalent but noticeably significant just like propaganda by the conflicting factions. Consequently, propaganda by the factions, the governments, the military and the intelligence community has had far reaching implications on media reportage of the conflict (see chapter eight). Propaganda of the media functions with censorship of the media. In the following chapter I look at censorship of the media in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict from 2002 to 2019.

# CHAPTER SIX

## CENSORSHIP AND THE MEDIA

### 6.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at censorship of the media by government, the military and the intelligence community in the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict. There are different types of censorship, including security, religious, moral and political censorship. However, this chapter will examine security censorship of the media since that constitutes one of the main themes this research is investigating. In working to ensure favourable coverage from the media, governments, the military and the intelligence community collectively imposed wide ranging prohibitions against the media in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict as discussed below.

### 6.1 Government Censorship and the media

Moore (2013, pp.46) posits that censorship is generally understood to be the official suppression or prohibition of forms of expression (see more in chapter two). This chapter investigates the use of censorship against the media by the NPP regime following the Yaa Naa murder. The first censorship measure employed by government was recorded even before the murder of Yaa Naa Yakubu II that reignited the Dagbon conflict. Government officials' denial of JOY NEWS report (see chapter five) and accusation of mischief against them for announcing that there were disturbances at the Yaa Naa's palace in Yendi ahead of the fire festival is a clear example of suppression of dissent. Narrating how they covered the conflict, JOY NEWS wrote as thus '...Despite the warning signals, government officials still insisted and even broadcast on national radio that Yendi was calm...Government rather accused *JOY NEWS* of mischief' (myjoyonline.com, March 30,2002).

Government's denial of the story was therefore equal in effect to 'deleting' the story and according to Webster censorship includes 'deleting anything considered objectionable' (see chapter two). Government's censorship of the media however intensified afterwards. In response to media reports about security blunder and alleged involvement of some government officials in the crisis, government adopted pre-censorship and post-censorship techniques against the media as discussed below.

### 6.1.1 Pre-Censorship (suppression of dissent, polling and denial of access)

Pre-censorship includes suppression of dissent, pooling and denial or lack of access (see chapter two). Government's first statement after the murder of the Yaa Naa was also accompanied with  suppression of dissent-a pre-censorship measure-as it asked the media to 'show the fullest restraint and avoid any inflammatory or speculative reporting that could further inflame the situation', (Daily Graphic, March 28, 2002, pp.1). Journalists who

were attached to the first government delegation to visit Yendi 72 hours after the incident endured suppression of dissent when they were warned by government officials not to write anything that was to be considered objectionable by government, 'they warned us when we were in the flight that whoever reports anything that we saw will be sanctioned because they will let the military and the police follow us', (Interview with reporter, May 17, 2017). It is not only in the Dagbon conflict that African governments suppressed dissent during conflict situations. In the 1970s in Zimbabwe during the 'Matabeleland conflict, government placed a ban on reporting' the conflict. Foreign journalists found reporting from 'the sealed security zone' were deported (Sikosana, 2011, pp.46). Situations like the above have compelled Ansah (1998, pp.9) to conclude that in Africa 'There has been a systematic suppression of all organized opposition and the elimination of all forms of organized dissent...'. Another journalist who reported the Dagbon conflict said 'we were part of the government delegation just like any other media house,...Normally if you are found to be speaking to other sources other than the official sources, you will be cautioned...'(Interview, June 24, 2017).

The above was a clear case of access denial as journalists were confined to speaking only to government designated sources but access denial was not confined to news reports alone. Journalists were also warned not to take pictures because it would 'offend the sensibilities of viewers' (see under 4.5 in chapter four). This is grounded in Knightley's treatise on access denial when he observed that during the Iraqi war of 2003 'only two photographers were allowed by the British Army onto the field, both of them army officers tasked to compile historical records only' (2004, pp.105).

Some journalists, including myself still went outside the designated sources of government and reported based on our observations and responses from independent sources. See 1.3 on how I reported from the Gbewah palace 72 hours after the king's murder. Reports like this that was later confirmed by the Wuaku Commission as argued earlier in chapter five must have further incensed government and the following day, government issued a statement announcing more censorship measures. The Information Minister, Jake Obetsebe Lamptey 'directed media houses to submit all news reports emanating from or about the area affected by the State of Emergency to the ministry for vetting' (Daily Graphic, April 1, 2002, pp.1). The statement which was issued on March 30, 2002 said, 'I am with the authority of the President serving you notice...you should clear any other news from Dagbon affairs with this ministry' (ibid). Asking the media to clear reports with the ministry was suppression of dissent. In addition to this, the statement evoked the country's emergency powers act of 1994 (the use of regulation) to back government's action (ibid). This is also a clear example of suppression of dissent and can situate in Knightley's discussion on censorship on how the British government used regulations to censor the media during World War 1. See below how *Daily Graphic* reported the censorship measure.

**Daily Graphic**

GHANA'S BIGGEST SELLING NEWSPAPER

MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2002. NO. 148485 PRICE: ¢1,500

'Govt will get to bottom of matter'

THE President, Mr J. A. Kufuor, has ordered a full-scale operation to identify, apprehend and bring to quick justice the perpetrators of the heinous crimes in the Yendi conflict.

In his address to the nation last Thursday, he said investigations into the matter have already begun.

The President said over the last few days, there has been extreme violence, resulting in many deaths in and around Yendi and indicated that "because of these events, I have declared a State of Emergency in the whole of the Dagbon Traditional Area. I have also dispatched the security services to stabilise the situation there.

He explained that the government had to take these measures to preserve public peace and to protect life and property, adding that, "reinforcements from both the Police and the Armed Forces have been deployed across the entire region".

Mr Kufuor also made it clear that anyone or group that might try, by word or deed, to take

• Continued on P. 3

# CLEAR ALL REPORTS
## • On Yendi conflict, says Information Minister

THE Ministry of Information and Presidential Affairs has directed media houses to submit all news reports emanating from or about the area affected by the state of emergency to the ministry for vetting.

A statement issued in Accra on Saturday and signed by the sector Minister, Mr Jake Obetsebi-Lamptey, made it clear that "unless you are reporting an official release from my office, you should clear any other news on Dagbon affairs with this ministry".

It reminded the media about the declaration of a state of emergency in the Dagbon areas of the Northern Region.

The statement said under the Emergency Powers Act of 1994, the President has the powers to censor any and all news emanating from or about the area affected by the state of emergency.

It said, "I am with the authority of the President serving you notice that unless you are reporting an official release from my office, you should clear any other news items on Dagbon affairs with this ministry".

The statement expressed regret about the fact that news items being broadcast by various radio stations are proving to be highly inflammatory.

It said, "Some are totally untrue, many more are ill-founded and/or ill-motivated speculation

and even in some cases where the reports are correct they are reports that are calculated to inflame the situation.

In an eight-point reminder to media practitioners, the statement said people's lives are in danger while the calm in the north is fragile and

• Continued on P. 3

• Jake Obetsebi-Lamptey — Information Minister

## Calm returns to Yendi

From Zakaria Alhassan, Yendi

LIFE is returning to normal at Yendi, two days after the hostilities between a number of lives, some of which have been buried at Sunbu, near Yendi.

The dead are to be buried at Yendi.

A military officer the Graphic spoke to intimated the guns used by the assailants in the conflict as very sophisticated as evidenced by the large bullet holes on the walls of the palace.

There is heavy military and police presence

whole of Dagbon is, however, still in force.

Meanwhile, the Presidential Team that was led by the Senior Minister, Mr J. H. Mensah, has met with leaders of both the Andani and Abudu gates at Yendi.

Members of the team included the Ministers of Information and Presidential Affairs, Jake Obetsebi-Lamptey; Food and Agriculture, Courage Quashigah; Tourism, Hawa Yakubu, and Local Government and Rural Development, Kwadwo Baah-Wiredu.

The rest were the Army Commander, Major General C. B. Yaache; the Officer Commanding the Northern Command,

R. K. Sarfo Kwarteng, among other commanding officers.

The Andani Gate was led by the Zohi Na, Mahamadu Salifu, while the chief linguist of the Abudu side, Iddrisu Iddi represented his people.

After both sides gave their side of the story, the Senior Minister explained that "our mission is not to judge the case or arrest anybody but to get the facts of the matter".

He said the two sides are the same people, notwithstanding their differences, and, therefore, asked them to use dialogue to iron out their differences.

The minister stressed that the law

Government's declaration of a censorship regime as reported by the *Daily Graphic*

The above censorship measure did not only enrage some journalists but also attracted swift response from the country's opposition that called on government to immediately withdraw the directive. The Minority Spokesperson on Communications, John Dramani Mahama (later President of Ghana 2012-2016) said the emergency powers of 1994 under which the minister claimed to have acted upon conferred no such power of censorship on the President neither does any provision of the constitution and that the 'directive was an attempt to present one-sided view of events on the Dagbon area and therefore cover up the

alleged inept handing of the crisis by the intelligence operatives…' (Daily Graphic, April 2, 2002).

Government said it was 'constitutional' (ibid). Government therefore set up a vetting committee to vet all stories on Dagbon and included the National Media Commission and the Security Services in the vetting committee (Daily Graphic, April 3, 2002)*. I argue that the observation by the minority came to pass as government used the censorship measure not only to reduce drastically further reportage of complacency on the part of the security and intelligence operatives but also allegedly covered up alleged murderers of the Yaa Naa.*

I premise my argument based amongst others on how government 'uncovered' the severed arm and head of the Yaa Naa at the Gbewah palace without convincing details on how they were 'uncovered' (see chapter five). The questions that beg for answers are where were the security personnel when the person or persons returned the 'body parts' since they could not move by themselves? How possible was it that somebody could return them without the security noticing since the palace was under a 24-hour guard and under dusk to dawn curfew? Can it be argued that government knew where the 'body parts' were coming from and only covered it up? *Can it further be argued that a call for and adherence to that call for proper investigations into the return of the 'body parts' could have unmasked those behind the murders?*

Government also employed the use of injunction as a censorship tool. Government officials accused of masterminding the murder of the Yaa Naa sued for libel three Andani spokespersons, seeking amongst others a Fast Tract High Court order to restrain the defendants from making further 'damaging' comments about the plaintiffs. The plaintiffs were the National Security Advisor, Major General Hamidu, the Interior Minister, Malik Alhassan Yakubu, a staff at the National Security, Major Sulemana and one Mohammed Aminu. The defendants were Dr. Adam Nasser and Professor Wayo Seini both from the University of Ghana and Dr. Yahuza Gomda, a veterinary doctor (see ghanaweb.com, December 29, 2003). One of the Andani spokespersons had this to say about the injunction 'we were told to stop making those comments…they were injunctions on us not to, it was not only court injunctions but also physical threats and some very extreme plots…' (Interview, June 19, 2017). I argue that the injunction was aimed at curtailing the defendants' right to expression. The defendants lost the case and 500, 000 cedis (about 95,000 pounds) damages awarded against each one of them. The court verdict thus 'silenced' the defendants. Government censorship measures were not confined to pre-censorship alone. In fact, journalists were attached to government officials throughout the early days of the conflict and restrictions imposed on them as discussed below.

**6.1.2 Government and 'attachment' of journalists as a technique of Censorship**

Journalists were attached to government sources and were often fed; this rendered their reports susceptible to censorship. A correspondent of a private newspaper had this to say:

> ...what happens is that transport is arranged by government with assistance from the military; they arrange transport for reporters to the conflict arena sometimes food is arranged for the reporters and other things are facilitated for them to feel comfortable and to report (interview, June 24, 2017).

His explanation is 'partly' situated in Frederick Palmer of the *New York Herald* recounting his 'ordeal' in reporting World War I:

> ...we lived in a mess with our *conducting officers* paying for our quarters, food...and having written our dispatches turned them over to the officers for *censorship*...the important items were those we left out and that made us public liars (Hallin, 1989, pp.127).

Like Palmer above, the result of this attachment was that government controlled the way the journalists reported. 'They (government officials) will say talk to this man, talk to that man, talk to this woman, talk to that young man so your hands are tied sort of...' (Interview, June 24, 2017).

However, unlike their Western counterparts, the Ghanaian journalists' case was different. Western journalists go through embedding by spending days and weeks and months with 'their conducting officers' at the frontline, getting attached to army units, obeying security ground rules and receiving protection and food, shelter and accommodation from the military. The Ghanaian journalists on the other hand spent only a day per each visit to the troubled Yendi township with 'their conducting officers'. Even though they also received protection and shared food with their conducting officers they were not accommodated and there were no ground rules to obey let alone being expelled for disregarding the rules. The condition under which the Western media is embedded is therefore markedly different from what pertained in the Dagbon conflict. Even though both military work to secure favourable coverage the methodologies are not the same. *Consequently, embedding technique was not used in the Dagbon case as it is being used by Western governments against the Western media. Under the circumstance, I argue that journalists reporting the Dagbon conflict were 'attached' to their conducting officers but not embedded. This method of attachment is part of the routine in reporting across journalistic practices (see chapter two for more treatises on embedding).* Government and post-censorship of the media is discussed next.

### 6.1.3 Government and Post-Censorship of the media (threats, intimidation and harassment)

Post-censorship of the media includes intimidation, threats and harassment of the media during access (see chapter two) in order to ensure favourable reportage in war and conflict situations. Journalists attached to the first government delegation to Yendi from Accra were intimidated and harassed on their way back to Accra via a military aircraft. One of the reporters said:

> … and I remember whilst we were in the aircraft going back to Accra, the then information minister and then one person who was his aid ordered all the photo reporters to delete every picture that they took in Yendi (interview, May 17, 2017).

Apart from the order to delete their pictures the journalists were also ordered to submit their reports to the Ministry of Information for vetting before publication in order not to aggravate the situation '…inside the plane, they were taking peoples' stories…when we write our stories we should let them see before it goes (to print) so that it doesn't aggravate the situation' (ibid). The above measure preceded the official declaration of censorship by the information minister as discussed under pre-censorship. These measures from government officials, exemplified a post-censorship measure as reporters were ordered to submit reports on their return to Accra after visiting Yendi. Intimidation and harassment of the media is not confined to Ghana alone. In fact, this tactic is exemplified in (Ochilo, 1993, pp.31) where in Malawi, some journalists have either been detained or fired for writing critical editorials. Similar harassments have been recorded in other African countries such as Angola, Rwanda, Somalia, Togo, Zaire and Ivory Coast (ibid).

At the local level and in Yendi a government minister verbally attacked the Yendi Traditional Council Secretary for failing to edit portions of a speech delivered by the Andanis to welcome the then Vice president, Alhaji Aliu Mahama:

> On one occasion when the then vice president Alhaji Aliu Mahama visited Yendi, I read a press statement and after that the then Regional Minister attacked the traditional secretary for failing to edit it so most of the things that I said were not covered (interview, June 17, 2017).

Military censorship of the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict is discussed next.

**6.2 Military Censorship and the media in the Dagbon conflict**

Military censorship of the media in Ghana is different from what pertains in the Western world (see chapter two). As a result, military censorship of the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict was different from the way the media are censored in the Western world in their reportage of conflicts and wars. This is due to a multiplicity of factors as discussed below.

Firstly, unlike their Western counterparts who travel around the world to report wars and conflicts, many as 'embeds', Ghanaian media are mostly confined to local wars (presumably for financial reasons). Their reporting of the Dagbon conflict was no exception as far as finance was concerned. This claim is supported by a journalist who reported the Dagbon conflict, 'Ideally the media houses do not have their own transport so what happens is that transport is arranged by the government with the assistance of the military command...' (Interview, June 24, 2017). Thus, whereas their Western counterparts can travel to the front line, the Ghanaian media could not travel to Yendi due to lack of transport. The military in the West go to wars outside their countries and continent and censor the media to 'win the propaganda war' or 'maintain moral of their forces' or 'maintain domestic support for the war'. The Ghanaian military do not do that and the only occasions they travel are for 'peace keeping' either under the United Nations or under West Africa military command. The need to embed journalists to write in support of a war or court citizens' support for the war is therefore a non motivator as the Ghanaian military's role is often to stop the crisis and keep the peace (a duty they failed in the Dagbon case). In addition, the nature, duration and conduct of the Dagbon conflict (that is under study) are different from wars that are reported by the Western media. The Dagbon conflict lasted for only three days as compared to wars reported by the Western media that last for weeks, months and sometimes years. Given the above, the two (Ghanaian media and the military) were not in any noticeable position to argue over censorship while the three-day attack on the palace was going on.

It is significant to also state that immediately after the incident in Yendi government took over the whole 'scheme of things' because of the political implications of the murder of the Yaa Naa (see chapter five). The military therefore operated directly under the ambit of the politicians in government and not solely under the command of the military high command. This situation is hardly existent in the reportage of wars by Western correspondents who are directly censored by the military command at the front line. Consequently, even though the military censored the Ghanaian media, the censorship was secured in conjunction with government and occurred only after the Yaa Naa was killed and hostilities between the Abudus and the Gbewah palace seized. Never-the-less the military on a few occasions directly censored the media through regulation. *Much of the military censorship of the media will therefore be discussed in the light of their collaboration with government to ensure*

*favourable coverage of the Dagbon conflict. This is important in discussing and understanding military censorship of the Ghanaian media in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict.* Military and pre-censorship of the media is discussed below.

### 6.2.1 Military and Pre-Censorship of the media (suppression of dissent and denial of access)

Soon after the murder of the Yaa Naa the army was deployed in the Gbewah palace area and the area declared a restricted area by the state. This blocked access to the media in the area. In situations like the Gbewah palace attack, the media would often visit the area to give a graphic description to their audiences about the current situation there after the carnage and possibly speak to eyewitnesses (if any). The media was however denied that opportunity. This is an example of denial of access and even though it was a government led state decision, it was the military that conducted it. This partly situates in Knightley's (2004, pp.105) treatise on access denial during the Iraqi war of 2003 where the media was denied access and that 'only two photographers were allowed by the British Army onto the field, both of them army officers tasked to compile historical records only...'. For Allan and Sreedhaan (2017, pp.102), during the wars in Iraq (2003), Libya (2011) and Syria (on-going) 'accessibility was always an issue amidst the chaos of violence', owing to a strategy of 'lock out or lock down imposed on journalists by the state and military authorities'. Declaring the Gbewah palace a restricted area was therefore part of the strategy of 'lock down or lock out' imposed by the state and military authorities to deny the media access to the Gbewah palace.

Another example of denial of access was the military command's decision not to make available a report of the military service inquiry into the death in military custody of Issah Mobila, an Andani sympathizer (see military propaganda in chapter five). The military had to wait seven years before they were compelled by a court to comment on the report and that clearly shows the extent to which the military denied the media access to the report. Even though the military released the report through a high court subpoena, sensitive information about who ordered the arrest of Mobila (which many Ghanaians are keen to know) is still not available to the media and consequently to the general public at the time of writing up this dissertation in 2019.

The military also engaged in suppression of dissent using government regulation. The Army Commander, Major General Clayton Yaache, reminded journalists of 'the State of Emergency' in the area and that the uneasy calm must not be taken for granted, (Daily Graphic, April 2, 2002 pp.1-3). This exemplified suppression of dissent, using an existing regulation like the 'State of Emergency' to gag the media from reporting issues that were to be considered objectionable. This lays claim to Carruthers' treatise on censorship that both Germany and Britain 'used the official secrecy acts' to impose 'wide ranging prohibitions'

against the media in World War 1 (2011, pp.50). Military and inducement technique are the next line of discussion.

### 6.2.2 Military and Inducement Technique

The military in conjunction with government also used inducement as a technique of censorship against the media in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict. Journalists who followed government and military personnel throughout their visits to the Dagbon area were attached and provided with transport and food-an example of inducement as censorship tool. See Frederick Plamer's 'confession' as captured by Hallin (1989, pp.127) above. A reporter who covered the Dagbon conflict told me about experiences akin to Plamer's in the media's engagement with government and military personnel:

> Ideally the media houses do not have their own transport, so what happens is that transport is arranged by the government with the assistance of the military command...sometimes food is arranged for the reporters and other things are facilitated for them to feel comfortable and to report (Interview with respondent, June 24, 2017).

Once the media were provided with transport and food, they were instructed to 'talk to this man, talk to that man, and talk to this woman...' (ibid). The action of dictating who the media should talk to by government and the military is exemplified in Keeble (2017, pp.11) who says the system of pooling reporters with frontline troops since (after) the Vietnam War has served to reinforce the corporate media's role as 'propagandists for the state in times of conflict'. I now discuss military and post-censorship of the media.

### 6.2.3 Military and Post-Censorship of the media (threats, intimidation and harassment)

There was no identifiable post-censorship of the media by the military in the media's reportage of the Dagbon conflict. Threats, harassment and intimidation were not employed against the media by the military after the media reported their stories. Having reported the conflict myself, I did not experience or see any of such technique of post censorship against the media. The journalists I interviewed also did not make any reference to that. I now discuss intelligence community censorship of the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict.

### 6.3. Intelligence Community censorship of the media

The intelligence community also imposed censorship on the media even though limited as compared to government as discussed below. Like government and the military, the intelligence community also did not embed journalists but did not attach them as government and the military did. They often dealt with the media 'undercover' unlike their

military counterparts and government officials. They employed the techniques of denial of access and suppression of dissent as discussed below.

### 6.3.1 Pre-Censorship of the Media (suppression of dissent and denial of access)

The intelligence community employed the technique of suppression of dissent against the 'feuding factions', in their quest to communicate their grievances to the general public through the media. An Andani chief and spokesperson had this to say; '...in one or two occasions we had our press conferences they (Bureau of National Investigation-BNI) looked at it and some parts were deleted', (interview, June 17, 2017). Another Andani sub chief said when Vice President Aliu Mahama paid a visit to the Gbewah palace 'we were asked to submit the speech that we will be reading to the BNI to scrutinize it before it will be read at the event', (May 23, 2007). This was clearly an example of suppression of dissent (see above under government censorship). It was however not confined to the Andanis alone as the Abudus also had their press statements 'checked' by the BNI before publication 'What I can remember, so many occasions they (Abudu youth) organized press conferences and it didn't come on just because BNI interrupted...' (interview, May 25, 2002). The intelligence community also denied access to the media which is one of the pre-censorship measures. A respondent said:

> If you go to the BNI they tell you that any signal that they pick from the ground they don't speak to the media, they give it to the appropriate quarters...they mention their bosses at headquarters (in Accra) (May 17, 2017).

When I reported to a BNI officer about an NPP/Abudu youth hiding a gun in a kiosk in a location in Tamale and after failing to retrieve the gun and arrest the culprit, the BNI officer refused to explain why he could not take action (see chapter four). The BNI's attitude above is clearly an example of denial of access that lays claim to Bakir (2017, pp.245) that the intelligence community will engage in 'withholding information or deliberately refusing to confirm or deny information...'. In the above situation, the BNI withheld information from the media, thus denying them access. The intelligence community also employed post censorship techniques which is next in this discussion.

### 6.3.2 Post- Censorship and the Media (threats, intimidation and harassment)

Threats and intimidation were also employed against the Andani family and the media. One of three Andani spokespersons who were found 'guilty of defaming' some government officials (see above) had this to say 'Anytime we had meetings ...unidentified vehicles will always be in the vicinity and telephone calls, threats and security were following...one time an attempted poisoning... (interview, June 19, 2017).

In Tamale, hosts of local language (Dagbani) talk-show programs were severally invited by the BNI and warned to 'tone down' on their programs relating to the conflict:

> BNI will call us and we were recording our programs so whenever they asked us about anything, we just produce a cassette to them... so they did that severally but we were not perturbed...they will just call us...how people are not comfortable with us because the issues we are raising are very hot... (interview with respondent, July 16, 2002).

Still in Tamale a host of English talk show programme said 'BNI will invite you...caution you so sometimes in Ghana the fear for the security, especially the BNI, you wouldn't want to say certain things and at the end you will be behind bars (June 7, 2017).

The above responses from the Andani and the journalists epitomize the psychological warfare employed by the intelligence community in their quest to ensure favourable coverage from the media in the Dagbon conflict. This is supported by Bakir (2017, pp.245) who while identifying three key strategies employed by the intelligence community in the West to manipulate the press, mentions amongst others the use of psychological warfare techniques, based on forgeries, fabrications and deception. On the above occasions, the intelligence community employed psychological warfare by questioning the media on their discussions as well as threatening and following the Andani spokespersons around. They also used fabrication to the effect of their claim (without providing convincing evidence as I was also invited) that 'people were not comfortable with issues raised' by the radio stations because those issues 'were very hot'. The intelligence community also manipulated the media as discussed below.

### 6.3.3 Manipulation

The intelligence community also manipulated the media using 'no sourcing' stories. A clear case is the *Daily Graphic* report of (April 3, 2002, pp.1) with the headline 'Reports were vetted in 1994', (during a tribal conflict between Konkombas and Dagombas). This was in response to the country's minority's call on government to reconsider its decision to vet stories from Yendi regarding the conflict (see Daily Graphic, April 2, 2002, pp.1). The writer's name (by-line) was not included in the news report. Was the report deliberately placed by the intelligence officers to support government's censorship measures in the media's reportage of the Dagbon conflict? This is exemplified in Keeble's argument that sometimes the intelligence community 'plant intelligence agency propaganda stories on willing journalists who disguise their origin from readers' (2017, pp.14). Keeble's position is supported by Hillebrand (2012, pp.704) who notes that much of what is known about 'modern intelligence agencies has in fact been placed in the public domain deliberately by the agencies themselves...often using the medium of the press'. Informed by Keeble above,

it can be argued that the intelligence community planted the story in disguise with the sole aim of supporting government's action.

The intelligence community further planted stories with willing journalists who disguised the origin of the stories from their readers. A private newspaper correspondent said:

> ...you had friends from the intelligence service so you use your contacts to verify the information you were getting from the government side and we saw that they were vast differences from the information we got from the intelligence and the government side so sometimes in our reportage, we try to quote anonymous sources just to water down the information from the government side...they gave information to trusted media people that they were comfortable with (Interview, June 24, 2017).

Is the above response by the journalist not a perfect example of manipulation of the media? According to Keeble (2017, pp.14), the intelligence community 'plant stories with willing journalists who disguise their origin from readers'. The respondent revealed they used anonymous sources in quoting information from the intelligence community thus 'disguise their origin from readers', as argued above by Keeble. Dover and Goodman (2009, pp.18) argue that even though the media will often see this as scoop, the intelligence agencies have 'good reasons for the release of the particular piece of information at a particular point in time and under particular circumstances. Again, informed by Keeble, Dover and Goodman above, I further submit that these journalists were participating in their own manipulation unknowingly, thinking they were 'getting scoop from their friends from the intelligence services'.

It is clear from the discussion above that the intelligence community censorship of the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict was very limited. The use of suppression of dissent, threats, psychological warfare and manipulation that constitutes pre and post censorship measures was prevalent albeit limited. The use of attachment of journalists was nonexistent, arguably due to their (intelligence community) service culture and method of operations (undercover investigations). The security agencies also collectively censured the media as can be argued below.

## 6.4. Security Agencies collective censorship of the media

A combination of three institutions of state-Government, Military and Intelligence Community in conjunction with other allied security services like the Ghana Customs Excise and Preventive Service (CEPS) that constitute the Regional Security Council (REGSEC) established a censorship desk at the Northern Regional Coordinating Council's offices. Media reports were being sent there for vetting in line with the Information Ministry's directive. A radio Ghana correspondent had this to say:

...the approved source was the Regional Coordinating Council; they were supposed to give us information which we used as such. Before one could get information on that subject matter, it was the REGSEC that was the source of information; they get the information and then distribute the information to us (interview, May 15, 2017).

Conclusively, the result of these censorship measures by government, the military, the intelligence community and REGSEC led to self censorship on the part of journalists in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict which is my next line of discussion.

## 6.5 Self Censorship

In view of the censorship measures by government, the intelligence community, the military and the REGSEC as indicated above, journalists covering the Dagbon conflict practiced self censorship in order to 'stay away from trouble'. A talk show host in Tamale had this to say about self censorship 'sometimes in Ghana the fear for the security, especially the BNI, you wouldn't want to say certain things and at the end you will be behind bars' (June 7, 2017). Another journalist who travelled with the first government delegation to Yendi on March 29, 2002 said even though he did not submit his reports to the Information Ministry as ordered by the minister, he 'suppressed the facts' while writing the story (interview, May 17, 2017). A management member of *North Star radio,* a private radio station in Tamale justified the practice of self censorship and offered the following treatise on censorship:

> ... there was self censorship. If you belonged to the media whose editorial policy reflected the way NPP saw things you saw things from that light. If on the other hand your media supported NDC you portrayed things in the light of the NDC. So as far as I am concerned people did not speak genuinely. And as far as the Dagbon issue is concerned people did not look for genuineness but political interest and that was a censorship of some sort (interview, June 16, 2017).

He again said:

> It was difficult for one to speak the truth. if you were not careful and you spoke the truth you were attacked and depending on where you were if you were at safe grounds you could speak the truth and the vice versa... (June 16, 2017).

The consequence of this self censorship according to one of the journalists was that:

> We were only reporting what the government wanted us to report and most of the time what information they gave you sought to paint government in a very favourable light that they are on top of the issues... (Interview, June 24, 2017).

The above submissions cumulatively can lay claim to Carruthers' treatise on self censorship that in Britain and Germany during World War 1 'Many editors sought Press Bureau guidance on stories acquired from sources other than the official wire service which they feared might contravene the nebulous rules' and added '...this was voluntary self censorship...if in doubt, ask the censors became the editors' unwritten rule (2011, pp.51). Self censorship in Africa is not confined to journalists in Ghana alone as in Egypt during Hosni Mubarak's military-led regime, (1981-2011) journalists were 'apprehensive about what they said and wrote because 'you don't know what will hurt national security' (Mahmoud Saad, of *Al-Nahar TV*, quoted in *Guardian Africa Network*, 2015).

## 6.6 Overall Conclusion on Censorship

It is clear from the above discussion that censorship of the media by government, the military and intelligence community in the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict was apparent. Whereas government recorded pre-censorship and post-censorship measures there was no embedding technique even though journalists were attached and induced with food and transport. The military censorship measures in these categories were less broad with no post-censorship and embedding techniques. In the case of the intelligence community there were pre and post censorship techniques but no embedding technique of censorship. Even though journalists were often attached to government and military sources they were not embedded in the strict sense of the word and technique of embedding as their attachments only lasted a day per each visit to the troubled area. This is distinct from their Western counterparts who are normally attached to the military for weeks and months and compelled to obey security ground rules. This notwithstanding, censorship measures by government, the military and the intelligence community led to self censorship on the part of the media in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict. Given the above treatises on censorship, did the censorship measures trigger biases in the media's reportage of the Dagbon conflict? I choose to look at the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and the *Ghana News Agency* in Ghana to find answers to the above question (see methodology in chapter three for rational behind my choice of Daily Graphic and Ghana News Agency). The following chapter discusses media reportage of the Dagbon conflict.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

## MEDIA BIAS

### 7.0 Introduction

This chapter looks at media reportage of the Dagbon conflict. It first looks at biases by two influential state-owned media houses, the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and the *Ghana News Agency* (GNA)-a wire service-in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict (see chapter three for rationale for the choice of these two media houses). It also looks at how opinion leaders of the Abudu and Andani factions perceived media reportage of the conflict. This study finds that official/elite/government sources dominated the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict, and that the *Daily Graphic* newspaper was more biased in overall terms than the *Ghana News Agency*. The study also finds that both news outlets did not show much regard for peace journalism in their reportage of the conflict. It also finds that opinion leaders thought the media was generally biased in favour of elite sources and failed to do due diligence to background information in reporting the conflict.

### 7.1 Detecting Bias (Daily Graphic Newspaper and Ghana News Agency)

To detect media bias from the perspective of news reports by the *Ghana News Agency* and the *Daily Graphic,* I sampled (through purposive sampling technique) 227 hard news stories gathered on the conflict from 2002 to 2019; 111 from the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and 116 from the *Ghana News Agency* (see 3.5.3 for details on sampling framework)*.* Even though both state-owned, I realized the above two news portals had the most comprehensive archived stories on the conflict. The two also generated more and better examples of the concepts and techniques that I used to detect the biases (see below).

### 7.2 Findings and Discussion (*Ghana News Agency and Daily Graphic Newspaper)*

Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Bennett (1990) argue that opinions in the free Western media are 'constricted to the views of elite sources' and the media during war time produce 'propaganda rather than independent journalism' (cited in Hammond, 2017, pp.80). Goddard et al. (2008, pp.10) while supporting the above 'verdict' on the media attribute the situation to the media's excessive dependence on official sources for news amongst other factors. This is the exactitude of the reportage of the Dagbon conflict by the *Ghana News Agency* (GNA) and the *Daily Graphic newspaper* as seen below*.*

The findings show that media reports on the Dagbon conflict by the two news outlets were dominated by government/elite/official sources, followed by the Wuaku Commission's sittings. I provide below a quantitative analysis of how the story actors were sourced.

### 7.2.1 How story actors were sourced (Daily Graphic, 2002-2019)

Table One

| Story Actors | Number of stories (out of 111) | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Government/elite/official | 49 | 41.1% |
| Wuaku Commission | 21 | 17.7% |
| Eminent chief | 13 | 11.0% |
| Andanis | 13 | 11.0% |
| Abudus | 08 | 6.8% |
| Civil society | 07 | 5.9% |
| Religious groups | 03 | 2.6% |
| Political parties | 05 | 4.2% |
| Others | 0 | 0% |

The table shows that government/elite/official sources had more publicity than the other actors in the *Daily Graphic* securing 41.1% with political parties gaining only 2.6 % out of 111 stores sampled.

The *GNA* within the same period recorded 36.1% for government/elite/official sources with political parties recording the least with 3.4% out of 116 sampled. This government/elite/official sources dependency syndrome as held by Goddard et al. (2008, pp.10, Herman and Chomsky 1988, 2) arguably influenced the media outlets' reportage of the conflict, especially when access to the conflict area was difficult to access (see chapter four).

In using official/government/elite sources however the two media houses contacted the right sources and were appreciably neutral in quoting the sources, but government officials were given overwhelming prominence over other sources like the feuding factions. Attribution was however problematic as the two news portals either used wrong attributes for some of the story actors or concealed their sourcing or attribution. Some of the 'sensitive' official stories either had no by-lines or had 'blind attributes' through the use of 'sources close to' or 'according to a source'. They also showed lack of balance in story source as they relied more on government sources for the information to the disadvantage of the feuding factions; the Abudus and the Andanis. As I will demonstrate below the two news portals (even though not widespread) employed euphemism and exaggeration in some of their reports. They did not also show much regard for peace journalism in their coverage of the Wuaku Commission, a phenomenon suggestive of inadequate regard for conflict sensitive journalism. I provide below an analysis of the various categories of the other findings.

### 7.2.2 The use of exaggeration and euphemism: *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* (2002-2019)

Table Two:

| Code | Exaggeration | Percentages |
|------|-------------|-------------|
| Daily Graphic | 12 | 10.9% (Out of 111 stories) |
| Ghana News Agency | 16 | 13.8% (out of 116 stories) |

The above table shows that the *GNA* showed more bias in exaggeration and the use of euphemism, garnering 13. 8% from 116 stories as against the *Daily Graphic's* 10.9 % from 111 stories

The use of euphemism and exaggeration by these two media portals had implications for conflict sensitive journalism (see below). For instance this is how the *GNA* reported on verbal exchanges between the Abudus and the Andanis at the Wuaku Commission's sitting '...But for the timely intervention of security personnel, members of the two gates would have gone beyond the verbal exchanges and staged *'re-enactment of what happened in Yendi in March this year*...' (GNA, June 28, 2002).

The *Daily Graphic* while reporting the same event chronicled that:

> A *routine greeting* from a member of one of the feuding gates in the Yendi crisis
> to another in the rival gate sparked off trouble but for the timely intervention of
> the security personnel... (Daily Graphic, June 28, 2002).

Whiles the *GNA* was unfair in comparing the verbal exchange to 're-enactment' of the Yendi carnage-a magnification of the situation (exaggeration), the *Daily Graphic* labelled the cause of the exchange as 'routine'-a simplification of the situation (euphemism). Clearly the *GNA* exaggerated the situation comparing it to the carnage at Yendi that involved the continuing firing of weaponry for three days. It suggests that Dagombas are 'war-like' people who can trigger a bloody conflict at the least provocation. I submit that describing the greeting as *routine* was clear bias on the part of the *Daily Graphic* since the reporter failed to establish what constitutes 'routine greeting' in Dagbon custom and arguably reached that conclusion based on the figment of his own imagination. This was a value judgment which according to McQuail (1977, pp.107) is media bias since bias is '...the use of argument which colours on otherwise factual report and conveys an implicit but clear value judgment...'.


The use of colourful language by the *GNA* 'denied but visibly fumbled' (June 28, 2002) and Mahama 'fumed and began with his cheeky responses' (July 6, 2002) amongst others about witnesses of the Andani family were value laden words that portrayed bias on the part of

the media house as they were opinions expressed by the reporters (see below). They also described the carnage as a result of an 'age-long crisis' (April 5, 2002), 'fighting between Abudus and Andanis' (January 7, 2003) and 'protracted chieftaincy feud' (Nov.17, 2004), a description that fitted into government's frame of the conflict as part of government's propaganda (see chapter five). The *GNA* also suggested that the crisis was the 'biggest weapon in the arsenal of the campaign armoury of the NDC as it seeks to unseat the incumbent NPP in the impending elections' (July 5, 2004), a value judgement.

The News Agency again engaged in value judgement when it reported about a deputy Attorney General that 'She made it clear' that the government has not aligned itself to either side of the conflict and suggested that the deputy minister 'wondered' how a lasting solution could be found to the problem if the Andanis continued to keep themselves out of the process (January 10, 2003). The *GNA* also reported that there was 'absolute peace' in Yendi in its November 28, 2004 bulletin only to report again that Dagbon was 'split down the middle' (December 2, 2004). This was not only an exaggeration 'split down the middle' and a euphemism 'absolute peace' since a divided people cannot live in absolute peace but also exposed the *GNA* as lacking institutional memory (on that occasion). This is because they failed to appreciate that the two mental pictures they painted to the reader (in less than a week) were contradictory-a paradox. The use of value laden words and phrases like 'wondered' 'made it clear', 'absolute peace' and 'split down the middle' is clear value judgment since they were opinions expressed by the reporters, see McQuail (1977, pp.107 above).

The *Daily Graphic* newspaper also recorded these slanting of mediated communication against the Andanis; an Andani witness…Na Abdulai '*flared up* when it came to the turn of the counsel for the Abudus…', (August 30, 2002), 'Andanis *reacted angrily* over the actions of the security personnel…' (June 28, 2002), members of the Andani family *joining in the confusion* (ibid)-a portrayal of 'violent demeanour'-and amongst others, Andanis making 'a series of allegations *seeking to implicate* the retired major…' (Daily Graphic, April 8, 2002). This was in reference to allegations by the Andanis that major (rtd) Sulemana, an Abudu and government official was part of the plot that murdered the Yaa Naa. The paper said at the Wuaku Commission an 'Abudu witness…Ziblim who *grew angry*…when counsel for the Andanis…' (July 4, 2002). This was another value judgement.

The expressions by the *GNA* above were obviously unfair to the Andani family as it did not only portray them as somewhat nonconformists to the rules of engagement at the Wuaku Commission 'fumed …cheeky response' but also liars before the commission of enquiry, 'denied but visibly fumbled' as against submissions by the Abudus.

The *Daily Graphic*'s expressions like *flared up, reacted angrily* and *joining in the confusion (see above)* portrayed the Andanis as violent people. Again, Andanis *seeking to implicate the retired major* (see above) portrayed the Andanis as unscrupulous group, a portrayal judgmental on the part of the *Daily Graphic as it* suggested the Andanis were just bent on implicating the retired major. Hackett (1984, pp.322) defines media bias as the intrusion of subjective opinion by the reporter or news organization into what is purportedly a factual account. Given that these colourful expressions were opinions expressed by the reporters and therefore bias is grounded not only in Hackett (1984, pp.322) above but also in the explanation of bias as offered by McQuail (1977, pp.107), (see above).

Even though the uses of euphemism and exaggeration were not widespread throughout the sampled period (2002-2019), they were noticeable, (especially during the Wuaku Commission sittings) and touched on the sensitivities of the people rendering it dangerous for conflict sensitive journalism as argued above. The *Ghana News Agency* recorded more of this form of bias than the *Daily Graphic newspaper.*

**7.2.3 The use of imbalance: *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* (2002-2019)**

Table Three

| Code | Imbalance | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Daily Graphic | 21 | 17.7% (Out of 111 stories) |
| Ghana News Agency | 19 | 16.4% (out of 116 stories) |

The table indicates that the *Daily Graphic* showed more biases in imbalance than the GNA gaining 17.7% against the *GNA's* 13.8% out of 111 and 161 stories respectively.

Entman (2010, pp.393) says detecting media bias includes demonstrating patterns of slant overtime. The *GNA's* several publications on Andanis allegations against some key Abudu government officials' involvement in the murder of the Yaa Naa suggested or reinforced the allegations that those Abudu government officials were guilty of the murder or conspiracy to murder the Yaa Naa (see for instance three stories on March 30 and two from April 4, 2002 editions). The 'recycling' of the same allegations against the same people in the same news portal was arguably a demonstration of slant (see Entman, 2010, pp.393 above). The News Agency failed to contact the accused persons before publishing the information, an act inconsistent with the journalism principles of fairness and balance. One of the victims of the allegations, Malik Alhassan Yakubu issued a statement of denial that was however published by the News Agency (March 30, 2002). However it has often been argued that failure to contact 'the other side of the story' in a single news dispatch constitutes bias (imbalance) even if they were given opportunity to respond in another dispatch since there is no guarantee that the same people who read the earlier dispatch will read the latter one. On this occasion, the other Abudu government officials, including Major (rtd) Sulemana and General (rtd) Hamidu who also stood accused were to deny much later at separate

interviews at a time they were already condemned by 'court of public opinion' long before they were 'cleared' of the allegations by a high court (see chapter six). This action by the news portal had implications for peace journalism as it constituted a substantial risk of courting hatred for the accused amongst members of the Andani family, who were already fuming with rage.

The *Daily Graphic* newspaper was not spared this form of biases. It failed to ensure parity in picture and story placement involving story actors in some of their news. Whereas it did not publish Andanis allegations against Abudu government officials' involvement in the crisis, the *Daily Graphic* newspaper decided to offer those government officials space to deny those allegations of involvement published by other news outlets. For instance, the paper reported that '...there has been a series of allegations *seeking to implicate* the retired major...', (Daily Graphic, April 8, 2002) in reference to the allegations by the Andanis that major (rtd) Sulemana collaborated with some others to assassinate the Dagbon king. Apart from the fact that the paper failed to publish the allegations against Sulemana by the Andanis, it gave Sulemana's 'rebuttal' a front-page prominence and indicated that the Andanis were 'seeking to implicate' him. In its May 4, 2002 edition, the *Daily Graphic* newspaper again published a front-page story about Abudu government officials' decision to sue for defamation some Andani spokespersons who implicated them in the crisis without seeking the views of those Andanis who included Professor Wayo Seini of the University of Ghana. Conversely, on some occasions allegations were made against the government, the paper sought to contact government sources for response before publication. Several examples abound. See for instance April 2, 2002 edition of the paper when the minority complained about government censorship of the media, the paper sought government response that said the media censorship 'was constitutional' and gave both stories front page prominence. In respect of Andanis' accusation of the Attorney General taking sides in favour of the Abudus, the paper again published the Attorney General's response and gave both stories front page prominence. Much as it is right to give equal space and prominence in a news dispatch to two actors engaged in 'media war', the paper did so only when government officials were involved and ignored such principle when it concerned other actors like the Andanis and the Abudus. This lack of balance was more pronounced in the *Daily Graphic* and arguably a demonstration of slant-bias- on its part. Entman describes content bias as slanted mediated texts to promote an interest (see above). These slants were demonstrated severally and arguably gave government sources more preference over the feuding parties and arguably promoted government's interest in ensuring favourable coverage over other news actors like the Andanis who were the 'hardest hit' by the conflict.

### 7.2.4 The use of Wrong Attribution: *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* (2002-2019)

Table Four:

| Code | Wrong Attribution | Percentages |
|---|---|---|
| Daily Graphic | 27 | 24.3% (Out of 111 stories) |
| Ghana News Agency | 31 | 26.8% (out of 116 stories) |

The table shows the GNA showed more biases in wrong story attribution, garnering 26.8% out of 116 stories sampled against the *Daily Graphic's* 24.3% out of 111 stories*.

Even though the two news portals generally contacted the right sources, some of the attributes given to story actors were either wrong or concealed. *The Daily Graphic* for example severally concealed the identity of their sources in some of their reports, a few examples follow:

March 26, 2002: 'Curfew at Yendi', -quote- 'according to a police source'

March 27, 2002: 'Uneasy calm at Yendi', -quote- 'according to a source'

March 28, 2002: 'Ya Na killed in violence in Yendi', -quote- 'police source'

April 1, 2002: 'Calm returns to Yendi', -quote- 'A military officer the *Graphic* spoke to…'

April 3, 2002: 'Reports were vetted in 1994'-no by-line

April 6, 2002: 'Gov't to rebuild Gbewah palace', -quote- 'according to a source'

April 8, 2002: 'Major Sulemana denies allegations'-No by-line

August 3, 2002: 'Abudu faction condemns statement by Andanis'-No by-line

Lack of attribution in the above stories together with the paper's continuous reference to Abdulai Mahamadu (Son of Abdulai IV) as 'Bolin Lana' (wrong attribution) constituted bias on the part of the paper since 'Bolin lana' is a chieftaincy title and Abdulai Mahamadu is not a chief but the eldest son of a deposed Yaa Naa (see chapter five). He himself confessed to not being a chief at the Wuaku Commission sitting when he said he 'does not occupy any traditional position in Dagbon', (Daily Graphic, August 20, 2002). Interestingly, the following day the paper while reporting proceedings at the commission wrote 'The 28-year-old Bolin Lana who is the regent of the Abudu family…' (August 21, 2002).

This deliberate twist of facts on the part of the *Daily Graphic* is clear bias. Reference to him as leader of the Abudu family (Daily Graphic, July 3, 2002) was also wrong since it was the Mion lana (chief of Mion) who was customarily the leader of the Abudu family by virtue of his identity as an Abudu, his being the eldest of the Abudu chiefs and princes, his chiefship

of Mion which is one of the three gate skins next to the Dagbon kingship and his status as son of a former Yaa Naa.

The *GNA* sourced all their stories appropriately but were largely 'guilty' of wrong attribution than the *Daily Graphic* as they covered more stories involving Abdulai Mahamadu and referred to him as 'Bolin Lana' in their numerous publications on the Wuaku Commission sittings and other related stories on the conflict (June 8, 14, 22, July 3, 2002, Dec. 2, 2004, amongst others). These biases (no source, lack of attribution and wrong attributes) had implications for Peace Journalism as will be discussed next in this chapter.

### 7.2.5 The use of Peace Insensitive Journalism: *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* (2002-2019)

Table five:

| Code | Peace Journalism | Percentages |
|------|------------------|-------------|
| Daily Graphic | 56 | 50.5% (out of 111 stories) |
| Ghana News Agency | 49 | 42.2% (out of 116 stories) |

The table shows that the *Daily Graphic* was more biased than the GNA in this category registering 50.5% against *GNA's 42%*.

The high numbers registered by the two media portals in conflict insensitive journalism are largely attributed to their concentration on elite sources (see above). Wrong attribution, exaggeration and euphemism (see above) were also incidences noticeable. Galtung (1986, 1998) classifies war journalism as elite centred, emphasis on victory and propaganda. Their reference to Abdulai Mahamadu as 'Bolin Lana' was not only a wrong attribute (as indicated above) but implicitly advanced a chieftaincy title to the man who himself told the Wuaku Commission that he was not a chief (see above and 5.5.2). Reference to Kuga-naa as 'regent of Dagbon' (Nov. 28, 2004) was not only 'degrading' since he is vested with the customary powers of enskining a Yaa Naa and acts as king of Dagbon in the absence of a Yaa Naa (and his regent) but also dangerous since it sought to align him with the Andani faction that could compromise his neutrality in the eyes of Dagbon while he was acting as their king. It is to be noted that as at 2004 the Yaa Naa was not buried and his regent was not installed and as such there was no Dagbon regent. The Kuga naa was acting as Dagbon king, according to custom until 2006 when the king was buried, and his regent installed to act as Yaa Naa.

The *GNA*'s publication of the graphic description at the Wuaku Commission of how the Yaa Naa's body was dismembered did not encourage peace journalism. It arguably brought back painful memories, especially to the Andani family; a situation that could have provoked violent reactions from the Andanis. I provide below just a few quotations:

Idana Sugri, a 35-year old farmer, who has been mentioned as one of the prime perpetrators of the assassination of Ya-Na Yakubu Andani II, Paramount Chief of Dagbon Traditional Area, on friday told the Wuaku Commission that he saw one Alhassan Gyamfo holding 'a battered human head' at the Bolin Lana's house on 27 March (June 22, 2002).

Again:

Witness said, 'at this time, I saw one Mohamadu Fusheni dragging the Ya-Na's body to a point whilst two other men holding lorry tyres placed them on it and poured a liquid on it'. When asked to mention those he identified, he cited the Bolin-Lana and his counsellor, the Zalinko-Lana, among others (June 14, 2002).

Again, the *GNA* reports of a witness before the commission:

'I saw Iddrissu Gyamfo using an iron bar to pick the battered head with blood oozing from all over it and since I was afraid, I had to leave the scene'. Idana, who was mentioned during previous sittings as tying the severed arm of the Ya-Na with a rope and hanged it on his neck during the crisis, was giving evidence as the 38th witness of the Wuaku Commission's sitting in Sunyani (June 22, 2002).

Reporting the same event the *Daily Graphic* recounts that 'A witness told the Wuaku Commission that he saw one Iddirisu Jahinfo holding the blood soaked human head in the Bolin Lana's palace...one who hanged the arm of the king in his neck...' (Daily Graphic, June 22, 2002). Galtung argues that a journalist in reporting conflict must focus on 'peace' 'truth' be 'people centred' and 'solution centred' (1986, 1998) but the evidence above suggests the *GNA* and the *Daily Graphic* did not promote peace reporting and were also elite centred in their sources. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) support Galtung when they argue that peace journalism is when 'editors and reporters make choices–of what stories to report and how to report them–that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflicts' (2005, pp.5). In the case of the two media outlets that was not the case as has been demonstrated above.

## 7.3 Concluding Reflections

The tables show that coverage of the Dagbon conflict by the two news portals was dominated by government/elite/official sources much to the neglect of concerns raised by the feuding factions. The inclusion of news portals like JOY FM could probably have influenced the findings of this study differently but I did not include that because of their inadequate archived stories on the conflict that fell short of generating the concepts of bias

I used in the analysis. They had lost most of their archived stories, including on Dagbon (interview with JOY FM editor, June 2, 2017). A purposive sampling of some of the *very few available news reports* from JOY FM revealed the media portal was critical in some of its reports of government. I provide two reports below:

> It is now clear that despite the presence of security forces at Yendi, no attempt was made to bring the situation under control. The security forces stayed away and made no attempt to stop the clashes between the Andani and Abudu factions because they were not ordered to do so... Our Northern Regional Correspondent, Sayibu Mahama...reports... (Myjoyonline.com, March 30, 2002).

JOY FM again wrote:

> ...At the time JOY FM spoke to the Ya Na's secretary on Tuesday, fighting was still going on but the police were nowhere to be found... Despite the warning signals government officials still insisted and even broadcast on national radio that Yendi was calm. Not even alarm signals from the advisor of the Dagbon king pushed government officials to action. Government rather accused JOY News (JOY FM) of mischief (ibid).

I selected the two stories because the former was the first story to have been filed at the crime scene after the murder of the king when I visited there with government officials while the later was collectively filed by correspondents of the radio station who reported the disturbances and the murders. They were also selected because they demonstrate that unlike the state media, some private media reports on the conflict were critical of government.

In comparative terms, The *Daily Graphic* played more of 'faithful servant' role of the state than the *GNA* not only because government/official/elite sources secured 41.1% against the *GNA*'s 36.1% but also because it provided more platform for Abudu/government officials to voice their concerns while denying the Andanis equal opportunity to do so. The paper also demonstrated bias in sourcing story actors than the *GNA* even though the latter recorded more attribution bias. The paper again showed more bias in terms of balance as discussed above. The two media outlets did not show much sensitivity in their reportage, especially about the description of the gory nature of the dismembered body of the late Yaa Naa at the Wuaku Commission's proceedings. The *Daily Graphic* was guiltier in that regard. Their high coverage of the Wuaku Commission is understandable since their correspondents were 'attached' to the commission as well as the overwhelming public interest in the sittings of the commission.

Dependence on official sources on the part of the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* is understandable since they are both state owned news portals and cannot absolve themselves from government control. Therefore government censorship measures, the declaration of the State of Emergency by the government (see chapter six), the fear of flak (Wolfsfeld, 1997, pp.69, Herman and Chomsky 1988, pp.2) and the use of 'national security interest' (Bakir, 2017, pp.245) by intelligence operatives may have influenced them to churn out official frames, thus rendering them '*faithful servants'* of the government.

However, decision by the *Daily Graphic* newspaper to conceal story actors in its stories' attribution was a decision-making bias. I argue that if the paper could not resist the temptation of officialdom by publishing favourable news and rejecting unfavourable news to government, they had the option of disclosing who their stories' sources were. The paper's action can find expression in Keeble who argues that one of the strategies used by intelligence agencies to manipulate the media is to plant intelligence agency propaganda stories *on willing journalists who disguise their origin from readers* (2017, pp.14). Arguably therefore the *Daily Graphic* acted more as *propagandists* for the government of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) in its reportage of the Dagbon conflict.

The *GNA* also played the '*faithful servant'* role but to a lesser extent. Even though they do not use reporters' by-line as the *Daily Graphic* do and cannot therefore be judged on the use of by-line, they offered government officials the space to respond to allegations that the agency did not put out. They also reported on allegations of complicity about Abudu government officials without seeking their responses in some of their dispatches. Even though they also compromised their neutrality largely using slant (imbalance), preference to official sources and exaggeration, the fact that they largely published unfavourable news about government officials makes them less bias and less propagandistic as compared to the *Daily Graphic*. That notwithstanding, they dominated the use of exaggeration and attribution bias over the *Daily Graphic*. Their lack of adequate sensitivity in reporting the proceedings at the Wuaku Commission was also noticeable and did not encourage peace journalism, even though less guilty than the *Daily Graphic* newspaper. The two media outlets relied more on government/elite/official sources for news and showed biases in their reportage of the conflict. The *Daily Graphic* newspaper was overall more biased than the *GNA* and acted more as propagandists for the NPP government than the *GNA.* The use of imagery and slant by the two news organizations, especially at the Wuaku Commission sittings affected conflict sensitive journalism which is a disturbing phenomenon. The findings may appear negligible quantitatively but the impact on peace journalism cannot be glossed over as discussed above. The last part of this chapter looks at opinion leaders' opinion on media reportage of the conflict.

**7.4 Opinion leaders' opinion on media reportage of the Dagbon conflict**

Beyond the empirical evidence provided above on media bias based on the publications of the *GNA* and the *Daily Graphic,* opinion leaders of the Abudu and Andani factions also gave a damning verdict on the media, accusing them of bias. They claimed that the media was 'in bed' with government by mostly reporting only what government wanted to be in the news while neglecting issues bothering on the conflict itself.

As discussed earlier (see 2.4.1) studies on opinion leadership in the West have found the power of opinion leaders in shaping and influencing opinions. Even though the above observation is based on studies and experiences in the West, (see 2.4.1) the power of opinion leaders in shaping public opinion in Dagbon is pragmatic and cannot be overemphasized and this is partly exemplified in Alhaji Mahama's 'lie' about Yaa Naa not dead (see chapter four) that was believed by the Andani youth and that persuaded them from possible reprisal attacks on the Abudus.

As a Dagomba and with knowledge in Dagbon customs and tradition, I can state without fear or contradiction that beyond the example above, opinion leaders influence in shaping public opinion in Dagbon is deeply rooted in Dagbon custom where leadership and age are held in high esteem. Indeed, it is considered a taboo in Dagbon custom (and this is no secret) to challenge an elder or leader as one does so at the risk of reprimand, including banishment from an area if it involves a traditional ruler.

This custom has been handed down from generations and not even the emergence of liberal ideas that had accompanied colonialism into Ghana and into the Dagbon state could change the status quo. Citizens who prove difficult are considered 'outcasts. This is partly the reason why Alhaji Mahama's 'lie' was not challenged even by those who fled the carnage in Yendi to Tamale and knew that the Yaa Naa was dead. This time-tested customary practice that makes the leader almost infallible and creates awe and reverence for them is the foundation on which opinion leadership in Dagbon draws influence.

One of the Andani opinion leaders relished their influence over the people when I sought to find out how they thought the people would believe Alhaji Mahama's lie about the fate of the Yaa Naa. 'We work in their interest…both young and old…and protect them and so they have no reason to disbelieve what we tell them…'. He added 'this is something that has been handed down to us by our forefathers (Interview, September 21, 2018). '…as I said that information (Mahama's lie) eventually saved all of us so it will not let them mistrust us in future…' (ibid). His Abudu counterpart said 'It is a question of tradition and this is what makes Dagbon culture (custom) peculiar…we are brought up to respect and trust our leaders…so whatever we tell them they believe it (interview, September 22, 2018).

Dagbon opinion leaders also draw their influence from their relationship with the political elite (see chapter one) that makes it possible for them to influence the choice of both political and non-political state appointees at both the local and national levels. These appointees are often indebted to the opinion leaders who take advantage of the situation to negotiate for jobs for the people as well as development in their respective areas. Their ownership of vast lands that they hold in trust and release to the people for development has also accrued some influence as the people often feel indebted to them and thus plunge under their influence. These opinion leaders in the Dagbon crisis who are generally chiefs, sub-chiefs and royal members of the Abudu and Andani 'gates' some of whom fairly or very well educated and endowed are therefore very powerful people. Their opinions are respected across Dagbon and amongst their following that run into hundreds of thousands of people. Even though the crisis has divided the people, opinion leaders are still respected and revered across the Abudu and Andani divide. Consequently, the use of opinion leaders in the Abudu and Andani factions to gauge the opinions of their entire following about media reportage of the Dagbon conflict cannot be downplayed. I interviewed six persons each from the two feuding parties made up of three spokespersons and three chiefs on how they rated the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict.

## 7.5 Findings

Both factions gave damning opinions about the media as they blamed the media for lack of professionalism as well as bias in reporting the conflict and called for a more professional approach to reporting conflicts.

### 7.5.1 Overall assessment of media reportage

Giving an overall assessment of the media in reporting the Dagbon conflict an Abudu spokesperson had this to say:

> …some vast majority of journalists depended on secondhand information…if you look at the way it was reported that some Liberian mercenaries, foreigners were cited in Yendi that is not true. No foreigner ever came. The whole thing was given a slant as if it was just an unprovoked attack on the Gbewah palace by the Abudu side (interview, June 11, 2017).

An Andani spokesperson also had this to say:

> Well, I will say that it was very superficial and secondly it was very biased…they did not see the correct people before they made their reportage, they just touched the surface of the problem and it was shallow. They did not seem to understand but in some areas where they understood it, they just went and  took the government one that portrayed the thing as a war and not as a criminal act

but as expected the media knew the truth but the pro-government media knew that the truth will hurt the government (Interview, July 17, 2017).

An Andani chief had this to say:

...there were information that they were supposed to contact the right sources but they contacted the wrong sources, got the wrong information and published them and people will read and have negative ideas about what transpired...most of them did not have background information about the conflict (interview, June 17, 2017).

His Abudu counterpart said:

I can say initially it was better and good because everything that happened, they reported it but along the way, getting to the middle everything changed. The correct things that they had to report, they diverted those things because they took side with the government by then so everything that was reported at that time was not accurate (Interview, June 25, 2017).

The above verdict on the media reportage of the conflict by the opinion leaders of the Abudu and Andani factions epitomizes media propaganda, lack of in-depth reporting and lack of detailed background information. The rest are the 'faithful servant' role of the media and lack of accuracy.

*The claims by these opinion leaders that the media depended on second hand information (see the Abudu chief in the above quote) and contacted the wrong sources (see the Andani chief above) and thus published the wrong information (ibid) suggest that the media relied on 'doctored information' made available to them by sources who were not factually correct sources.*

One of the techniques of detecting media bias is speaking to wrong sources (see above) and media bias, according to Entman (2010, pp.393) is slanted framing of mediated texts to promote a specific interest. The opinion leaders also accused the media of engaging in half truths. Bakir et al. (2019, pp.22) arguably places half truth under *deception through omissions* since it withholds aspects of the information to make a promoted viewpoint more persuasive. Bakir et al. and Entman treatises above concur on 'the promotion of a specific interest or viewpoint' and this fits into the definition of propaganda by Zollman (2017, pp.7) who argues propaganda includes 'the forming of texts and opinions in support of particular interests...'.

Arguably therefore the media as claimed by the opinion leaders engaged in propaganda in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict and this is supported by the findings on media bias above on the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* reportage of the conflict.

Journalists covering the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict were also accused by the opinion leaders from both factions of failing to do in-depth reporting and did not have background information about the conflict. 'Well, I will say that it was very superficial... they just touched the surface of the problem and it was shallow (interview with Andani spokesperson, May 25, 2017). '...most of them did not have background information about the conflict' (interview with Andani chief, June 17, 2017). This 'charge' by the opinion leaders from the Andani family is concurred with by a submission from an Abudu spokesperson '...the media paid little attention to background and details in some of their reports...' (Interview, June 38, 2017). This finds expression in the observation I made about journalists not having much background information about the conflict (see chapter four), having reported the conflict myself. This lack of background information arguably affected the quality of reporting and rendered journalists prone to propaganda as argued above. This together with the use of wrong attributes-reference to Abdulai Mahamadu as 'Bolin lana' and 'regent of Dagbon'-had implications for peace journalism (see chapter seven).

The media was also accused of 'being in bed' with the government and thus failed to report on issues that would make government look bad 'the correct things that they had to report, they diverted those things because they took side with the government' (Interview with Abudu chief, June 25, 2017) and 'majority of the media was pro-government...they did not want to put the government in bad light' (interview with Andani spokesperson, May 25, 2017). This verdict by the Abudu and Andani opinion leaders on the media finds expression in Wolfsfeld (1997, pp.69) who argue that the media during times of national crisis and war act as 'faithful servants' of the state and Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Bennett (1990), argue that the media during war time produce 'propaganda rather than independent journalism' (cited in Hammond, 2017, pp.80).

Goddard et al. (2008, pp.10) argue that the media's excessive dependence on official/elite sources for news is what has rendered them 'propagandists' or 'faithful servants'. These observations can find expression in the findings on media bias above where the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* gave official sources more prominence over other news actors and in overall terms acted as propagandists for the New Patriotic Party government from 2002 to 2009.

The opinion leaders again accused the media of filing inaccurate reports. Accusations about 'slant', 'bias' and 'wrong reports' all added to lack of accuracy on the part of the media in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict. This again concurs with the finding above on the

*Daily Graphic* and *Ghana News Agency* about slant and wrong attribution that constitute bias in news reporting.

On the question of how accessible the media was to their side of the conflict both Abudus and Andanis opinion leaders claimed that the media was generally not accessible and the few occasions there were they either 'slanted' the news or 'spiked' it. One of the spokespersons to the Abudus had this to say:

> I remember those critical days hardly would you find a journalist come down to Yendi. They only reported from Tamale and it turned out that much of what they reported were half truths (interview, June 17, 2017).

An Andani spokesperson on his part said:

> The pro-government media either did not carry the essentials of our case or they twisted it. This was an issue of national security interest and a crime of national monumental proportion and it should have been taken at a higher level. So, on both sides, the media did not treat the issue properly as they should have done (interview, June 19, 2017).

Their claims of inadequate access and slant find expression above where government sources dominated the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and the *Ghana News Agency* reportage with Abudus and Andanis getting insignificant numbers. For the *Daily Graphic* government sources garnered 49 out of 111 stories between 2002 and 2019 with only eight for the Abudus and 13 for the Andanis. The *Ghana News Agency* on the other hand gave government sources 43, Abudus nine and Andanis 14 out of 116 stories. The 'half truth' verdict by the Abudu spokesperson above and the 'twisting of facts' verdict by his Andani counterpart find expression in Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Bennett (1990) that the media during war time produce 'propaganda rather than independent journalism' (cited in Hammond, 2017, pp.80). (Goddard et al. 2008, pp.10,) attribute media propaganda to excessive dependence on official sources for news as demonstrated by the figures above. Even though the two media outlets cannot be said to be representative of the Ghanaian media, it was the view of the respondents that the Ghanaian media was unfair by failing to grant them 'adequate' publicity when they were the main protagonists of the conflict.

On how the media framed their stories the Andanis suggested that the media cast their stories in line with government's frame of the conflict as a war between the Abudus and the Andanis (see chapter five). One of the spokespersons had this to say:

> The thing was a crime; the media never thought of it as such, they just reduced it to a chieftaincy conflict... If the media had been very serious, they could have come to find out from the security agencies, but they didn't. They just went and

took the government one that portrayed the thing as a war and not as a criminal act but as expected the media knew the truth, but the pro-government media knew that the truth will hurt the government (Interview, July 17, 2017).

The Abudus suggested that beyond perpetuating official frames, the media took sides with the conflicting parties and generally framed their stories to satisfy the factions '...it looks like they (the media) have also taken sides of the two gates...and whoever is in power' (interview with Abudu chief, June 25, 2017). This assertion by the Abudu chief '...and who ever is in power...' is not only in consonance with the assertion by an Andani spokesperson on media bias in favour of government, 'majority of the media was pro-government...they did not want to put the government in bad light' (see above) but also evident in some of the *Daily Graphic* publications. I provide an example below.

1.  With no by-line the *Daily Graphic* reported amongst others that the Andanis were making '...a series of allegations *seeking to implicate* the retired major...', (Daily Graphic, April 8, 2002). This was in reference to an Abudu and government official accused of masterminding the murder of the Yaa Naa. This suggested that the Andanis were unscrupulous in their allegation against the Abudu government official, a suggestion suggestive of support for the latter and opinionated.

This opinion of the *Daily Graphic* is arguably subjective and grounded in Hackett (1984, pp.322) and Entman (2010 pp.393)'s definitions of media bias as espoused above. See above for more slanting of mediated communication against the Andanis. The Abudu family also suffered the media biases as media reports about alleged involvement of Abudu government officials in the murder of the Yaa Naa were severally dispatched without responses from the Abudus (see above on Ghana News Agency recycled reports on their alleged involvement and its consequences). Such reports constituted a substantial risk of pronouncing the Abudu government officials guilty in the court of public opinion and arguably exposed them to ridicule and potential threats. I now discuss their assessment of the government media and private media respectively.

### 7.5.2 Government media

The opinion leaders' assessment of the government media is not markedly different from their assessment of the general media as explained above. They argue that the government media over concentrated on government sources to the neglect of sources from the feuding factions. An Andani spokesperson said '...the government media followed the government frame of the conflict and reported only what government wanted the people to know thereby neglecting the facts on the ground...' (Interview, January 12, 2019).

His Abudu counterpart said, 'the government media behaved differently under the NPP and the NDC'. He added,'...under the NPP regime they tried to report what the government

wanted, that is to say it was a war and government had no hands in it'. He again said, 'under the NDC they appeared to be following some leads that suggested that the previous NPP government did not do well to prevent the conflict...' (January 13, 2019).

These responses do not only support the quantitative analysis of sourcing story actors under 7.2.1 above but also suggest bias on the part of the government media and can situate in Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Bennett (1990) that the media during war time produce 'propaganda rather than independent journalism' (cited in Hammond, 2017, pp.80). Goddard et al. (2008, pp.10) also attribute excessive dependence on official sources for news (as claimed by the respondents) to propaganda. Excessive dependence on official sources for news (Herman and Chomsky, 1988, 2) also rendered them practitioners of 'Patriotic Journalism' (see 2.4.3) where they followed government framing of the conflict as claimed by the respondents.

The above views by the spokespersons were shared by their chiefs. An Abudu chief said, 'the government media which is supposed to be neutral failed to report most of our activities...rather depended on government institutions like the police and government ministers for news' (interview, January 20, 2019). His Andani counterpart said, 'they failed to report the truth the way it was, like telling the whole world that government looked on as the Abudus murdered the Yaa Naa' (Interview January 20, 2019).

The opinion leaders however praised the government media for their extensive coverage especially of the Wuaku Commission sittings. They said notwithstanding their biases, government media gave detailed accounts of what transpired at the Wuaku Commission and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs meetings. An Abudu spokesperson said 'I can say that even though we had issues with the government media, they did well in covering all the Wuaku Commission sittings' (interview, January 13, 2019). His view was shared by his Andani counterpart '...the best service they rendered to us was to follow the Wuaku Commission sittings and the Otunfuo Committee of Eminent Chiefs sittings...they did well in that regard (interview. January 12, 2019).

Opinion leaders of the Abudus and the Andanis were not satisfied with government media's coverage of the conflict. Their assessments of government media on over dependence on elite sources for news and lack of background information about the conflict, concurred with the above empirical findings in newspapers are exemplified in Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Bennett (1990) that the media during war time produce 'propaganda rather than independent journalism' (cited in Hammond, 2017, pp.80).

### 7.5.3 Private media

The private media did not receive a good verdict from the opinion leaders. They were blamed for 'cherry picking' reporting and reporting along chieftaincy and political lines. An

Abudu chief said, 'many of the private media reported only what favoured their side of the conflict because many of them were Dagombas and had a side in the conflict' (interview, January 20, 2019). He added '...you know Abudus are NPP and Andanis NDC so the NDC papers and their reporters supported the Andanis...' (Ibid). His Andani counterpart said, 'the private media reported many allegations that turned out to be lies often reflecting their support for a side in the conflict' (January 22, 2019). These views were not only supported by their chiefs but also supported by a veteran journalist and management member of *North Star FM* a private radio station in Tamale, Ghana who said:

> ...If you belonged to the media whose editorial policy reflected the way NPP saw things you saw things from that light. If on the other hand your media supported NDC you portrayed things in the light of the NDC. So as far as I am concerned people did not speak genuinely and as far as the Dagbon issue is concerned people did not look for genuineness but political interests... (interview, June 16, 2017).

He again said:

> It was difficult for one to speak the truth. if you were not careful and you spoke the truth you were attacked and depending on where you were if you were at safe grounds you could speak the truth and the vice versa. That was one of the reasons why *North Star* was attacked often because the owner of the station belonged to one of the divides, and even though he did not interfere in our editorial affairs the fact that he owned it was an offence (June 16, 2017).

The submissions by the Abudu and Andani opinion leaders supported by the veteran journalist above coalesce around the shared view that the private media engaged in self censorship and bias which is grounded in Entman who describes media bias as 'consistently slanted framing of mediated communication that promotes the success of a specific interest...' (2010, pp.393). On this occasion the media promoted the interests of government and the feuding factions as claimed by the respondents above. Promoting the interests of government and of the feuding factions rendered the media biased and thus 'faithful servants' of government and of the factions.

On the way forward in reporting conflicts in Ghana, the respondents suggested the need for training of journalists on conflict reporting and fair and balanced reporting. An Andani spokesperson suggested the need for journalists to specialize in reporting conflicts and also study the background of conflicts before reporting on them. One of them said:

> The way forward is to see seasoned journalists to be able to study any particular situation and report it well and truly not covering the criminals...so we only hope that journalists will study it report it deeply and not with bias (April 25, 2017).

His Abudu counterpart suggested the need for '…journalists to get better training on how to report conflicts…' (Interview, June 11, 2017). They should also endeavour to 'report the truth and distance themselves from propaganda reporting' he added.

## 7.6 Discussion and Conclusion

It is clear from the above discussion that the two royal families in the Dagbon conflict were not satisfied with the media reportage of the conflict owing to the factors discussed above. The media failed to give enough publicity to the factions who were the main protagonists in the conflict but relied more on government/ elite/ official sources for their news. This suffocated the factions who were already under intense pressure emanating from the murder of the king and needed to speak out to defend their positions on the matter. The failure of the media to give them adequate publicity can find expression in the findings on media bias by the *GNA* and the *Daily Graphic* newspaper above where official sources dominated overwhelmingly over Abudu and Andani sources. Even though the study was about two media outlets, it gives an indication that the verdict by the two factions that the media was biased in favour of officialdom cannot be discounted. This is because the *Daily Graphic newspaper* and the *Ghana News Agency* are arguably amongst the most popular, most patronized and most powerful media organisations in Ghana.

The study has also revealed that in the midst of biases against the factions, the government-controlled media favoured the Abudu family as against the Andani family during the first six years of reportage of the conflict when the NPP was in power. This was due arguably to the fact that the then government and the Abudus were virtually fighting the same course. They were both trying to exonerate themselves from complicity with regards to the murder of the Yaa Naa, especially when many of those Abudus accused by the Andanis of complicity in the Yaa Naa murder were government appointees holding security related positions. The study also revealed that the opinion leaders' verdict on the private media was more damning than the state media even though they expressed disquiet about the conduct of the overall media.

Conclusively, even though opinion leaders as 'influencers' in the communication process referred to as the 'two step flow communication theory', has been challenged by several communications scholars (see 2.4.1), the power of opinion leaders in shaping opinions in the Dagbon conflict cannot be overemphasized. Evidence abounds that the Andanis, following from government's announcement about the murder of the Yaa Naa and their subsequent anger, had to 'demobilize' after they were told by an opinion leader (Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama) that the Yaa Naa was still alive and recuperating from injury (see above). Alhaji Mahama's 'action' finds expression in Glock and Nicosia who argue that opinion leaders 'act not only as channels of information' but also as 'source of social pressure toward a particular choice, and of social support to reinforce that choice once it has been

made' cited in (Chaudhry and Irshad, 2013, pp.16). As discussed in earlier chapters, Alhaji Mahama told the Wuaku Commission that he had to lie to avert bloodbath that could have reduced Yendi to rabbles if the people knew (at that moment) that the king was indeed murdered.

Arguably therefore, opinion leaders in Dagbon acted as influencers in the communication process in the Dagbon conflict. Their opinions about the conduct of the media can arguably be said to have influenced and or represented the opinions of their following. Their verdict on media bias in both government and private media only goes to confirm finding on newspaper analysis of the *Daily Graphic newspaper* and the *Ghana News Agency* that government media was biased in favour of elite sources. The next chapter will analyze the findings of this study on propaganda censorship and the media in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict.

# CHAPTER EIGHT

## ANALYSIS

## 8.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses the findings on propaganda, censorship and media bias as discussed in chapters five, six and seven. This study aims to test the proposition that propaganda censorship and media bias are responsible for the perpetuation of the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

The Dagbon conflict will go down history as one of the darkest (having claimed about a 100 lives and that of the Yaa Naa) in Ghana's chieftaincy conflicts in recent times that has witnessed media bias as well as massive use of propaganda and censorship techniques by governments, the military and the intelligence community in the media reportage of the conflict.

## 8.1 Propaganda and the conflict

As argued in chapter five, propaganda was used indiscriminately by governments (both the New Patriotic Party-NPP and National Democratic Congress-NDC governments), the military, the intelligence community and the Abudus and Andanis. Government propaganda took the case of deliberate and fabricated lies, deception through lying, misinformation, censorship as tool of propaganda and intimidation and threats of journalists. Again, frames as propaganda tool and the use of 'word game' like the fear factor, transfer, name calling, glittering generality and plain folks (see chapter five) were used. For the military, propaganda took the pattern of lies, facilitative communication, fear factor, hate propaganda and name calling. The intelligence community propaganda used censorship as propaganda tool, deception, facilitative communication, fear factor and psychological warfare. For the Abudus and Andanis, lies, deception, atrocity propaganda, and facilitative communication were employed. However, whereas government recorded more propaganda techniques, military propaganda and intelligence community propaganda were less dominant but noticeable just like that of Abudu and Andani propaganda. Consequently, propaganda by the factions, the governments, (NDC and NPP governments), the military and the intelligence community have had far reaching implications on the conflict as analyzed below.

## 8.1.1 Implications

It all begun on March 25, 2002 with the assertion by the Interior Minister, Malik Alhassan Yakubu that Yendi was calm after JOY FM reported that there was an attack on the Gbewah palace ahead of the traditional fire festival. Shortly after the JOY FM report, telephone services to Yendi were cut and fighting around the Gbewah palace continued (see chapter

four). It can be argued that if the Interior Minister had admitted media reports of disturbances in Yendi ahead of the fire festival and government had intervened in the matter, the Yaa Naa and his retinue could probably have been saved and the Gbewah palace carnage could have been avoided. Once the carnage had taken place, the NPP government arguably continued to employ propaganda in order to cover up its alleged complicity in the matter and arguably save its political allies-the Abudus-from reprimand (See chapter one for the alliance between the Abudus and the NPP government). See also Mahama (2009, pp.27-28, pp.37, pp.40-41), Tonah (2002, pp.8), Ladouceur (1972, pp.97) and Asiedu (2008, pp.10). It set up the Wuaku Commission in the midst of dispute over its legality and failed to implement its recommendations (see chapter five). It employed the 'word game' techniques like 'glittering generality' and 'card stacking' to exonerate Abudu government officials accused of masterminding the conflict. It employed the 'fear factor' and 'name calling' to silence the Andanis from further holding it responsible for the carnage and calling for the apprehension of the murderers (see chapters four and five).

It can be further argued that if government apart from the above had not propagandized the uncovering of the severed head and arm of the slain king (see chapter five) and had given the culprits up and the law had taken its course, the mistrust and tension between the two royal gates (that are still feared by some Ghanaians) could have been minimised or abated. A Ghanaian security analyst, Emmanuel Sowatey thinks that notwithstanding the installation of a new Yaa Naa, Dagbon is not out of the woods yet with regards to finding a lasting peace 'the lasting peace would be tested when the new Ya Naa…how he engages with the other faction will have a sterling impact on his legacy' (citinewsroom, January 25, 2019). Sowatey's fears came to pass when the Yaa Naa's choice of an Andani as chief of Nantong is at the time of submitting this thesis being rivalled by another candidate from the Abudu stock. Haruna Tia who lost the contest to become chief of Nantong accused the new Yaa Naa of favouring the Andanis in his appointments and declared himself chief with his supporters threatening the life of the Yaa Naa's appointee. Even though the Yaa Naa, by tradition, has the powers to enskin whom he wishes, the Nantong skin was last occupied by an Abudu and the Abudus expected an Abudu to succeed him. Tia's action is noteworthy as it reflects the thoughts of the Abudu youth (see under reflexivity in chapter three) who expressed fears that an Andani Yaa Naa would enskin Andanis to vacant Abudu skins. They said:

> …we have been in opposition for a long time. If an Andani is chosen as the new Yaa Naa our skins will be given to Andani chiefs…should that happen, we shall resist it with all our might and as usual we shall win…an adage in Dagbani says a man who wins a wresting contest against you all the time is the one who swears by his father…(Covert research, July 27, 2017).

How this latest development is managed and whether the Abudus will win or not will greatly impact on the peace of the area.

As argued above, government's refusal to disclose who returned the 'body parts' arguably lays claim to Godson et al.'s (2011) definition of denial that includes 'an attempt to block information channels by which a target could learn some truth' and that the method of denial is mostly used to safeguard 'classified' information (see chapter two). The Wuaku Commission *recommended the prosecution of only Abudus for the murder and conspiracy to murder the Yaa Naa and others* (Wuaku Commission report, 2002). As discussed above writers of Dagbon conflict, including Tsikata and Seini (2004), Ladouceur (1972), Asiedu (2008), Mahama (2009) and Tonah (2002) amongst others have argued that the Abudus are political allies of the NPP. Even the Abudus themselves admit to this when one of their secretaries while commenting on the status of Abdulai IV as former Yaa Naa said:

> What I do know as the secretary and having had the opportunity of discussing this matter with all the leading chiefs it was an understanding that a government that was favourable to us (Abudus) was in power then we expect that justice would be done because we do know that the Supreme Court recognized him as a king. So, if a fair government or a government loyal to us is in power we expect them to use the legal instrument to grant the (Abdulai IV's) funeral because these are legal issues and not the matter of cheating anybody (interview, June 11, 2017).

The Abudu secretary's position was echoed by the Abudu youth who said:

> …our party is now in power and so Nana  (Ghana's President and NPP leader) cannot disappoint us…he should just allow us to perform the funeral at the Gbewah palace and take over the kingship; it was a  promise that must be fulfilled (Covert research, July 5, 2017).

This political alliance was arguably to prove costly in the Yaa Naa murder situation arguably with the decision of President Kufour (who was in power when the Yaa Naa was murdered) to gift Abudus with top security related positions (see chapter 4.3). A respondent said:

>  …at the chain of authority in the country (almost) the whole security apparatus was  in the hands of the Abudus, the Vice President was an Abudu, the interior minister, the national security coordinator were all Abudus,…then the regional minister was an Abudu,        the        DCE        was        an        Abudu        so        the whole security apparatus of the nation, including Yendi was in the hands of the Abudus and so a lot of us thought that it was something that was planned because even when the attack on the palace was going on and people in south were hearing gun shots in the

media, the interior minister who was the MP did not even find it fit to rush to Yendi to see what was happening, he was sitting and relying on information coming from the DCE and even put it on national TV that nothing was happening when it was very serious (Interview, June 6, 2017).

It can be argued that the Abudus succeeded in killing the Yaa Naa not only because of government's denial of a tensed security situation at Yendi's Gbewah palace but also its failure to intervene in the crisis. Given that the real culprits were not arrested, can it be argued that it was owing to President Kufour's government's decision to park the Abudus at the top of the country's security set up that enabled them to influence the scheme of things? Was government's decision to park them a result of its loyalty to the Abudus?

As evidenced in this study, a loyal government, an NPP government-through the Committee of Eminent Chiefs succeeded in getting Abdulai IV's funeral performed at the Gbewah palace and thus achieved its campaign promise to the Abudus that was outstanding since the 2000 presidential election campaign period (see chapter one). Can it therefore be argued that government denied Ghanaians the truth about who returned the body parts because it involved their political allies-the Abudus-and therefore considered that information 'classified'?

Beyond government propaganda, the country's Supreme Court ruling in 1986 on the status of Abdulai IV's kingship as 'former Yaa Naa' after it revoked his kingship, provided grounds for the two factions to engage in propaganda regarding his burial and funeral rites after his death in 1988 (see chapter five). The Andanis continued to maintain that the concept of 'former Yaa Naa' (conferred on Abdulai IV by the Supreme Court), 'with the conferred rights and privileges was conceived in a scheme of delicate balances to promote peace and reconciliation and not to set up a dual authority' (See chapter five). The Abudus on the other hand argued that the order meant that Abdulai IV was a Yaa Naa and must be accorded all rights and privileges of a Yaa Naa (ibid). Having buried him at the Gbewah palace in 1988 the Abudus insisted that his funeral be performed there. It was the refusal of the Yaa Naa to accede to this request that activated the attack on his palace and killed him on March 27, 2002, thus triggering the present crisis. The Abudus 'ingenuity' in getting their desired intent fulfilled is noteworthy. As discussed in chapter five, they convinced the Yaa Naa and the state that once buried at the royal mausoleum, Abdulai IV's funeral would not be performed at the palace. Once he was buried there, they demanded that his funeral must be performed at the palace (see chapter five). They held on to that demand for 30 years (in the midst of confusion, including the Yaa Naa's murder) and finally succeeded in getting their wish granted by government. This speaks volumes of how deception and for that matter propaganda has played a role in the perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict.

Propaganda as discussed in chapter two includes deception (Jowett and O'Donnell, 1992, pp.17-23), lies (Jowett and O'Donnell, 1992, pp.17), (Lawrence, see chapter five), half truths (Bakir, et al. 2019, pp.22), the use of 'word game' (Harb, 2011, pp.27) and thus portrays negativity. However, Taylor (2003, pp.324) believes propaganda is not a negative concept and could be an instrument for facilitating democratic values and observes that 'it is the intention of propaganda that needs scrutiny and not just propaganda itself'. His argument that propaganda is not a negative concept is exemplified in this study where Alhaji Ibrahim Mahama 'lied to avert bloodbath' by announcing that the Yaa Naa was alive when he was indeed dead (see chapter five). Lie as a tool of propaganda was used by Alhaji Mahama to persuade the Andanis from mounting reprisal attacks on the Abudus for killing the Yaa Naa, until the security services took control of the whole of Dagbon. This arguably facilitated a democratic value by facilitating the right to life of potential targets in the otherwise imminent Andani attacks on the Abudus. As discussed in chapter five, to respond to Taylor's call for the scrutiny of the intention of propaganda, it can be argued that under the above circumstance in this Dagbon conflict study, propaganda served a useful purpose by preventing potential loss of lives and thus vindicates Taylor's stance that it is not a negative concept.

Taylor's call for the intention of propaganda to be scrutinized could further be discussed in the light of the argument by Zollmann (2017, pp.10) that the intention of propaganda is to maintain the legitimacy of the institution or organization that it represents and thereby ensure the legitimacy of its activities. In the Dagbon conflict, the NPP government arguably established the Wuaku Commission to investigate the Yaa Naa murder to bring the culprits to book but as it later turned out, the committee's recommendations did not bring the culprits to book.

The commission was accused by the Andanis who appeared before it of bias and its final report was rejected by them (see chapter five). Government disagreed with some of the recommendations of the commission's report and failed to carry out the entire recommendations of the report (ibid). These together with the commission's discharge of some Abudu government officials of wrong doing for allegedly masterminding the murder of the Yaa Naa only added to the argument by some, including the Andanis that the commission was used by government to cover up its alleged complicity in the matter and muddy further investigations into the criminal activities. It can therefore be argued that government set up the Wuaku Commission to maintain its legitimacy as an honest arbiter in order to legitimize the activities of its security chiefs (see chapter five) whose seeming disregard for security warnings, arguably informed by government's quest to fulfil a party manifesto promise (ibid), culminated in the carnage at Yendi. This security blunder, the 'monstrous murders of many Andanis' and government's failure to arrest the perpetrators

have further augmented the tensions between the Abudus and the Andanis in the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

Government's propaganda in maintaining its legitimacy as an honest arbiter and legitimizing the activities of its security chiefs through the establishment of the Wuaku Commission as argued above should not however be misconstrued as 'plausible deniability'. 'Plausible deniability' (see chapter two) which is one of the psychological warfare techniques used by the U.S. is to allow the U.S. government to deny responsibility for operations that in reality originated from them. The Dagbon conflict case is however different. This is because the Ghana government did not launch the attack on the Yaa Naa but rather failed to halt it. The above notwithstanding and notwithstanding Taylor's treatise on the positives of it, which fits into this study in Alhaji Mahama's 'lie to avert bloodbath' (see above), propaganda has arguably contributed significantly to the perpetuation of the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

## 8.2 Censorship and the conflict

On censorship, government, the military and intelligence community adopted the pre-censorship (suppression of dissent and denial of access), post-censorship (threats and intimidation) and attachment where journalists were attached to elite sources (See chapter six). Whereas government recorded pre-censorship and post-censorship measures there was no embedding technique even though journalists were attached and induced with food (ibid). The military censorship measures in these categories were limited as they recorded no post-censorship or embedding techniques. The intelligence community recorded pre and post censorship techniques but no embedding technique of censorship. Even though Ghanaian journalists were attached to government and military sources they were not embedded (see chapter six). They were not attached to army units and government units for weeks, months or years as do their Western counterparts. They were also not compelled to adhere to security ground rules by the military. The threats of expulsion associated with 'wronging' the ground rules-one of the cardinal principles behind embedding-that secure favourable coverage for the military-were nonexistent. This is distinct from their Western counterparts who are normally attached to the military for weeks, months or years and are obliged to follow the ground rules or risk expulsion from the units.

The attachment of journalists to news actors in the Dagbon conflict was also not akin to the 'lobby system' as practiced in the British parliament. Lobby journalism-reporting of stories unrelated to parliamentary proceedings-in the British parliament enables journalists to constitute themselves into a group with committees and anticipate events other than just reporting parliamentary proceedings. They work under rules, cardinal amongst which is secrecy where they conceal their sources under 'a parliamentary source' or 'sources close

to the Prime Minister's office' (Parliamentary Press Gallery, March 6, 2015) see also (U.K. Parliament Homepage). They get unparalleled access to parliament and regular briefings and scoop (New Statesman, August 1, 2017). In the Dagbon case the situation was markedly different as journalists did not form a group, were (having reported the conflict myself) 'cherry picked' by their media organisations to report and were not required to follow any rules beyond the expected journalistic ethics of accuracy, fairness and balance. What the journalists did was to engage in the normal journalistic practice applied across the journalism profession. *Arguably therefore embedding was not used in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict. I argue that journalists were simply attached to sources to report in the Dagbon conflict and therefore did not go through embedding neither did they go through lobby journalism. C*ensorship measures by government, the military and the intelligence community in the Dagbon conflict reportage had far reaching implications as argued below.

### 8.2.1 Implications

Government's decision to vet all reports on the Dagbon conflict before publication backed by a regulation (see chapter six) arguably situates in Moore (2013, pp.46)'s treatise on censorship as the official suppression or prohibition of forms of expression. This regulation and vetting of stories also lay claim to Knightley's (2004, pp.84) treatise on suppression of dissent and Carruthers' (2011, pp.50) position on same in relation to how the British and German governments used official secrecy acts to impose wide ranging prohibitions against the media in World War 1. The Ghanaian government's action inhibited the media's ability to report events that arguably could have led not only to exposing government's complicity leading to the Yaa Naa murder but potentially to the uncovering of his murderers. It's decision to declare the Gbewah palace a restricted area immediately after the murder of the Yaa Naa and its warning to journalists not to take pictures at the palace (see chapters five and six), respectively was part of the strategy of 'lock down or lock out' as argued by Allan and Sreedhaan (2017, pp.102) on access denial during the Iraqi war of 2003. It can also situate in Knightley's (2004, pp.105) treatise on access denial as he argues that during the same Iraqi war of 2003 only army photographers could take pictures at the front line. This access denial strategy subdued the media's ability to record fresh events that could have proven valuable in future investigations into the murder, especially so when Mahama (2009, pp.134) argues that 'the mercenaries' were still in Yendi guarding the 'Bolin lana' days after the murder of the Yaa Naa.

The post-censorship measure of intimidation and harassment of journalists who were in Yendi to report on activities of government officials at the Gbewah palace two days after the Yaa Naa murder is noteworthy. These journalists, while returning to the nation's capital Accra, were warned not to write anything objectionable to government and had their

pictures of the crime scene deleted by government officials (see chapters five and six). A government media reporter had this to say:

> …what I saw there still haunts me as a reporter and I feel sad that some of the stories that we ought to cover, they warned us when we were in the flight that whoever reports anything that we saw will be sanctioned because they will let the military and the police follow us and I still feel sad and I remember whilst we were in the aircraft going back to Accra, the then information minister and then one person who was his aid ordered all the photo reporters to delete every picture that they took in Yendi. When we got to Accra out of frustration I did the story I thought that I was doing an objective work, I reported whatever I saw but to my surprise when the story came out they were things that I did not add but they used their options (discretion) to delete whatever they thought was not proper but that was the truth (Interview, May 17, 2017).

This also proved a disincentive to the media's quests to publish accurate information that also could have aided in future criminal investigations into the matter. Government's action fits into Ochilo's (1993, pp.31) treatise on post-censorship of the media in Africa where in Malawi, Angola, Rwanda, amongst other African countries, journalists have been harassed threatened and intimidated for daring to write reports considered objectionable by government.

It is important to state also that government's decision not to disclose how the severed head and arm of the Yaa Naa were 'uncovered' (since there was no way those 'body parts' could have gotten to the palace by themselves) situates in Moore's (2013, pp.46) treatise on official suppression of news and that arguably pervaded the cause of justice. An Andani chief said:

> …Indeed, from the point when the Wauku Commission was set up to the time they concluded their work and reported to government, you could see conscious efforts by government appointees to bury the facts. And I will give you examples…am aware that when a high-powered government delegation came to Tamale…and met my family they promised to look deep into the matter and find the killers and bring them to justice. When they went to Yendi, visited the palace, got to the spot the Yaa Naa was burnt…met the other side (Abudus) and one person called iddirisu iddi also called Zalinko lana also called Mba dugu (said)…they did what they did-and by that killed the Yaa Naa-because for 28 years they knew no peace. This should have been a prime suspect. What makes it more annoying is that the government delegation introduced what they called a crack investigation team at the head of which was the current IGP. At that time, he was chief inspector David Asante Apeatu… he

heard Iddirisu Iddi. Iddirisu Iddi said this in the full glare of T.V. cameras on March 30, 2002. The midday news GBC broadcast it live and we heard it. Iddirisu iddi is roaming about a free man. So it looks like the Wuaku commission itself and then the govrenment appointees made the world believe they were looking for the truth but rather went to Yendi and buried the truth because on the first of April, four days after the murder of my brother and three days after the palace was under 24 hour police and military guard, the severed left arm and the head of my brother were found at the same spot where the government delegation led by J.H. Mensah visited in the presence of the crack investigation team headed by Apeatu. Apeatu was the same person who reported to the army officer that was taken from the 37 military hospital to perform autopsy on my brother's remains. He reported to him that they had found on the night of 31 March the severed arm and the head of my brother. How could that happen? It appears to me that Apeatu knew where they were and if this did not come to the government with excitement because that was a clear lead to establish who were part of the plan then it makes me believe that the government sent a team to bury rather than expose the truth (Interview, June 19, 2017).

It stands to reason that if government had not censored the identity of those in possession of the 'body parts', their arrests and prosecutions could have arguably led to the uncovering of those who planned and executed the murder of the Yaa Naa and his retinue. Once that had happened, I argue that the prosecution of *such persons* could have satisfied the people of Dagbon, served as a deterrent to others and having installed a new Yaa Naa, the tension as argued above could have reduced to the barest minimum if not completely abated. The contributions of the intelligence community and the military in the above censorship measure cannot also be ruled out since the security were those who handed the 'body parts' to government (see chapter five), having been guarding the palace area under dusk to dawn curfew.

Censorship measures were not confined to government, the military and intelligence agencies alone. Supporters of the feuding factions harassed and intimidated journalists. A management member of a private radio station in Tamale aligned to the Abudus had this to say about Andani supporters and intimidation:

   …to tell you the truth it was not easy. Tamale being an area thickly populated by the Andanis there were several occasions my radio station was attacked for merely putting out a chieftaincy story that was not in their favour not because the story was wrong…if you were not careful and you spoke the truth you were attacked and depending on where you were if you were at safe grounds you could speak the truth and the vice versa. That was one of the reasons

why (we were) attacked often because the owner of the station belonged to one of the divides and even though he did not interfere in our editorial affairs the fact that he owned it was an offence. We were attacked several times… (interview, June 16, 2017).

As discussed earlier in chapter four both the Abudu and Andani families intimidated journalists, including this author. Consequently, censorship like propaganda of the media has also contributed to the perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict.

## 8.3 Media bias (Daily Graphic newspaper and Ghana News Agency)

The propaganda and censorship measures affected media reportage as the media were compelled to rely on government for information by overwhelmingly constricting their publications to the views of elite/official sources to the disadvantage of the Abudus and the Andanis (see chapter seven), who were the main protagonists of the conflict. This is exemplified in Herman and Chomsky (2002) and Bennett (1990) (see chapter seven) who argue that opinions in the free Western media are 'constricted to the views of elite sources' and the media during war time produce 'propaganda rather than independent journalism'. Goddard et al. (2008, pp.10,) support their treatises on the media's role in the Western world and attribute the situation to the media's excessive dependence on official sources for news. Herman and Chomsky (1988, pp.2) argue that the media is an integral part of the class welfare and act in consent with the powerful political elite to establish, enforce, reinforce and monitor corporate hegemony. That arguably creates a situation in which preferred meanings embedded in news are 'those that are functional for the elite'. This therefore creates a symbiotic relationship between the media and the political actors (ibid, pp 20-23). This together with the fear of flak renders the media prone to constricting their publications to the views of elite sources. This situation that was epitomized in the Ghana media reportage of the Dagbon conflict rendered the media 'faithful servants' of the state and 'propagandists' for the NPP government and practitioners of 'Patriotic Journalism' (see chapter seven). Propaganda treatises by Goddard et al. (2008), Bennett (1990), Herman and Chomsky (2002) and the propaganda module by Herman and Chomsky (1988) have therefore been useful in this study.

Media bias also includes imbalance, exaggeration and colourful language. It also includes wrong attribution, lack of equal treatment of story actors amongst others. McQuail, (1977, pp.107) argues that media bias emanates from imbalance in news presentation and this is exemplified in the Dagbon conflict reportage. As argued in chapter seven both the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and the *Ghana News Agency* (GNA) respectively recorded 17.7 and 16.4 percent of imbalance in their news presentation on the conflict out of 111 and 116 stories sampled within the study period (see chapter seven). The *GNA's* several publications on Andanis allegations against some key Abudu government officials' involvement in the

murder of the Yaa Naa without contacting the Abudus for their responses in same publications were inconsistent with the journalism principles of fairness and balance. These suggested or reinforced the allegations that those Abudu government officials were guilty of the murder or conspiracy to murder the Yaa Naa ahead of any findings by any investigative body. This action by the news agency had implications for peace journalism as they constituted a substantial risk of 'courting' hatred for the accused amongst members of the Andani family, who were already fuming with rage as a result of the murder of the Dagbon king. The *Daily Graphic* newspaper was not spared this form of bias. Whereas it did not publish Andanis allegations against Abudu government officials' involvement in the crisis as did the *GNA*, the *Daily Graphic* newspaper decided to offer those government officials space to deny those allegations of involvement published by other news outlets. A clear case is that the paper reported that '...there has been a series of allegations *seeking to implicate* the retired major...', (Daily Graphic, April 8, 2002) in reference to the allegations by the Andanis that major (rtd) Sulemana, an Abudu and government security advisor was culpable in the murder of the Dagbon king. Apart from the fact that the paper failed to publish the initial allegations against Sulemana by the Andanis, it gave Sulemana's 'rebuttal' a front-page prominence. However, allegations made against government were published with responses from government sources (see chapter seven). Even though that was good journalism practice it was expected that the same principle of fairness would have been adhered to by the paper throughout its reportage of the Dagbon conflict. The paper's failure to do so when it involved non-government officials suggested lack of balance on its part. This lack of balance was arguably a demonstration of slant and this also finds expression in Entman (2010, pp.393)'s content bias thesis that argues that media bias is a 'consistently slanted framing of mediated communication' and cautions that media bias should arise only when research demonstrates that slant holds over time and pervades the most influential media outlets. As argued in chapter seven the statistics show imbalance was held over time and in this study the two media outlets sampled are arguably part of the most influential media outlets in Ghana (see chapters three and seven). McQuail's theory on news imbalance and Entman's content bias theory (see above) have therefore been useful in this study. Entman's decision making bias where journalists allow their ideologies to guide the news, they produce is however not evidently applicable in this study.

Media bias includes the intrusion of subjective opinion by the reporter or news organization into what is purportedly a factual account, Hackett (1984, pp.322). McQuail (1977, pp.107) defines news bias as the use of argument which colours on otherwise factual report and conveys an implicit but clear value judgment. These two definitions of news bias are epitomized in this study of the Dagbon conflict reportage, especially at the Wuaku Commission sittings where both the *Daily Graphic* and the *GNA* used value laden words that exposed their subjective opinions and implicitly conveyed their clear value judgment. The use of colourful language by the *GNA* 'denied but visibly fumbled' (June 28,

2002) and Mahama 'fumed and began with his cheeky responses' (July 6, 2002) amongst others about witnesses of the Andani family are value laden words that portrayed bias on the part of the media house as they were opinions expressed by their reporters. They also described the carnage as a result of an 'age-long crisis' (April 5, 2002), 'fighting between Abudus and Andanis' (January 7, 2003), (instead of attack on the Yaa Naa) and 'protracted chieftaincy feud' (Nov.17, 2004), a description that fitted into government's frame of the conflict as part of government's propaganda (see chapter five). The *GNA* also suggested that the crisis was the 'biggest weapon in the arsenal of the campaign armoury of the NDC as it seeks to unseat the incumbent NPP in the impending elections' (July 5, 2004). This portrayed a value judgement on its part. The News Agency again engaged in value judgement when it reported about a deputy Attorney General that 'She made it clear' that the government has not aligned itself to either side of the conflict and suggested that the deputy minister 'wondered' how a lasting solution could be found to the problem if the Andanis, continued to keep themselves out of the process (January 10, 2003). The *GNA* also reported that there was 'absolute peace' in Yendi in its Nov. 28, 2004 bulletin only to report again that Dagbon was 'split down the middle' (Dec. 2, 2004). This was not only an exaggeration 'split down the middle' but a euphemism 'absolute peace' since a divided people cannot live in absolute peace. It also exposed the *GNA* as lacking institutional memory (on that occasion) since they failed to appreciate that the two mental pictures they painted to the reader (in less than a week) were contradictory and thus paradoxical. The use of value laden words and phrases like 'wondered' 'made it clear', 'absolute peace' and 'split down the middle' is clear value judgment since they were opinions expressed by the reporters and this is grounded in McQuail (1977)'s and Hackett (1984)'s theories on news bias (see above). Hackett's and McQuail's theories on media bias have therefore been useful in this study.

The *Daily Graphic* newspaper also recorded these slanting of mediated communication against the Andanis; an Andani witness…Na Abdulai '*flared up* when it came to the turn of the counsel for the Abudus…' (August 30, 2002) and 'Andanis *reacted angrily* over the actions of the security personnel…' (June 28, 2002). Again, it said, 'members of the Andani family *joining in the confusion'* (ibid). The paper also reported that Andanis were 'making a series of allegations *seeking to implicate* the retired major…' (Daily Graphic, April 8, 2002). The paper also said about the Abudus that at the Wuaku Commission an 'Abudu witness…Ziblim who *grew angry*…when counsel for the Andanis…' (July 4, 2002). The use of these value laden words like 'fumed …cheeky response' 'denied but visibly fumbled' by the *GNA* and '*flared up', 'reacted angrily'* and *joining in the confusion by the Daily Graphic* portrayed the Andanis as violent people and liars*. Additionally, Andanis *seeking to implicate the retired major* tagged the Andanis as unscrupulous group, a tag judgmental on the part of the *Daily Graphic as it* suggested the Andanis were just bent on implicating the retired major. These value laden words arguably had the potential of activating the

sensitivities of the people rendering it dangerous for conflict sensitive journalism as espoused by Galtung (1998). Galtung argues that a journalist in reporting conflict must focus on 'peace' 'truth' be 'people centred' and 'solution centred' (1986, 1998). However, the evidence above suggests the *GNA* and the *Daily Graphic* did not promote peace reporting and were also elite centred in their sources. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) support Galtung when they argue that peace journalism is when 'editors and reporters make choices–of what stories to report, and how to report them–that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflict' (2005, pp.5). Galtung (1986, 1998) and Lynch and McGoldrick (2005)'s treatises on conflict sensitive journalism are therefore useful in this study not only in the use of exaggeration, euphemism and over reliance on elite sources above but also in attribution bias by the two news portals as evidenced below.

The two media outlets referred to Abdulai Mahamadu, the first son of Abdulai IV as 'Bolin Lana' (see chapter seven). This was not only a wrong attribute but implicitly gave away a chieftaincy title to him even though he told the Wuaku Commission that he was not a chief (see Wuaku Commission sitting, August 21, 2002). This had implications for conflict sensitive journalism. The implication of this 'tag' together with reference to him as 'leader of the Abudu family' and 'regent of the Abudus' and 'regent of Dagbon' (see chapter seven) is that it increases perception amongst Abudus and Ghanaians in general that Abdulai Mahamadu is a chief and that fuels perception on the existence of a parallel authority in the Dagbon kingship. The perception of the existence of parallel authority in Yendi was one of the remote causes of the current dispute (see chapter one). Reference to Kuga-naa as 'regent of Dagbon' (Nov. 28, 2004) was also not desirable since he is vested with the customary powers of enskining a Yaa Naa and acts as king of Dagbon in the absence of a Yaa Naa. It sought to align him with the Andani faction since it was their turn to produce a regent from amongst the children of the slain king. That 'tag' could compromise the Kuga naa's neutrality in the eyes of Dagbon while he was acting as their king. In 2004 when he was referred to as such, the Yaa Naa was not buried and his regent was not installed. There was therefore no Dagbon regent. The Kuga naa was acting as Dagbon king, according to custom until 2006 when the king was buried, and his regent was installed. These attribution biases arguably posed a threat to peace journalism as argued in chapter seven.

Even though finding on media bias was based on two media outlets (see chapter seven) the views of opinion leaders from the Abudu and Andani factions support the finding that the media was arguably generally biased in favour of elite sources. They accused the media of over dependence on official/elite sources in reporting the conflict, lack of background information that affected the quality and accuracy of the news as well as the use of half truths and wrong sourcing all of which affects peace journalism (see chapter seven).

As argued in chapter seven even though the biases may appear negligible quantitatively, their qualitative effect, especially on peace journalism cannot be underestimated. Arguably therefore the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and the *Ghana News Agency* were biased in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict and some of those biases (especially reports on the Wuaku Commission sittings) arguably constituted a disincentive to lessening the conflict.

In overall terms, coverage of the two media houses concentrated more on the attack and murder of the Yaa Naa, the declaration of State of Emergency and the declaration of a censorship regime by government. Others were government's responses to the Yaa Naa murder, including the setting up and sittings of the Wuaku Commission and the Committee of Eminent Chiefs as well as reactions from the Abudu and Andani families over the murder of the Yaa Naa.

## 8.4 Conclusion

The above analyses show that there was wide use of propaganda, censorship and to some extent media bias in the coverage of the Dagbon conflict. The analyses also show that propaganda, censorship and media bias have had negative implications on the conflict. These therefore support the proposition that propaganda, censorship and media bias are responsible for the perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict. The next chapter is the concluding chapter where I will summarize the main points of this study and offer concluding reflections.

## CHAPTER NINE

## CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

## 9.0 Introduction

This chapter concludes this study on propaganda, censorship and the media in Ghana's Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. It will summarize the main points of the discussion and offer some lessons for journalists in Ghana on journalism practice. It will also offer lessons for scholars of media war and conflict in the West on media and conflict in Ghana and Africa and make recommendations for further research.

## 9.1 Structure of the study

Chapter one offered background information and brief history of the Dagbon conflict. This took the case of the origin of the conflict since 1948 and the interventions made by various governments at various stages of the conflict, including the setting up of committees. It also discussed responses of the New Patriotic Party (NPP) government and the opposition National Democratic Congress (NDC) to the murder of the Dagbon king, Yaa Naa Yakubu II on March 27, 2002.

Chapter two reviewed the literature on media, war and conflict in the West and Africa. It discussed censorship and propaganda of the media in those areas. The chapter looked at how governments, the military and the intelligence community in those areas manipulated the media using censorship and propaganda. It also discussed theoretical frameworks on 'Public Opinion' 'Media Bias' 'Objectivity' and 'Peace Journalism' to provide some of the framework for the study.

Chapter three discussed the methodology used in the study, including the collection of data for the study. The use of qualitative method, ethnography and reflexivity to gather data was explored in this chapter. In all, this chapter discussed how and why I chose and designed my methods and how they affected the reliability and transferability of my findings. It also discussed 'Textual and Thematic Analysis' and 'Auto-ethnography' to provide the framework for the understanding of my RQs.

Chapter four discussed the 'Auto-ethnography' of the study that included my experiences in reporting the Dagbon conflict. Chapter five, six and seven respectively discussed and analysed the empirical factors of propaganda, censorship and media bias in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict. Chapter eight analyzed the findings on propaganda censorship and media bias that supported the proposition that they contributed to the perpetuation of the conflict.

## 9.2 Significance of the study

This study on propaganda censorship and media bias in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict is significant for two reasons:

1.  It is the first study on government, the intelligence community and the military propaganda and censorship of the media in the reportage of conflicts in Africa and Ghana, including the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict
2.  It is also the first comprehensive study on media reportage of chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana, including the Dagbon chieftaincy conflict

The above notwithstanding, there are some studies on propaganda and censorship of the media in Africa. For instance studies on the Rwandan genocide, including Jolyon (2007), Thomson (2007), Noam (2011), Carruthers (2011), Catharine (2009), and amongst others Yanagizawa-Drott (2014) found the use of propaganda by Hutus against the Tutsis and provide evidences of Hutus led government and military participation in the propaganda culminating in the deaths of about 800,000 people. Again, journalists were banned from accessing the Matabeleland conflict (a political conflict) zone in Zimbabwe in the 1970s Sikosana (2011, pp.46). In Malawi, 'some journalists have either been detained or fired for writing critical editorials' Ochilo (1993, pp.31). Similar harassments have been recorded in other African countries such as Angola, Rwanda, Somalia, Togo, Zaire and Ivory Coast (ibid). Stremlau (2018) also focuses amongst others on how traditional and new media are used in waging wars in Africa.

These studies however do not comprehensively discuss propaganda and censorship of the media in the reportage of conflicts in Africa by governments, the military and intelligence community. Where they discuss conflicts as reported by Stremlau (2018) or like the Rwandan example above that recorded government and military propaganda, such studies do not also discuss intelligence community propaganda in African conflicts and propaganda and censorship in the reportage of chieftaincy conflicts in Africa. This therefore makes this thesis very significant for the study of propaganda, censorship and media bias by students and scholars of media and conflict in Africa and the West as well as historians of the Dagbon conflict. It is also important for media practitioners in Ghana and Africa to learn about how the Ghanaian media was manipulated by governments, the intelligence community and the military in the reportage of the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

The significance notwithstanding, the study as discussed in the methodology in chapter three is limited in that the sampling framework has been constructed around two media houses; *Daily Graphic* and *Ghana News Agency* to detect media bias. The two media outlets were considered out of over ten media houses at the time of the beginning of the latest conflict in 2002 and 382 radio stations and over 35 newspapers' houses in the country now (National Media Commission report, 2017). This was a limitation since the inclusion of

more media houses could have generated more examples of media bias. Comparing the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency*; two *government-controlled media* organizations to detect media bias in a study that involved government and some of its agencies like the military was also a limitation. This is because the inclusion of private independent media houses like *Joy FM, Citi FM* and *The Insight newspaper* amongst others could have arguably presented some interesting findings in terms of media independence in the reportage of the conflict.

Again, generating concepts of propaganda and censorship largely on *government controlled Daily Graphic* and *Ghana News Agency* publications could limit the study's ability to record more concepts strategies and techniques of propaganda and censorship. This is because the inclusion of more private media houses could have given a more 'independent' approach to the reportage of the conflict that could have generated some more interesting findings on techniques of propaganda and censorship.

These limitations notwithstanding, this study has arguably demonstrated clearly the use of propaganda and censorship as well as media bias in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict in *government-controlled media*. The significance of generating concepts of propaganda censorship and media bias largely from news reports in the *Daily Graphic* and the *Ghana News Agency* to test the proposition that propaganda censorship and media bias are responsible for the perpetuation of the Dagbon conflict is therefore markedly noticeable.

There has been indiscriminate use of propaganda and censorship by Ghana governments, the military and the intelligence community as well as the warring factions as revealed in this *first study on government, the intelligence community and the military censorship and propaganda in the reportage of conflicts in Africa and Ghana, including the Dagbon conflict.* The main findings are as follows:

1. For propaganda; government propaganda took the form of deliberate and fabricated lies (disinformation), deception through lying, misinformation, censorship as tool for propaganda, intimidation and threats of journalists. It also included frames as propaganda tool and the use of 'word game' like the fear factor, transfer, name calling, glittering generality and plain folks (see chapter five).
2. For the military; propaganda took the pattern of lies, facilitative communication, fear factor, hate propaganda and name calling (ibid).
3. The intelligence community propaganda also recorded censorship as propaganda tool, deception, facilitative communication, fear factor and psychological warfare (see chapter five).
4. For the Abudus and Andanis, lies, deception and atrocity propaganda were employed (ibid).

However. whereas government propaganda was widespread, military and intelligence community propaganda were limited but noticeable just like propaganda by the conflicting factions (the Abudus and the Andanis). For censorship, government, the military and intelligence community adopted the pre-censorship (suppression of dissent and denial of access), post-censorship (threats and intimidation) and attachment where journalists were attached to elite sources (See chapter six). The main findings are:

1.  Government recorded pre-censorship measures, including suppression of dissent and denial of access and post-censorship measures like threats and intimidation. There was however no embedding technique and even though journalists were attached and induced with food, the practice was neither embedding nor lobbying as done in the British parliament but reflected a routine journalistic practice practiced across the journalism profession (see chapters six and eight).

2.  The military censorship occurred in the above category on pre-censorship but was less broad as compared to government censorship with no post-censorship and no embedding techniques.

3.  The intelligence community recorded pre and post censorship techniques but no embedding technique of censorship (see chapter six).

*In this first comprehensive study on media reportage of chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana, including the Dagbon conflict,* the study found that:

1.  Official/elite/government sources dominated the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict, and that the *Daily Graphic* newspaper was more biased in overall terms than the *Ghana News Agency*. It also found that opinion leaders of the Abudus and Andanis thought the media was generally biased in favour of elite sources and failed to do due diligence to background information in their reportage of the conflict. The study also found that both news outlets did not show much regard for peace journalism in their reportage of the conflict. Their disregard for conflict sensitive journalism (see chapter seven) especially on the coverage of the Wuaku Commission proceedings, their uses of exaggeration and euphemism as well as slant and wrong attribution were noticeable even though not widespread throughout the sampled period (ibid). As argued in chapter seven even though the biases may appear negligible quantitatively, their qualitative effect, especially on peace journalism cannot be underestimated. For instance the use of imagery that sought to portray the Andanis as 'liars' and 'non conformists' to the rules of engagement at the Wuaku Commission sittings (see chapter seven) as against submissions by the Abudus that did not carry those negative tags had implications on the peace process that the nation and government were regularly preaching.

2. Dependence on elite sources for news rendered the media 'faithful servants' of the state and 'propagandists' for the NPP government (see chapter seven).

3. Cultivating wrong attribution for Abdulai Mahamadu as 'regent of the Abudus' and 'Bolin Lana' (a chieftaincy title), was not only factually incorrect but also defied custom and tradition of Dagbon and constituted a substantial risk of creating the impression that there was a parallel traditional authority in Yendi-one of the factors that triggered the latest conflict (see chapters one and seven).

Arguably therefore the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and the *Ghana News Agency* were biased in their reportage of the Dagbon conflict and some of those biases (especially reports on the Wuaku Commission sittings) arguably constituted a disincentive to lessening the conflict. Considerably, propaganda censorship and media bias were obvious in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict and (as argued earlier) contributed significantly to the perpetuation of the conflict.

## 9.3 Lessons for journalists in Ghana

This study has revealed the need for journalists in Ghana to practice conflict sensitive journalism, especially in reporting chieftaincy and political conflicts. As chapter seven revealed, the disregard for peace journalism by the *Daily Graphic* newspaper and the *Ghana News Agency* in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict was evident. This was through the use of imagery, exaggeration and wrong attribution, a phenomenon that should be avoided in the reportage of conflicts in Ghana (and Africa) because of its implication on conflicts. Several uses of imageries around the dismembered body of the slain Yaa Naa by the *Daily Graphic* like 'Jahinfo holding the blood soaked human head' and 'Gyanfo using an iron bar to pick the battered head with blood oozing from all over' amongst others (see chapter seven) could have been avoided. The same point could have been made as 'being in possession of some dismembered body parts (or dismembered remains) of the slain king'. Lynch and McGoldrick (2005) argue that peace journalism is when 'editors and reporters make choices–of what stories to report and how to report them–that create opportunities for society at large to consider and value non-violent responses to conflicts' (2005, pp.5). The imageries above were enough to remind the Andanis of the way the Yaa Naa was killed and that could have provoked some of them to violent action. The use of value laden words like 'Andanis have been making series of allegations seeking to implicate the retired major...hiring mercenaries to kill the Yaa Naa' was value judgement and thus bias on the part of the *Daily Graphic* (see chapter seven) since it suggested that the Andanis were trying to incriminate the retired major without providing evidence to that effect. McQuail (1977, pp.107) defines bias to include '...the use of argument which colours on otherwise factual report and conveys an implicit but clear value judgment...'. The paper could have

simply stated that the 'Andanis are alleging that the retired major hired mercenaries…'. See more of the use of imageries in chapter seven.

On attribution, reference to Abdulai Mahamadu as 'Bolin lana' and 'head of Abudu family' and 'regent of Dagbon' by the media was wrong as his factually correct title was first son of Abdulai IV (see chapter seven). The media's continuous reference to him as 'Bolin lana' was therefore a recipe for confusion which is not good for peace journalism. The implication of the 'Bolin lana' tag together with references to him as 'leader of the Abudu family' and 'regent of Dagbon' was that it increased perception amongst Abudus and Ghanaians in general that Abdulai Mahamadu was a chief. This fuelled perception of the existence of a parallel authority in the Dagbon kingship-one of the remote causes of the current dispute (see chapters one and seven).

Reference to Kuga-Naa as 'regent of Dagbon' was not only factually incorrect but dangerous. A regent could only come from the Andani family since the slain king was Andani. The regent was to be the king's first son of sane mind without physical deformities, who would be enskinned as chief (in case he was not already one) before he could see his father's remains to pave way for his burial and subsequent performance of his funeral. Giving the circumstances surrounding the demise of Yaa Naa Yakubu II, the installation of his regent and his burial took four years to conduct. This was because the Andanis refused to bury him until his murderers were found (see chapter one). Controversies surrounding his burial made it impossible for his regent to be installed for the four-year period. During this period the Kuga Naa was acting as overlord of Dagbon. According to Dagbon custom, immediately a Yaa Naa passes on the Kuga Naa assumes his position as acting Yaa Naa ahead of the installation of a regent. Therefore Kuga-Naa as 'regent of Dagbon' sought to align him with the Andani faction, a situation that could compromise his neutrality as the acting king in the eyes of the Dagbon people, especially the Abudus. His factually correct attribute then therefore was 'Kuga Naa acting overlord of the Dagbon Traditional area'.

Significantly, the use of factually correct attributes and avoidance of hyperbole in news reports could arguably jettison the potential of wrong attributes and imageries in news reports creating wrong impressions (as discussed above). Such wrong impressions could compromise the delicate peace in the Dagbon area.

The study also revealed that journalists could hardly appreciate some of the propaganda and censorship techniques and thus 'dutifully' welcomed them. For instance, a senior journalist who reported the Dagbon conflict said, 'they arranged transport for reporters to the conflict arena sometimes food is arranged for the reporters and other things are facilitated for them to feel comfortable' (June 24, 2017). Given that the gesture was not just intended by the military and government officials to make them feel comfortable but to control the way they reported (see chapter two) epitomizes lack of appreciation on the part

of some journalists about the use of these propaganda and censorship techniques. This therefore stresses the need for the Ghanaian journalists to be trained in propaganda and censorship through refresher courses. The following topics could be considered:

1.   For propaganda; topics like history of propaganda and the media, propaganda and politics, propaganda and conflict reporting, theories and concepts of propaganda like organized persuasive communication, word game, information disorder, facilitative communication and deception and denial are recommended. Other topics could include types of propaganda like black white and grey propaganda as well as propaganda techniques like threats, intimidation, violence, inducement and image manipulation.
2.   For censorship; censorship measures like embedding, pooling and denial of access, threats, intimidation, harassment and inducement as well as media and censorship should be the focus of the discussion.

Such trainings will help the Ghanaian journalists (both trained and untrained, including the school drop-outs) to study the use of propaganda and censorship to be able to detect them in a more professional manner in reporting conflicts. In a country where school 'drop-outs' are used as general reporters, the need for training becomes even more compelling if journalists in Ghana are to be more professional in the practice of conflict sensitive journalism. For treatise on peace journalism or conflict sensitive journalism see chapters two and seven.

## 9.4 Lessons for journalism institutions and media houses

Ghanaian institutions of journalism do not offer detailed courses in Propaganda Studies. Given the massive use of propaganda and censorship in the Dagbon conflict reportage, it is important for institutions that offer journalism training, made up of the Ghana Institute of Journalism, the University of Education, Winneba, the University for Development Studies, Tamale and the University of Cape Coast as well as the School of Communications Studies at the University of Ghana, Legon, to begin to offer thorough courses in media censorship and propaganda studies. This will draw journalists' attention to propaganda and censorship and how to detect them in their reportage. Refresher courses are often organised for journalists by media houses and civil society organisations on political reporting, conflict reporting, sanitation, environment and business reporting as well as ethics in journalism. However, having attended many of such programmes that discussed the above topics, I argue that they are not enough to address issues of propaganda and censorship in the media, especially in relation to the concepts discussed in this thesis. Given the potential of propaganda and censorship as well as media bias to perpetuate conflicts (as in the case of the Dagbon conflict as found in this study), there is the need for media organisations to intensify the building of the capacity of their journalists. They

should also deemphasize the engagement of school 'drop-outs' as journalists (or sponsor them to pursue further education), whose engagements are influenced by the inability and or reluctance on the part of owners of media houses to meet the higher salary demands of professionally trained journalists. School 'drop-outs' are often preferred by media owners because they accept whatever offer is given them for their labour.

The engagement of school 'drop-outs' as journalists and the lack of professional training for journalists have provided fertile grounds for state actors like government and other news actors like conflicting parties to propagandize the media and render them vehicles for feeding the public with 'doctored information'. This lack of high professional standards in Ghana has long been the focus of attention by Isaac (1988, pp.89) and Boafo (1988, pp.62, 64) in their various treatises on the media in Ghana. For instance (Brouhard, 1979) cited in Boafo (1988, pp.62) states that a survey conducted on journalists' training and working conditions in the late 1970s revealed that 9 percent of journalists reporting in various media houses in Ghana had no formal media training. Four decades on, Paulitsch and Hummelink (2012, pp.1) writing on problems of journalism in Ghana in an online news article mention lack of educational requirements for becoming a journalist as a factor. '...in Ghana everyone is able to work as a journalist sometimes even without basic education' (Ibid). This situation that still pervades the country's media landscape (especially in the radio stations that number 382 across the country) constitutes a substantial risk of undermining not only responsible journalism but also peace journalism. Responsible journalism, especially in the reportage of conflicts could seriously be undermined as inadequate or lack of scholarly knack on the part of these 'school drop-out journalists' could compromise their comprehension of propaganda and censorship issues. This could lead to the production of 'doctored information' that could arguably pose a threat to peace journalism. Consequently, the need for training of journalists as indicated above is imperative.

## 9.5 Lessons for Western scholars of media, war and conflict

Western scholars of media and conflict have offered scholarship on the role of the media in the Rwandan genocide (see 9.2 above). These scholars argue that the Rwandan media encouraged participation in violence by the Hutus against the Tutsis through broadcasting of anti-Tutsi propaganda and suggest that mass media can affect violence and increase the participation of violence by citizens against fellow citizens. Yanagizawa-Drott (2014, pp.195) claim in a study that 10 percent of the total participation in the genocide was caused by Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), a local radio station that broadcast anti-Tutsi propaganda. This scholarship coalesces around the shared view that Hutus led government and militias used the media to encourage the participation of violence by the Hutus majority against the Tutsis minority with hate propaganda, culminating in the deaths of about 800,000 people. The media was used by the Hutus to

demonize and mobilize public support against the Tutsis, using outright lies and half truths as well as 'hate and atrocity propaganda', leading to the genocide (Carruthers, pp.19-21). Hutu broadcasters for instance informed audience that 'Tutsi rebels (were) rushing in from Uganda to pauperize, displace and subjugate Rwandan majority population' (atrocity propaganda) and urged them to 'strike them before they strike you' (ibid, pp.20) and referred to them as 'dogs' 'snakes' and 'cockroaches' (hate propaganda) (ibid, pp.19). The media then fuelled the conflict as it encouraged listeners to kill and maim. Whereas scholarship on the role of the media in effecting violence in Rwanda in Africa is conspicuous in Western literature on media war and conflict, scholarship on the role of the media in checking the escalation of violence or nibing it in the bud in Africa is missing. The use of propaganda in the media (radio) to fuel conflict in Rwanda is arguably the direct opposite of the Ghana Dagbon case where radio was used to alert government officials of an impending 'regicide' but the warning signs were ignored and rejected by government leading to the murder of the Yaa Naa and others. As discussed in chapters one, four and five, JOY NEWS reports of an imminent attack on Ghana's Dagbon Gbewah palace could have prevented the Yaa Naa murder that re-ignited the latest Dagbon conflict in 2002 if political authorities had acted promptly. JOY NEWS, following from reports of tension in Yendi had on March 26, 2002 contacted government spokespersons, including the Interior Minister who denied any tension in the area. They then spoke to secretary to the Yaa Naa on the same day who confirmed the palace was under attack, but government again denied it and accused JOY NEWS of mischief. JOY NEWS later wrote 'At the time JOY FM spoke to the Ya Na's secretary on Tuesday, fighting was still going on, but the police were nowhere to be found' (JOY ONLINE, March 30, 2002). They again stated:

> Despite the warning signals, government officials still insisted and even broadcast on national radio that Yendi was calm. Not even alarm signals from the advisor of the Dagbon king pushed government officials to action. Government rather accused JOY News of mischief. The flurry of activity that followed was to develop into concise reportage of the country's worst chieftaincy feud in recent times (ibid).

The JOY NEWS report later assumed 'prophetic significance' as the Gbewah palace was attacked and scores of people, including the Dagbon king killed after three days of attack on the palace. *Yet scholars of media war and conflict have yet to discuss this positive role the media played in the Dagbon situation and the seeming lackadaisical attitude of politicians to distress calls by the media to halt the imminent Gbewah palace attack.*

In Ghana, beyond the use of techniques of threats, intimidation and harassment akin to the techniques used against the Western media by Western governments as discussed by Western scholars of media war and conflict (see chapter two), the Ghana government's use

of threats intimidation and harassment against the media often also come in the form of physical violence. Party and government 'foot soldiers' are often unleashed onto critical media personnel who beat journalists up, accusing them of being in bed with the opposition and trying to undermine their government in order to bring it down (see chapter four on my account of attacks on me and 6.5 in chapter six on *North Star* radio management member's account on intimidation and attacks on them). This is reminiscent of the situation in Burundi where government and party functionaries destroyed a radio station and scores of journalists harassed, intimidated and accused of being 'accomplices' to a failed coup for providing a platform for demonstrators protesting against the third time presidential bid of President Nkurunziza (see chapter two). See also Risso (2017) in chapter two on challenges faced by African journalists in reporting ethnic conflicts in Africa, including personal safety. In Ghana beyond the physical violence, there is also the risk of social exclusion as critical journalists are often portrayed as hypocrites and untrustworthy by these politicians to the people. The people end up distancing themselves from the journalists because they fear to be labelled 'accomplices to hypocrisy'. Under the circumstance, people risk being accused of leaking government information to such journalists if they are seen publicly with the journalists and or associating with them in any way. This is often felt at social gatherings like funerals and weddings amongst other social events where people shy away from these journalists because they do not want to be cited for 'compromising a collective interest to satisfy a hypocrite enterprise'. This technique works more effectively against indigenous local journalists since they are part of the people and the culture. Such journalists often end up being isolated and reviled by their own people. Non-indigenous journalists have often found a way of surviving this technique by staying away from reports that could incur the displeasure of these powerful politicians or report under disguised by-lines like 'from our roving correspondent' or 'from our reporter' or 'from our correspondent'. The ability of these politicians to court violence hatred and isolation against these journalists is a case that needs exploration in the scholarship on global Journalism Studies. *This therefore provides a fertile ground for further interrogation by Western scholars of media war and conflict of these uses of physical violence and social exclusion by politicians and governments in Ghana as a technique of censorship and propaganda to secure favourable coverage in the media in times of simmering bloody conflicts like the Dagbon conflict.*

This study unlike other media and conflict studies, de-westernises media and conflict studies in its contribution to new insights into how the concept of embedding works in non-western countries, including Ghana. The concept of 'attachment' in this study is designed by the Ghanaian censors to ensure favourable coverage just like embedding does for the western censors. However, there are no written ground rules to obey neither are journalists embedded for weeks or months or clothed or accomodated by their censors. They spend a few hours with their censors and obey spontaneous rules in order not to

attract the wrath of their censors. This concept of attachment could therefore serve as a new concept in discussing embedding in global Journalism Studies scholarship.

This study has also generated new insight into the concept of inducement in non-western countries, including Ghana. In Ghana, (as found in this study) journalists are often given money to facilitate coverage of events, including during the reportage of the Dagbon conflict (see chapter four). Popularly called 'soli' in Ghana and derived from the word solidarity, journalists often take money either to report favourably or to refrain from publishing damaging news. This practice is so widespread that it has become 'institutionalised' where government departments, including the security agencies, district assemblies as well as non-governmental organisations, political parties and individuals pay money to ensure favourable media coverage. Even though journalists have often been criticised for this and accused of 'selling their medium to the highest bidder', they often explain that they use the money to facilitate transportation to cover the programmes. This concept of 'solidarity' could serve as a new form of inducement in global Journalism Studies scholarship.

The study has revealed that opinion leaders in the Dagbon conflict reportage were used as 'facilitators of censorship and propaganda'. As discussed in chapter four, functionaries of the National Democratic Congress government relied on Andani opinion leaders to prevail upon me and other Andani family reporters to 'tone down' on our critical reportage of their government for failing to establish a presidential commission to investigate the murder of the Yaa Naa as promised in their manifesto. This strategy of using opinion leaders to censor and propagandise the media could potentially serve as new insight into the study of propaganda and censorship in global Journalism Studies scholarship.

The study has also shown that 'ambiguous' judicial pronouncements on conflicts has the potential of exacerbating the conflicts since parties to the conflicts could exploit the ambiguity to advance their positions on the matter. Ghana's Supreme court having upheld an earlier ruling which deposed Abdulai IV as Yaa Naa, went on to pronounce him 'former Yaa Naa' with conferred rights and privileges setting the stage for the Abudus and the Andanis to argue over whether his funeral should be performed at the very Gbewah palace that he was ousted from. It was this disagreement that sparked off the conflict that consumed the life of Yaa Naa Yakubu II and re-ignited the latest Dagbon chieftaincy conflict.

Researching the Dagbon conflict where the researcher is culturally located on one side of the conflict poses a serious risk of misleading the researcher and compromising the researcher's reflexive role in the research process. Reflexivity is about being honest and ethically mature in the research process (see chapter three) but some respondents on the researcher's side of the conflict would often expect the researcher to present their side of the case in a manner that would reflect only their own understanding and position on the

matter, even when it is clear that some of the 'facts' they present are not correct. In this study my encounter with some Andani respondents revealed a conscious attempt to bias the data. One of such was in relation to how the Yaa Naa was murdered when one Andani respondent who survived the attack at the Yaa Naa's palace, claimed that the king was not hit by a bullet contrary to the autopsy report that stated that he died through a bullet wound. The respondent was one of several hundreds in Dagbon who believed that the Yaa Naa could survive the attack because of the widespread belief in Dagbon that Dagomba chiefs, their elders and other 'elevated subjects' are magically powerful and could withstand bullets fired at them. Dagombas tout their magical prowess to include their ability to withstand bullets fired at them. The belief in charms and magical protection in Dagbon is a long held one dating back to the establishment of the Dagbon kingdom in the 15th century and as *The Guardian Online* in London found out, Dagbon has a long tradition in ancient beliefs, 'with a power structure reliant on soothsayers and charms' (July, 5, 2012). The respondent's position, shared by hundreds of other Dagombas, was therefore arguably in line with the popular belief that Dagomba chiefs are magically powerful and could withstand any violent threats to their life, including the firing of guns at them. Attempt at biasing the researcher's data by means of the trust in charms and magical protection could serve as a useful tool in discussing constraints in researching ethnic and chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana and Africa in global Journalism Studies scholarship.

There is also the risk of respondents holding back vital information from the researcher in situations where the researcher and the respondent do not belong to the same side of the conflict. In such a situation, the credibility of data could be seriously compromised unless the researcher has a good appreciation of the issues. There was some level of mistrust from the Abudu side of the conflict in giving vital information because of the widely held view in Ghana that they killed the Yaa Naa and so researchers' intentions could be misconstrued to mean undercover investigations to uncover the murderers for prosecution. In areas where my identity as Andani was not known, the situation was hardly different as respondents, both Abudu and Andani exhibited some level of mistrust in their responses often re-stating their responses where their initial responses appeared to be 'implicating'.  This was particularly pronounced in my interactions with respondents in Yendi who either witnessed the conflict or participated in it. This level of mistrust towards the researcher based on the mistaken assumption that they could be undercover investigators arguably constitutes a substantial risk of biasing the data and could serve as a useful point of reference in discussing constraints of conflict researching in Africa, including Ghana.

Access to respondents who belong to the other side of the conflict could also be difficult to gain as was the case for this researcher but the involvement of an Abudu gate-keeper exorcised the fear of the Abudus to the researcher's intention behind the data collection even though some of them still exhibited some level of mistrust in their interactions.

Under the above circumstances, a deep knowlegde about the conflict, understanding of the local language (Dagbani) and the honesty of the local interpreter where the researcher does not understand the local language are crucial in collecting reliable data.

During the research process, it was learned that conflict reporters in Ghana unlike their counterparts in the west, do not often get elaborate briefings from their editors, including how to ensure their personal safety before they embark on reporting conflicts. Plaut (2017, pp.43) writing about reporting conflicts in Africa by western reporters indicates that the BBC often take reporters through some elaborate training, including background of conflict and contact information to guide reporters. Also included is safety where reporters undergo week-long training on personal safety, including how to react when abducted or kidnapped, knowledge about local intelligence in the area of conflict and how to take cover when under shell-fire. Heinz (2007, pp.948-963) reports about how in March 2003 in Iraq some 775 journalists were invited into 'boot camps' by the U.S. army where basic military knowledge was impacted unto them to help them report safely. In Ghana beyond background information and contacts, reporters are often left to their fate and given no elaborate personal safety training. This lack of personal safety training and lack of adequate preparation for reporters need further exploration in global Journalism Studies scholarship as that could undermine accurate reportage of conflicts. It could also constitute a substantial risk of endangering the lives of reporters, especially those presumed to be on one side of the conflict.

Responsible journalism in Ghana could be under serious threat with the ever increasing proliferation of media outlets, especially radio FM stations largely manned by the ever increasing number of untrained journalists, some of whom lack basic education certificate. In response to the increasing public demand for local language programmes on radio coupled with  their readiness to settle for any fee, these untrained and less educated 'journalists' have been engaged at the local radio stations by radio station owners and are often also used as general reporters, including reporting tribal and chieftaincy conflicts. Their lack of scholarly depth and lack of journalistic expertise could arguably gradually lead to a fall in journalistic standards in the country. This situation could affect responsible journalism and could in areas of bloody conflicts prove costly. Global Journalism Studies scholarship could benefit from a debate on this Ghana case in relation to its potential to affect journalism standards in Ghana, and whether the Ghana case is peculiar or has any similarities with journalism practice in other African countries and non African countries, including the west.

One of the limitations of ethnographic study is that it is time consuming and demands intensive resources given that the researcher will have to be in the setting for between 8 months and two years (Bhattacherjee, 2012, pp.41). However as found in this study, familiarity of the area and subject of study could obviate this limitation in relation to time

and resources. Even though I spent six months, with little resources to collect data (see chapter three), large amount of data was generated, and I have in my view been able to narrate my experiences in detail for readers to be able to experience the Dagbon culture and understand the Dagbon conflict without being there. Therefore, little resources with adequate understanding of the subject matter under investigation coupled with the researcher's ability to contact and interview the right respondents could arguably facilitate the provision of enough, reliable and naturalistic data in ethnographic study.

## 9.6 Recommendations for further research

It is recommended that further research into detecting media bias and propaganda and censorship in the reportage of the Dagbon conflict should include more media houses-both state and private media. It should also monitor how the two factions in the conflict-the Abudus and the Andanis-will use propaganda and censorship in their quests to remain relevant in the wake of the installation of the new Yaa Naa who is neither of the 'two regents' from the two royal families even though an Andani. The Dagbon kingship is the second most powerful kingship in Ghana (see chapter one) and the occupant is no doubt powerful in terms of resources, finances and influence, including political influence (see chapter seven). This is the main reason why the competition over it is markedly intense. Even though the new Yaa Naa Abukari II is an Andani, some Andani youth preferred the immediate past Dagbon regent, the Kampakuya naa (whose father Yaa Naa Yakubu II was killed in the Yendi carnage) to succeed his late slain father. Some of the Abudus also expected the 'Bolin lana' to be the next king of Dagbon basing their argument on the rotation system of succession contained in the 1986 Supreme Court ruling on the Dagbon chieftaincy dispute. With these two 'regents' out of the contest (see chapter one), it is important to monitor in further studies how their supporters will co-operate with the new Yaa Naa and whether the conduct of these regents (now chief of Savulugu for Kampakuya naa and chief of Mion for Bolin lana) and their supporters will pose a threat to the ailing peace in Dagbon.

Pronouncements of political parties (especially the National Democratic Congress, NDC and the New Patriotic Party, NPP) and politicians in opposition and government should be monitored to see the extent to which they continue to abuse the chieftaincy dispute for political expediency and how this abuse could contribute further to the perpetuation of the conflict through propaganda, censorship and media bias.

Another area recommended for further studies on the Dagbon conflict and media, censorship and propaganda should look at comparing the Dagbon conflict with the Bimbilla chieftaincy conflict in the Northern region of Ghana. The Bimbilla case has similarities with the Dagbon conflict, including the king's murder, 'intelligence failure', feud over kingship, influence of politicians in the conflict and failure on the part of the state to apprehend the

culprits (see chapter one). A study into the conflict could provide a basis to examine and compare the patterns adopted in killing the kings amid state security and how and why the NDC and the NPP governments failed to apprehend the killers amongst others in the Dagbon and Bimbilla chieftaincy conflicts.

Further research into the above areas will provide useful and more up-to-date data for the analysis of propaganda, censorship and media bias in Ghana's Dagbon chieftaincy conflict by media and conflict scholars, media and conflict students as well as journalists and historians of the Dagbon conflict. This will potentially contribute to global Journalism Studies scholarship on censorship, propaganda and media bias in Ghana and Africa.

END.

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**APPENDIXES**

**APPENDIX 'A' (CONSENT FORM)**

Informed Consent Form for Journalists, Opinion leaders, Media Experts, academics and Civil Society persons.

This consent form is in two parts-information sheet and consent certificate Information Sheet (consent certificate).

**INTRODUCTION**

My name is Mahama Seth Sayibu. I am a PhD candidate at University of Bangor, Wales in the United Kingdom and I am researching into propaganda, censorship and media bias in the reportage of the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict. I want to ask you questions relating to the above subject. You do not have to decide today whether or not you will participate in this research. Before you arrive at a decision, you can talk to anyone you feel comfortable with about your decision. If you do not understand anything in this consent form and or the interview questions, please ask me to explain as I will be willing to do so.

**Purpose of the Research**

This research is being undertaken by me solely in fulfilment for the award of a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Political Communication and it is to address a gap in literature regarding the use of censorship and propaganda against the Ghanaian media in conflict situations by government, the military and the intelligence community in Ghana. This research may however be published later subject to approval from Bangor University authorities.

**Participant Selection**

You are being invited to take part in this research because I am convinced that you have been following the media reportage of the conflict and matters arising out of it that make you a perfect choice to deliver responses that would enrich the research findings.

**Voluntary Participation**

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is your choice whether to participate or not. The choice that you make will have no bearing on your position or job. You may change your mind later and stop participating even if you agreed earlier.

**Duration**

This interview will take between one hour and two hours. If you are unable to continue for any reason, I will be willing to come back at your convenience

**Benefits**

There are no direct benefits. However, your contribution will enable me find out the extent to which the media has suffered censorship and propaganda in reporting the Dagbon conflict that could help address how the media is regulated in conflict times in this country.

Confidentiality

Any information you give will be treated in confidence. No one will know what information you will be sharing with me. Since the Dagbon conflict remains volatile, information you share may be part of the research finding but cannot be traced to you since your name will not be mentioned (unless you so wish and which is deemed by me not to have any negative impact on your person).

**Certificate of Consent**

I have read the foregoing information, or it has been read to me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I consent voluntarily to be a participant in this study

Name of Participant_____

Signature of Participant _____

Date _____

      Day/month/year

**If illiterate**

I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential participant, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Name of witness_____     Thumb print of participant

Signature of witness   _____

Date _____

      Day/month/year

**Statement by the researcher**

I have accurately read out the information sheet to the potential participant, and to the best of my ability made sure that the participant understands the content. I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

A copy of this Consent Form has been provided to the participant.

Name of Researcher _____ _____

Signature of Researcher_____

Date _____

      Day/month/year

**APPENDIX 'B'**

**INTERVIEW QUESTIONS**

**Interview questions to News editors**

To what extent were censorship and propaganda techniques apparent in the Ghana Dagbon chieftaincy conflict from 2000 till date?

How did your media house respond to these censorship and propaganda techniques within this period?

To what extent did it influence your choice of stories on the Dagbon conflict?

How did the censorship and propaganda techniques affect the practice of conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana?

What were the dominant issues in your reportage of the conflict?

How did you cast the stories on the Dagbon conflict?

How did your casts affect the practice of conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana?

What challenges did you face in soliciting information from sources in the conflict e.g. Government, Abudus and Andanis?

How did the Abudu and Andani opinion leaders react to your coverage of the conflict?

What is the way forward for the practice of sensitive conflict journalism in Ghana?


**Interview questions to Media Experts**

How do you rate the performance of the media in Ghana in reporting the Dagbon conflict so far?

What were the dominant casts in their coverage of the conflict?

What propaganda and censorship techniques were apparent in the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict?

How did the propaganda and censorship techniques affect the media reportage of the conflict?

What are the implications of the propaganda and censorship techniques to the practice of conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana?

What are the implications of the media reportage on the Dagbon conflict to the practice of conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana?

What is the way forward for the practice of conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana?


**Interview questions to Civil Society**

How do you rate the performance of the media in Ghana in reporting the Dagbon conflict so far?

What were the dominant casts in their coverage of the conflict?

How did their casts affect the peace in Dagbon?

What are the implications of their frames to the practice of conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana?

What propaganda and censorship techniques were apparent in the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict?

How did the propaganda and censorship techniques affect the media reportage of the conflict?

What are the implications of the propaganda and censorship techniques to the practice of conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana?

What is the way forward for the practice of conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana?


**Interview questions to Reporters**

What propaganda and censorship techniques were apparent in your reportage of the Dagbon conflict?

How did you respond to these propaganda and censorship techniques?

How did your response to propaganda and censorship techniques affect your reportage of the Dagbon conflict?

How did you cast your stories on the Dagbon conflict and why?

What were the dominant casts in reporting the Dagbon conflict?

What challenges did you face in soliciting information from sources in the conflict e.g. Government, Abudus and Andanis?

How did the Abudu and Andani opinion leaders react to your coverage of the conflict?

What is the way forward in reporting conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana?

**Interview questions to Opinion Leaders of Abudu and Andani factions**

How do you rate the media reportage of the Dagbon conflict?

What cast did the media employ in reporting the conflict?

What were the dominant casts in the media reportage of the conflict?

How accessible were the media in reporting your side of the conflict?

What is the way forward in reporting the Dagbon conflict and chieftaincy conflicts in Ghana in general?

## Appendix 'C'

**Examples of sample of thematic coding of interviews, official documents, media texts and ethnographic data on propaganda, censorship and media bias**

Table 1-Examples of thematic coding on propaganda

| Code | Category | Sub-category | Example Quote | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Government propaganda | Propaganda | deception | '...in the midst of fighting the interior minister claimed that 'Yendi was calm...' <br><br> 'At the time JOY FM spoke to the Ya Na's secretary on Tuesday, fighting was still going on, but the police were nowhere to be found...government rather accused JOY NEWS of mischief...' | *Associated Press* February 27, 2005 <br><br> Myjoyonline.com March 30, 2002 |
| | | -Deception through lying | Information Ministry's denial of disconnection of telephone lines from Sang (against its own officer's claim, only to admit later) | *Ethnographic data* |
| | | Lies | NPP Government's claim that Issah Mobila died of severe stomach pains (against autopsy report that he died of torture and military enquiry report that he died in military guardroom) | *Ethnographic account* |

| | | Denial | The Rawlings' tape sage. 'NDC' in opposition claimed to be in possession of a video tape recording of how the Yaa Naa was killed (only to explain later while in government that it was a conversation between Yaa Naa's nephew and an Aide to Rawlings' about what happened in Yendi the day the Yaa Naa was killed ).<br><br>Ndc government promise of establishing a presidential commission into the Yaa Naa murder only to use the Wuaku Commission report to prosecute thus creating an alternative reality | *Myjoyonline cited in ghanaweb.com* June 13 2011<br><br><br>NDC manifesto 2008,<br><br>Ethnographic account |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | censorship as propaganda tool | 'Clear all reports on Dagbon affairs with the ministry'-information minister | Daily Graphic April 1 2002 |
| | | Threats and harassment of journalists | '…they warned us when we were in the flight that whoever reports anything that we saw will be sanctioned because they will let the military and the police follow us…', | Interview May 17 2017 |
| | | Frames as propaganda tool | NPP government referred to the attack on the Yaa Naa's palace as a 'three-day war' between the Abudus and the Andanis…' | Executive summary Wuaku Commission report 2002 |

| | | Word Game<br><br>Fear factor<br><br>Plain folks<br><br>Name calling | President Kufour warned that anybody who tries to 'take advantage of the present difficulties will be *swiftly* and *decisively dealt with* under the full rigors of the law'<br><br>'... government had to do that to preserve public peace and to protect lives and property'<br><br>'Having found as a fact that he *recruited and sponsored warriors* for the Ya Na... government is at a loss to appreciate why a *potential suspect* (Ibrahim Mahama) in the creation of such training camps should have been so lightly treated' | Daily Graphic April 1 2002<br><br><br>Daily Graphic April 1, 2002<br><br>Government while paper on Wuaku Commission report, 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Propaga nda | Military Propaga nda | Lies | Lieutenant Colonel W. Omane Agyekum has described Mobila's death as 'purely accidental and that 'his ribs were broken when he fell from the guardroom after being unconscious' | The Insight newspaper cited in peacefmonline. com February 17, 2010 |
| | | Fear factor /intimidati on | 'Army commander   Major General Clayton Yaache has 'cautioned the media to be circumspect in their reportage' and that the current situation was an 'uneasy calm and must not be taken for granted'. He also said the army had 'instituted a mechanism to contain any unforeseen circumstances' and announced that '23 officers and 421 men were deplored in the area under the State of Emergency'<br><br>'He said 'effort of the ground troops would be complemented by *daily air surveillance* in the Dagbon area' | Daily Graphic, April 2 2002<br><br><br><br>Ghana News Agency April 2, 2002 |

| | | Inducement | 'Military...donating 10 bales of used clothing to some of the victims of the conflict in Yendi' | Daily Graphic April 2, 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Facilitative communication | 'Ideally the media houses do not have their own transport so what happens is that transport is arranged by government with assistance from the military they arrange transport for reporters to the conflict arena sometimes food is arranged for the reporters and other things are facilitated for them to feel comfortable and to report' | interview June 24 2017 |
| Propaganda | Intelligence community propaganda | Intimidation<br><br>Facilitative communication | 'I did a report and I had a call from the BNI inviting me to their office...I got to the office and they questioned me on certain issues, where I got that information from...they discharged me'<br><br>'A special investigative team from the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) of the Ghana Police Service has announced a reward of 10 million (old) cedis for anyone who could provide information leading to the arrest of the murderers of the Yaa Naa' | Interview June 3 2017<br><br>Daily graphic, April 2 2002 |
| | | Deception through lying | 'Intelligence officers claim that the Yaa Naa's 'body parts' were uncovered the same spot they were severed at a place guarded by soldiers under dusk to dawn curfew...without seeing who brought those body parts' | Mahama, 2009 pp.134 |

| Propaga nda | Andani Propaga nda | Atrocity propagand a | '...leading to the murder of the Yaa Naa and forty of his elders...' Andanis | Andanis press conference March 30 2002 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Lies | 'Yaa naa is not dead...recuperating from injury'-Ibrahim Mahama | JOYNEWS, March 28, 2002 |
| Propaga nda | Abudu propaga nda | Deception | 'We (Abudus) ...are installing a new regent of Dagbon'-Abudu family | Daily Graphic online December 16 2018 |
| | | | | |

Table 2-Examples of thematic coding on news bias

| Object of Analysis | Category | Sub-category | Example | Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Daily Graphic and Ghana News Agency | Media Bias | Exagger ation | '...But for the timely intervention of security personnel, members of the two gates would have gone beyond the verbal exchanges and staged *re-enactment of what happened in Yendi in March this year*...' | Ghana News Agency (GNA), June 28 2002 |

| | | Wrong attribution and lack of attribution | See 7.2.3 Both Daily Graphic and GNA relied more on elite sources for new which is bias | Chapter seven table three |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | | | | Daily Graphic, April 6, 2002 |
| | | | 'Ya Na killed in violence in Yendi', -quote-'police source' | |
| | | | | August 3, 2002, Daily Graphic |
| | | | 'Reports were vetted in 1994'-no by-line | |
| | | | | Daily Graphic April 8, 2002 No by-line |
| | | | 'Major Sulemana denies allegations' | |
| | | | | Daily Graphic, August 3, 2002 No by-line |
| | | | 'Abudu faction condemns statement by Andanis'- | |
| | | | | Dec 16, 2018 GNA cited in Daily Graphic online |
| | | | 'Bolin Lana new regent of Dagbon' | |

| | | Peace insensitive journalism | 'I saw Iddrissu Gyamfo using an iron bar to pick the battered head with blood oozing from all over it ... | Ghana News Agency June 22, 2002 |
| | | | 'A witness told the Wuaku Commission that he saw one IddirIsu Jahinfo holding the blood-soaked human head in the Bolin Lana's palace...one who hanged the arm of the king in his neck...' | Daily Graphic, June 22, 2002 |
| | | Sourcing story actors | See 7.2.1 how story actors were sourced. Media relied overwhelmingly on government /elite sources for news | Chapter seven table one |
| | | Imbalance | '...there has been a series of allegations *seeking to implicate* the retired major...' (no response from the Andani family in the story even though accused of trying to implicate the major). | Daily Graphic, April 8, 2002 |
| | | | (See 7.2.3 for more on imbalance by both Daily Graphic and GNA) | Chapter seven, table three |

Table 3-Examples of thematic coding on censorship

| Code | Category | Sub-category | Example Quotes | Source |
|------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|
| censorship | Government censorship | Pre-censorship (suppression of dissent) (Denial of access) | 'I am with the authority of the President serving you notice...you should clear any other news from Dagbon affairs with this ministry' 'Normally if you are found to be speaking to other sources other than the official sources, you will be cautioned...' | Daily Graphic March 30, 2002 Interview with private media correspondent, June 24, 2017 |
| | | Post censorship (threats and intimidation) | '...I remember whilst we were in the aircraft going back to Accra, the then information minister and then one person who was his aid ordered all the photo reporters to delete every picture that they took in Yendi' 'On one occasion when the then vice president Alhaji Aliu Mahama visited Yendi, I read a press statement and after that the then Regional Minister attacked the traditional secretary for failing to edit it so most of the things that I said were not covered' | Interview May 17, 2017 Interview June 17 2017 |
| | | Attachment (There were no noticeable embedding techniques, journalists were only attached to | 'Ideally the media houses do not have their own transport, so what happens is that transport is arranged by the government with the assistance of the military command, they arrange transport for reporters to the conflict arena and sometimes food is arranged | Interview June 24 2017 |

| | | government sources) | for the reporters and other things are facilitated for them to feel comfortable and to report' | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Censorship | Military censorship | Pre-censorship (Denial of access) Suppression of dissent - through use of regulation | Soon after the murder of the Yaa Naa on March 27, 2002 the army was deployed in the Gbewah palace area and the area declared a restricted area by the state. 'The army commander, Major General Clayton Yaache,' cautioned journalists to be circumspect in their reportage and reminded them of 'the State of Emergency' in the area and that 'the uneasy calm must not be taken for granted' | Ethnographic account, 2017 Daily Graphic, April 2, 2002 |
| | | Post censorship No noticeable post censorship techniques like threats intimidation by military | | |
| | | Attachment There were no noticeable embedding techniques, journalists were only attached to government sources | 'Ideally the media houses do not have their own transport, so what happens is that transport is arranged by the government with the assistance of the military command, they arrange transport for reporters to the conflict arena and sometimes food is arranged for the reporters and other things are facilitated for them to feel comfortable and to report' | Interview, June 24, 2017 |
| Censors | Intellige | Pre-censorship | 'If you go to the BNI they tell you | Interview, |

| hip | nce commun ity censorsh ip | Denial of access | that any signal that they pick from the ground they don't speak to the media, they give it to the appropriate quarters and if you ask them who are the appropriate quarters, they mention their bosses at headquarters (in Accra)' | May 17, 2017 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Post censorship | 'BNI will invite you...caution you so sometimes in Ghana the fear for the security, especially the BNI, you wouldn't want to say certain things and at the end you will be behind bars' | Interview, June 7, 2017 |
| | | Embedding There were no noticeable embedding techniques | | |
| Censors hip | Self censorsh ip | Fear of threats 'Fear of flak' | 'It was difficult for one to speak the truth. if you were not careful and you spoke the truth you were attacked and depending on where you were if you were at safe grounds you could speak the truth and the vice versa...' '...there was self censorship. If you belonged to the media whose editorial policy reflected the way NPP saw things you saw things from that light. If on the other hand your media supported NDC you portrayed things in the light of the NDC. So as far as I am concerned people did not speak genuinely'. | Interview, June 16, 2017 Interview, June 16, 2017 |

**Appendix 'D'**

**Some Interview transcripts**

**1.Date June 6, 2017. Interview with Peace Building Expert- West Africa Network for Peace Building (wanep).**

<u>**Introduction**</u>

Am national coordinator for wanep and we are into peace building and human security. We are not into state security but security of the state. ensuring security of the individual. We have been part of the interventions in the Dagbon area.

**Q How do you assess the performance of the media in reporting the Dagbon conflict?**

Ans. I think that at the beginning the media did not do much. Their reportage was sensational trying to let people know that this people are into conflict that some individuals and stakeholders were the cause of the conflict. It was quite negative. after some time, there has been some orientation of the media to be more sensitive, so the situation does not degenerate into (more) violence

**Q Why did the media not do well at the beginning**

Ans. Some of the words; the specific things they said did not help matters. There were passions as a result of public interest but training of journalists by organizations like RUMNET WANEP helped.

**Q What did you train them on?**

Ans. how to respect the sensibilities of stakeholders also, to be conflict sensitive by not identifying where the deaths were coming from the conflict. Holding on to the ethics of journalism reporting in a manner that stakeholders in security will respond to emergency situations before they escalate. Senior journalists were part of the resource persons

**Q What casts did the media employ in reporting?**

Ans. the things that did not go well were the broadcasts of pictures of killings. These are things every human being will be incensed about. Also identify groups that suffer casualties because it leads to reprisal attacks. The focus should have been how do we move to ensure they unite

**Q. Don't you think the media was just doing its work to report exactly what was happening**

Ans. Exposure isn't necessarily about naming and shaming criminals.

Q. **What about propaganda and censorship?**

Ans. There were some media houses promoting the interest of one group against the other and some media persons sympathetic to some groups against the other. So, it was not necessarily about the media but journalists in the media. The conflict had been politicized and there were some media houses that had political agendas and did not see anything wrong with the propaganda that was churned out by some staff of their media. eg. governments are subtle in doing things in terms of support like humanitarian support like NADMO; some support were quite rapid than others in the heat of the crisis, there were attempts by some politicians and you can remember that there were accusations that so so and so delayed responses to the eruption of violence. Also, at the top, allegations of some people manipulating security reports and those reports not being sent to the president.

There was that tip off that this is what was happening an intelligence was gathered and sent but it looks like from what we hear in the media it was not passed on to the president so he did not have much information to initiate rapid responses to prevent it. Also, the security on the ground (in Yendi) could not stop the violence because of excuses that some equipment was not working (armoured vehicle's battery could not spark the vehicle).

Q. **What about Malik's Denial?**

Ans. I agree but if it was meant to calm situation on the ground so the conflict could be curbed but there was not much action on the ground to prevent situation and to correlate with his intentions; there should have been action on the ground to stop the violence, so the situation was not handled well.

Q. **What about censorship of the media?**

Ans I heard about journalists being beaten threatened etc. some people were seen giving out information that they (security agencies and government) thought they should not have gone out, are you not one of them? I remember the situation very well and that time you were working with JOY FM.

Q. **Do you give handouts to journalists to facilitate their work?**

Ans. Yes, we give out money for transport and food not to influence journalists but to facilitate their movement to the place since they do not have transport etc. from 20gh cedis media houses including GTV do not have vehicles

Q. **What do you know about ex-zalinkolana An Abudu saying they have suffered under the leadership of the Yaa Naa which was aired once on TV and taken off?**

I heard from interactions with other stakeholders that what the man said was indeed censored later.

**End**

**June 10, 2017. Interview with Peace Building Expert-Foundation for Security and Development**

I work for the foundation for security and development in Africa

**Q. Were you working at the time of the beginning of the Dagbon conflict?**

Ans. yes

Q. **How do you rate the media in reporting the conflict?**

Ans. I will say the performance of the media then and now has changed drastically. remember we just came out of a military regime that turned into a political party that ruled for 8 years so the media landscape was not streamlined as it is today. There was the initial euphoria of freedom of speech and of the media and the media houses we have today outstretched what we had in 2002 and looking back at the capacity of the people we have in the media today then I would say generally it was not as sophisticated as we have today. There was very little censorship. and most of those who were working at that time were hardly trained on how to report conflict in order not to escalate it. At the background, the media performance at that time was quite abysmal and they reacted in a way that did not help the course at that time. And not to rubbish what they did, I will say they brought the issues to the fore. Whether they were credible, as to whether those who were reporting knew how to investigate and isolate truth from falsehood is another matter. I will say it was muddled with misrepresentation assumption and misinformation.

**Q. Going forward do you think the media has improved?**

Ans. Commenting from where I stand the information and concerns that we have from 2002 to date and tried to help build the capacity of local journalists, I must say there is some improvement in self-censorship, the media now. the NMC (Media commission) have themselves expressed concern about how the media in Ghana have taken to the height of irresponsible journalism all in the name of press freedom naming and shaming and threats to close down radio stations has bred circumspection now but I will not say we have the best

Q. **What were the dominant issues or frames in the media reportage of the conflict?**

Ans. From my own observation we have two main groups of media. Unfortunately, they were also oriented towards political lines. the pro-Abudu media and the pro –Andani

media. they also had leanings towards the two dominant political parties-ndc and npp. Npp perceived to be for Abudus and ndc for Andanis. What we witnessed towards the conflict was justification of why certain acts and misacts happened and also others trying to counter them.

Q. **What are the implications of the frames to conflict sensitive journalism in Ghana?**

Ans. they are far reaching and negative bothered on unverified information mostly rumors objectivity compromised and the public reacting and taking stance based on that thus increasing tensions instead of helping to resolve them.

Q. **Are journalists responsible for the conflict not ending?**

Ans. No but partly yes. we should also give credit because in the midst of the crisis I remember calls for justice. the media made it possible for the public to know what happened at the Wuaku commission and deserve some credit.

Q. **How apparent were censorship and propaganda?**

Ans. Even to date we still have that misinformation being put out deliberately and it happened a lot during the crisis period. Eg. Yaa Naa reported dead then not dead was a strategy for crisis management to create a space for people to gradually settle in, eventhough it gave government time to occupy strategic positions to protect live and property I still call that misinformation. Misinformation and misinformation still continue, and politicians take advantage of that but the media are sometimes compelled to act in accordance with what their masters want.

Q. **let's look at censorship in the reportage of the conflict**

Our constitution gives unlimited freedom to journalists so if there is censorship it will be based on gross misconduct. eg muntie 3. In terms of self-censorship, the media is trying but the GJA itself is concerned that unlimited freedom to the media is making it difficult for them to call their members to order.

Q. **Does censorship and propaganda pose a threat to ending the Dagbon conflict?**

Yes, I heard journalists being attacked cameras seized etc what I can't confirm is whether they are state sponsored. In the Dagbon case and others there is some form of intolerance towards the media eg. in political situations

Q. **What are the implications of censorship and propaganda towards ending the Dagbon conflict?**

Ans. Censorship is subtle the work that we do is normally difficult to blame individuals for example owners of radio stations determine what journalists should broadcast after the latter have covered the programme. The private media channels have people with entrenched interest and that is the invisible arm of the censor where even the one reporting does not have the power to decide

**Q. Does censorship and propaganda pose a threat to the resolution of the Dagbon crisis?**

Ans. They constitute a threat; social media is also a problem because it cannot be censored. We should also encourage stories that bring the two together like the stopping over of the regent of Dagbon at the Tolon regent's palace which should have been given wide publicity. Some people in Dagbon also want the conflict to continue to fan. It does not help our cause but Dagombas have to wise up and some Dagombas are beginning to realize that the chieftaincy agencies are being pushed by enemies of progress.

Q. **Does propaganda and censorship by government, intelligence community, Abudus and Andanis pose a threat to the resolution of the Dagbon conflict?**

Ans. I will say yes

Q **What are the implications of propaganda and censorship to peace journalism?**

Ans. instead of pumping money into conflict areas donors prefer to channel it through development and peaceful projects

Q. **What about ndc npp promises to Abudus and Andanis?**

Ans. Its unfortunate but the public is wiser now. The Abudu Andani issue is used for political gains and let the recipients of the information hold them responsible. There is a fatigue now. Dagombas should realize they have been used for propaganda purposes and should now move on.

Q. **Is this a bane for fixing the crisis?**

Ans.  Politicians get possessed to hold on or get to power. So, they overlook the realities on the ground and when they get power there are individuals and groups interest, government challenges and constitutional challenges and by the time they realize its election time again. **End**

**June 11, 2017. Interview with Abudu Secretary, Abudu family**

Q. **What was the role of the media in the conflict?**

Ans. It received wide coverage and good coverage. Much as journalists tried to be fair and say it as it is, some vast majority of journalists depended on secondhand information. I remember those critical days hardly would you find a journalist come down to Yendi. They only reported from Tamale and it turned out that much of what they reported were half-truths.

Q. **Can you set one or two examples where half-truths were said or reported?**

Ans. Yes if you look at the way it was reported that some Liberian mercenaries' foreigners were cited in Yendi, that is not true no foreigner ever came. The whole thing was given a slant as if it was just an unprovoked attack on the Gbewah palace by the Abudu side and fortunately that was not the case and the Abudus were absolved by the security report. I remember at the Wuaku commission the military said that fighting begun at the Gbewah palace and even the Andanis who went to the Wuaku commission I remember one Alhassan Zakari and others admitted that the first shot came from their side. The whole thing was as if it was a sadden and unprovoked attack on the Gbewah palace and unfortunately the whole country had believed it up till now because this was repeated and repeated. Yes, the horrible nature of the demise of the overload made people sympathize so much and took everything hook line and sinker. And all believed all that was said and unfortunately you are one of them who played a major role in that I will tell you. those days I craved for an opportunity to meet you because there was the perception that the Abudus were hostile to people from the other side.

**Interviewer**

I remember my colleagues came to Yendi to cover Abudu press conference and the Abudus youth were asking of me angrily clearly it suggested hostility towards me. Because they thought I was not being fair to them but honestly many of the information we got we got it from the security.

Q. **From then till now what other issues in the media are you not happy about?**

Ans. Our access to the media was not as good as the other side the media was not accessible as we wanted

Q. **Media censorship by government, Abudus, Security, Andanis, that you know of?**

There were times we needed journalists to come and there were times certain happenings needed the action of journalists but no. What we told the media actually came out but sometimes the way we wrote it the wording it did not come out like that

Q. **Did you attack the media at any point in time?**

Ans. Yes after press conference but we have never made a statement attacking journalists

Q. **What is the Abudu position on the Road map?**

Ans. The road map is not the best but if implemented it shall bring peace to Dagbon, but then looking at the implementation of the roadmap its like the committee of eminent chiefs has compromised their document because after burial and installation of a kampakuya naa, we shall come back and discuss the performance of the funeral of naa mahamadu Abdulai. Initially we had serious problems with it because a Yaa Naa's funeral starts with regent installation, our position is that it is wrong to perform the funeral of naa Mahamadu Abdulai without installing his regent. Having said naa mahamadu's funeral was to come first, it was wrong for the committee to impose and allow for Yaa Naa Yakubu's regent to be installed, so due to this imposition the Abudus signed the document with some reservations. The Andanis were also questioning the position of naa Mahamadu Abdulai as Yaa Naa. So, the road map has been bridged by the committee itself. The implementation of the road map there are bottle necks. the two regents were asked not to install chiefs and when the Andanis started installing chiefs the committee's attention was brought to it but it has not stopped, the committee has been toothless and today the number of chiefs installed are about 100. The other bottleneck, no regent was given the chance to sell lands or any Dagbon property. Unfortunately, over 20 thousand acres have been sold all these were reported to the committee and the committee have done nothing. To tell you the truth the Abudu side has been brought to the alter of justice.

Q. **Has propaganada and censorship in this conflict affected its unending nature?**

Ans. Strongly. censorship might be there, but I have no evidence that propaganda has contributed emensely. If the people had known the truth that there was no unprovoked attack on the Yaa Naa's palace just to take over the skin, things would not have been as it is. its sad.

Q. **Has the role of politicians affected the unending nature of the conflict?**

Ans. They used it to achieve their political ends, what I do know as the secretary and having had the oppoprtunity of discussing this matter with all the leading chiefs it was an understanding that a government that was favourable to us (Abudus) was in power then we expect that justice would be done because we do know that the supreme court recognized him as a king so if a fair government or a government loyal to us that is in power we expect them to use the legal instrument to grant the funeral because these are legal issues and not the matter of cheating anybody.

Q. **Do you trust politicians to resolve the conflict?**

Ans. I don't. the politicians use it for their political ends.

Q. **If you were to summarize in a sentence or two the stands of the Abudus-the reason why the conflict is not ending what would you say?**

Ans. The Abudus feel that the on-going process at manthia is that the committee that is brought in to do justice is looking at the issue on some tainted glass. Why because as a mediation committee they have to do a research to find out the basis of Dagbon and the customs that they are about to see its implementation so that none of the factions can sway them.

Q. **And the last thing you will also not accept is for anybody to tell you not to perform the funeral of naa mahamadu Abdulai at the Gbewah palace?**

Ans That is non-negotiable, the laws of the land say he is Yaa Naa and I don't see why the authorities that have been mandated to see to it today cannot speak the truth

**June 16, 2017 Interview with Journalist**

Introduction

My name is ... I have been in the media for 53 years. The chieftaincy stated in the late forties now just a conflict between two brothers by 1952-53 it started to assume political dimension and by 1955 it had become a matter of two parties, the cpp for the Andanis and the u.p for the Abudus and that has continued up till date.

Q, **How do you rate the performance of the media from 2002 till date?**

Ans. In fact by 2002 the media was polarized there were those supporting the ndc and those supporting the npp and depending on which political divides the media represented, they portrayed things in that light. I say that those who supported the npp saw nothing wrong with the behavior of the Abudu people while those who supported the ndc saw nothing wrong with the behavior of the Andani people. So, the media took sides. along ndc npp lines.

Q. **So talking about their portrayal how did it affect peace journalism?**

Ans, Well, it did not help because if you take sides you don't see anything wrong with the other side and that is a problem so peace journalism was not encouraged.

Q. **So what were some of the propaganda and censorship techniques apparent in the reporting of the Dagbon conflict?**

Ans. The censorship took several forms. the npp was in power and was liberal towards the media but there was self-censorship. if you belonged to the media whose editorial policy reflected the way npp saw things you saw things from that light. If on the other hand your

media supported ndc you portrayed things in the light of the ndc. So, people did not speak genuinely as far as I am concerned. and as far as the Dagbon issue is concerned people did not look for genuineness but political interest and that was a censorship of some sort.

Q. **Are there other examples?**

I will say radio stations in the north here operated in a way, people were attacked. radio stations were attacked depending on where you belonged and in 2008 I happened to be a manager of a radio station in Tamale, *North Star* and to tell you the truth it was not easy Tamale being an area thickly populated by the Andanis there were several occasions my radio station was attacked for merely putting out a chieftaincy story  that was not in their favour not because the story was wrong. In Tamale the chieftaincy issue has also taken a religious dimension, one part of the chieftaincy divide belong to one religious sect while the other belong to the other, that one too is a factor; if you were not being attacked because of chieftaincy you were being attacked because of religion but all bothered on nothing but the chieftaincy issue.

Q. **At the heat of the crisis government asked journalists to clear their reports with the information ministry, did you?**

Ans. Most stories that came to us were already cleared because we were using GNA stories Daily Graphic etc but anytime we were in doubt we sought clarification from the ministry

Q. **How did the censorship affect the practice of journalism in Ghana?**

Ans. It affected in a way because it made it difficult for one to speak the truth, if you were not careful and you spoke the truth you were attacked and depending on where you were if you were at safe grounds you could speak the truth and the vice versa, that was one of the reasons why *north star* was attacked often because the owner of the station belonged to one of the divide and even though he did not interfere in our editorial affairs the fact that he owned it was an offence. We were attacked several times.

. Q. **Is censorship and propaganda a bane in resolving Dagbon conflict?**

Ans. Yes, the censorship took different turns depending on which party is in power so people will not speak the truth. Also, people have taken entrenched positions and are finding it difficult to speak the truth on issues that are clear for all to see. No body is prepared to speak the truth; the radio stations are constrained because they don't want to speak the truth, chiefs don't want to speak the truth and religious leaders don't want to speak the  truth and that is what the issue of Dagbon is. It is a problem simply because nobody wants to speak the truth; your truth depends on where you are if you are an Andani you have Andani truth, the Abudus same, the religious bodies are divided the politicians want to use the issue to garner votes

Q **What about Political influence promises and failures?**

Ans. It's a family problem so politicians should stay clear. Anyone who says he is coming to solve it is going to use it for votes. Both sides of the factions have been disappointed in the ndc and npp so it is better for the politicians to stay clear and let the chiefs solve their own problem.

.**Q. Are politicians also responsible for non-resolution of the Dagbon conflict?**

Ans. The politicians both ndc npp cannot solve the problem. I believe it is the chiefs who can solve it using the court system.

Q. **Any comment on funeral of Mahamadu Abdulai and entrenched positions by factions?**

Ans. Future not so good as far as tradition is concerned. But let me say that 15 years ago the issue was more violent but now it is abating which means the people are now finding it irrelevant and it may not be long when people will forget about it. And it will only be a problem of history and if that happens the tradition of Dagbon will suffer, the young people are not keen about it they will grow and their children and grandchildren will not be keen and the whole matter will fizzle out one day, that is my prediction.

Q. **What is the way forward?**

The way forward is for dagbonbas to see themselves as one people and solve their problem. These days it is the matter of bread and butter and not about chieftaincy. in some villages there are two three chiefs which means dagbon tradition is decaying and not good enough

END

**19th June 2017 Interview with Andani Chief**

Q, **It's been 15 years since your brother was killed and the killers have not been found. How do you feel?**

Ans. I feel very bitter about it; I feel let down by the laws of this country because I believe that the government of the day and successive governments have the resources including men and equipment to unmask all those who were associated from planning to funding and execution of the murder of the yaa naa.

q. **How do you assess the role of the media during this period?**

The role of the media has been a mis bag, a mis bag in the sense that while some media houses deliberately worked towards the success of the plan to ensure the murder of my brother, another aspect tried to expose those that they considered by all standards to be

associated with the murder of my brother. So I will say one was more powerful than the other and the scales tilted in the direction of the stronger and that is the media that worked in support of the government of the day. Because the events that led to the gruesome murder were not sudden. It started unfolding as early warning signs picked up by individuals and reported in the media but government had control and used that to stifle those who were trying to expose either due to the fact that they were not part of the plan or they had a passion to report on happenings in the country. To the extent that initially reports were made indicating warning signs which government and media houses in support of it refused to lend credence to it indicating that the media did not throw their weight towards ensuring that it did not happen in the first place.

Q. I remember when I was reporting for JOY FM that we put it on air that there were gun shots in Yendi but the interior minister denied it on national television

Ans. Every one who cares about Dagbon heard it but government denied and in this denial there were some media houses that lend support that actually in one way or the other muffled efforts that were made earlier to expose the issues that exploded in our faces at the murder of the yaa naa.

q. **After the murder government put on measures, including state of emergency committee of eminent chiefs and warning to apprehend the killers; what do you have to say about all these?**

Ans. I will say that what the government did first of all from the presidency to announcing they were going to go through this issue and discover plans to ensure they executed the plan get the murderers and the committee of enquiry to establish the facts. I see these things as a p.r gimmick by the government to let the world know they were sincere about looking for the facts of the murder of my brother but indeed from the point when the Wuaku commission was set up to the time they concluded their work and reported to government, you could see conscious efforts by government appointees to bury the facts. And I will give you examples; am aware that when a high-powered government delegation came to Tamale headed by J. H Mensah and met my family they promised to look deep into the matter and find the killers and bring them to justice. when they went to Yendi visited the palace got to the spot the yaa naa was burnt, met the other side, and one person called iddirisu iddi also called zalinko lana and also called mba dugu declared that they did what they did (and by that killed the yaa naa) because for 28 years they knew no peace. This should have been a prime suspect. What makes it more annoying is that the government delegation introduced what they called a crack investigation team at the head of which was the current IGP. At that time, he was chief inspector David Asante Apeatu; He heard iddirisu iddi. Iddirisu iddi said this in the full glare of tv cameras on the march 3o 2002 the mid-day news gbc broadcast it live and we heard it. Iddirisu iddi is roaming about a free man so it

looks like the Wuaku commission itself and then the govt appointees then made the world believe they were looking for the truth rather went to Yendi and buried the truth because on the first of April, four days after the murder of my brother and three days after the palace was under 24 hour police and military guard, the severed left arm and the head of my brother were found at the same spot where the govt delegation led by J.h mensah visited in the presence of the crack investigation team headed by Apeatua. Apeatu was the same person who reported to the army officer that was taken from the 37 military hospital to perform autopsy on the brother's remains. He reported to him that they had found on the night of 31 march the severed arm and the head of my brother. How could that happen? It appears to me that Apeatu knew where they were and if this did not come to the government with excitement because that was a clear lead to establish those who were part of the plan then it makes me believe that the government sent a team to burry rather than expose the truth.

Q. **What about Wuaku commission?**

Ans. The Wuaku commission was headed by someone who was known to be chairman of progress party in 1969 so from the onset we knew this was a man who was brought to help bury the truth and save the government. So any person that appeared as witness for the Andani family was discredited and told that he was a liar. Secondly a principal witness of the Abudu family who appeared before the committee was somebody, we showed much interest in and our lawyers told the chairman to invite them back for cross examined by our lawyers. The chairman of the commission rejected that request; in my estimation through out the commission there was ample evidence that the commission chairman was paid to bury the truth and he buried the truth

Q. **Your comments about eminent chiefs meeting?**

The outcome of the meetings that were held at the committee led to the road map. but issues that our representatives did not agree on upon reading the road map became part of the components of the road map. Example the Road Map has it that the gbewah palace which was the theater of events that led to the murder of my brother and which the kuga naa declared 'defiled' the mediation committee indicated that they were going to allow the Abudu gate at a certain date to occupy it to perform the funeral of Mahmadu Abdulai, we said at the time of the murder of yaa naa there was no dispute who the yaa naa of Dagbon was because that issue was settled by the supreme court in 1986. Thus, restoring the findings of the Ollenu comittee and declared the installation of Mahamadu Abdulai in 1969 null and void and made consequential orders. The court went ahead to make consequential orders and those are the ones the eminent chiefs have adopted as the central plague of the road map making us believe that the late ex Yaa Naa Mahamadu Abdulai and the late Yaa Naa Yakubu Andani as far as Dagbon custom is concerned should be given the same right

which we disagree. That is why after the installation of kampakuya naa we decided to write to the mediation committee and copied the president pretesting the inclusion of certain issues in the road map. We have never moved away from that; it appears the committee wanted to protect the interest of the government of the day.

**Q. Some Abudus also said the mediation committee is working in the interest of the Andanis and for them the next line of action is for them to have performed the funeral of Mahamadu Abduai at the Gbewah palace. What do you say?**

Ans. We are not against the funeral performance but against the uncustomary issues associated with it. Because they want it to be observed at the Gbewah palace. kuga naa the late, declared it defiled and all royals of Dagbon should consider it defiled. Because in our history a Yaa Naa has never been killed in the palace but the Abudus want to go along the uncustomary want to perform his funeral in the palace which is not right. Instead of where he died, and we have precedence where Yaa Naas who died out of office did not have their funarals performed at the palace. The case of Savulugu naa Dahamani Kulkalje who was removed from office by the Germans. Naa Andani my great grand father died, then his first-born son Tugu lana yiri was installed as regent the funeral was performed. Dahamani Kulkalje who was also the son of naa Yakubu was enskinned Yaa Naa he in turn enskinned Tugulana yiri as Savulugu naa Tugu lana yiri decided to leave Yendi on his way to Savulugu and stopped over at Sang and the following morning a detachment of Germans and some Abudus met him in Sang and killed him. Ya Naa Dahamani Kulkalgee heard about the killing of Tugu lana and left the Gbewah palace and the following morning the Germans attacked the palace and set it ablaze. They then went to Karaga and brought naa Alhassan and made him Yaa Naa. Kulkalgee died out of office by this development. His funeral has never been performed at the gbewah palace then Savulugu naa Bukali Tampinkarigu who became Yaa Naa and was removed by Ziblim kulunkuu in a war. He ran and died later somewhere; his funeral was not performed at the palace. Savulugu naa Bukali was appointed Yaa Naa in 1920 but abdicated because of infirmity. In his place an Abudu by the rotation system became the next Yaa Naa. Bakali died in savulugu his funeral was not sent to Yendi even though the Germans put it on record that he was Yaa Naa and his children could ascend to the yani nam.

**Q. What about Propaganda and censorship?**

When kufour on 28 made a nationwide broadcast, he warned that anybody who tried to take advantage of the situation in Yendi would be dealt with. That warning was intimidation intended to achieve something I think that press houses did not delve into the issues beyond the ordinary. That made some of the press houses to shy away from reporting this issue. Also there were excesses even after the death of the Yaa Naa but government deliberately did not report the excesses. The presumption was that the

Abudus were sympathetic to the government of the day and the Andanis were not. So, issues that were seen as evidence, human rights of living members of the family were not reported. The Andani youth called press conferences looking over their shoulders because they knew government was not friendly. When the regent was installed the family wanted the government to actually look at the custom of the people of Dagbon against what was contained in the road map the press shy away from it because I remember the family met the president with a letter written to the committee and copied to him. In the full glare of t.v cameras he held the letter and said the Andani family could not be selective-thus creating the impression that we the Andani were not for peace and looking to undermine government. Government did everything to ensure the press did not report what we would say was our version of the truth and that persisted up till the time that kufour left office.

**q. My question is propaganda censorship and political interference are they a bane in resolving the Dagbon issue?**

Ans. There are indeed a bane because for every situation in real life there is only one truth deliberate attempt to bury the truth amounts to censorship. Then the propaganda; when our delegation met the president, Attah Mills in 2011 when the 15 Abudus were discharged for lack of evidence, according to the court. There was trouble in town here. Government hurriedly invited the Andani family to the castle when we met the first person to address us, it was John mahama. He said you have to stop the young men from destroying the property of the ndc, all those who were released I don't thing all were part of those who murdered the Yaa Naa, the presumption was that he knew that some of them were part of it. When he said he was sure not all of them were part of those who murdered the yaa naa, I got the impression that some were involved. They made us understand that they were looking for the truth but I tell you some of us were aware that they arrested the 15 people with the full cooperation of the Abudu family because they were assured that nothing was going to come out of the arrest. The propaganda is that while the ndc under Mill/Mahama promised us that they were going to arrest and prosecute the killers they did so to please us to ensure the law worked. As things stand today they tell our youth to look for money forget about the arrest because they know that the Andanis are the majority in the ndc in Dagbon. Up till today they keep telling our young people that they should look for money rather than spending their precious time on a conflict which will never find amicable solution in Dagbon. They say it and we know so politicians on Abudu and Andani side continue to prey on this conflict because they know it is dear to our hearts and the tool they use is propaganda. It is left to us to understand that a homemade solution will be better than what they are doing to us.

q. **Funeral of Mahamadu Abdulai at the Palace; your thoughts?**

What I know is that the committee will come out with its report any time soon on the performance of the funarals of the two late Yaa Naas. This will happen after a meeting between the committee and the two families. I have information to that effect, but as we sit here am aware that the Abudus still hold to their entrenched position we believe that unless there are compromises, that funeral can never be performed at the Gbewah palace. If it is to be observed at the ghewah palace one of two things may happen. The Andani family may decide to give in to the coercive power of government or we will resist and await any consequences for history to tell those who will follow us what we stood for and what we died for.

END

**Appendix 'E'**

**SUMMARY OF ENTIRE INTERVIEWS**

**Respondents 1 Peace building expert**

Respondent one-A peace building expert in Tamale the northern regional capital working with the West Africa Network for Peace Building. He spoke about the role of the media and how government responded to emergency at yendi unevenly. He critized the media for being sensational.

**Respondent 2. Peace building expert-Foundation for Security and Development**

Works with Foundation for Security and Development. Criticied the media for being sensational, not trained to report conflicts and reporting along the whims of their employers. Criticized the NDC and NPP for using the conflict for political goal. Called on Dagombas to wise up.

**Respondent 3 Abudu Secretary.**

Criticized the media for reporting half-truth. Denied mercenaries helped the Abudus to kill the Yaa Naa. Said performance of the funeral of Mahamadu Abdulai at Gbewah palace is non-negotiable. Admitted the NPP are Abudu allies.

**Respondent 4. Media person**

Said the conflict is used for votes by political parties. Nobody in Dagbon is prepared to speak the truth. Spoke about censorship and how his radio station was severally attacked by the Andanis.

**Respondent 5 Andani Chief**

Said government sent a team of investigators to Yendi to bury the truth and no to find out the truth. Media performance was a mis bag. Politicians use the conflict for political end. Spoke about why Mahamadu Abdulai's funeral should not be performed at the Gbewah palace.

**Respondent 6 Andani chief.**

Said the media relied on government in reporting attacks on Yaa Naa that did not help as government lied on the attack. Andani family was censored by the intelligence community.

**Respondent 7 Abudu chief**

Said the media was biased along NDC Andani and NPP Abudu lines. Intelligence community censored the Abudu youth news conferences. The committee of eminent chiefs were not fair to the Abudu family. Called for training of journalists to report conflicts.

**Respondent 8 Abudu chief in Yendi**

The media was biased. Did not report accurately and did not want to take the Abudu side of the conflict. Sided with the Andanis. Some Abudus also died in the conflict and some wounded.

**Respondent 9 Abudu deputy secretary**

Actually the media as at that time were not fair to the Abudu royal family, all their reports were geared towards the idea that the Abudus murdered the Yaa-Naa but the issue wasn't murder but rather a fight between two families and even if you look at it, they are actually one family. The reporting was geared towards one side just because the other side had much casualty so they were not fair.They reported on casualty and they were not trying to look at what triggered the whole thing, they were reporting on just people who were affected. The casualties were not only one side but rather both sides so I cannot just give an account as to which side suffered more. Oh yes, some Abudus died and they were more than three. As for casualty, a lot of them had casualties. Our chief's funeral must be performed first because he died first.

**Respondent 10 private media journalist**

Factions told the story from their faction's perspective. The media relied on government and intelligence community sources. Media was bussed to Yendi and warned not to be 'sensational'. Reported based on observation as well.

**Respondent 11 Andani opinion leader**

Media was not fair. Reported what government wanted. Andani family denied Yaa Naa's murder because it would have provoked repraisal attacks on the Abudus and escalate the conflict. Wuaku commission was set up to support government to bury facts about Yaa Naa murder. Ndc promised to arrest the killers but failed.

**Respondent 12 Andani spokesperson**

The media was not fair and relied on government version of the conflict. The attack on the Yaa Naa was a crime but they reported as though it was a conflict. The npp was not determined to arrest the killers. The ndc used the issue for votes but failed to arrest the killers. They deceived the Andanis and some of us were not surprised about this development.

**Respondent 13 Media expert**

The thing was a regicide. Government employed propaganda including acting as funeral coordinator. Government framed the attack as a war and not an attack and the wuaku commission furthered the stance of government.

**Respondent 14 media expert**

The media was not up and doing. There were lots of misreportage owing to lack of expertise. The media was divided along Abudu Andani lines and that tainted the way they reported, lots of state censorship and that affected also the quality of reports. Need for journalists to undergo training on conflict reportage.

**Respondent 15 Civil Society-Agro business services**

There was a news blackout at the beginning, and we were depending on rumours. The issue is political and no wonder the issue reemerged after the npp won power. The wuaku commission was set up to please people. We give journalists some money for transport any time we organize programs.

**Respondent 16 media person-talk show host-private radio**

There was censorship. Any time we aired a program on radio about the conflict the BNI will call us and ask us to present the recording. I was sacked for doing the programs, took the matter to court and won

**Respondent 17-reporter Ghana Broadcasting corperation**

There was propaganda and censorship. Even though the king was killed some reported he was still alive. We were asked to clear our reports with the security before broadcast and that was what we did. Sourcing was a challenge as both factions gave different accounts of events.

**Respondent 18-private media journalist**

There was censorship and one needed to be careful. You were afraid to report wrongly and be arrested. We got information from the security and the factions but always cleared with the security. Some of the factions would see you and warn you about your reports.


**Respondent 19-man on the street**

I am neither Abudu nor Andani. I think the conflict has affected dagombas a lot. The killing of the king was bad but they should reconcile and ensure peace.

**Respondent 20-Survivor of the palace attack**

Frankly speaking, throughout our stay in the palace, when all the rooms in the palace were burnt, we were with the Yaa-Naa in the main entrance for more than one hour, there was no gun shots that was on Wednesday morning, the Yaa-Naa never received any gunshot in the palace till when the room of the main entrance (Zong) was falling on us then it was decided that we should go out and they will kill us and get us to bury than staying here. The Yaa Naa was not hit by a bullet.

**Respondent 21-reporter Ghana News Agency**

I went to Yendi with a government delegation. We were warned not to write any thing objectionable. We relied on government sources. When I wrote my report. some portions were deleted. I was sad about what I saw in Yendi. We were forced to delete pictures we took.

**Respondent 22-Reporter with private Daily Newspaper**

The challenge was that they were not really forthcoming with the truth for fear that they felt you wanted to use it against them, or you wanted to use it to give to the security to effect their arrest. Both factions were unwilling to tell you the real issues for fear that you could just target them and hand over whatever information they give to the police. There was censorship as we cleared our reports with the security

**Respondent 23-Reporter with state newspaper**

There was censorship as we were directed by the information ministry to clear our reports. There was tension as you could not cover any news without resort to your editor who would decide whether it was worth reporting because of the tensions. There were many reports we could not cover-reports that blamed government.

**Respondent 24-Reporter with state Daily paper**

We were cautioned to be circumspect in order not to escalate tensions. We cleared our reports with the ministry of information before broadcast. I did not receive any threats. there was propaganda as we wrote some stories from government when we knew that was not the situation on the ground.

**Respondent 35-Private media reporter**

We did not clear any reports. We reported statements mostly from the factions, especially the Andanis. We did not trust the security and government to tell us the truth given what transpired before the murder of the king.

**Respondent 36-man on the street**

I do not think this conflict will ever end. The way the two factions are divided along politics means when the Andanis party (NDC) get power they will also do same and it will go on and on. However, I call on government to arrest the killers and give the kingship to the Andanis. That can solve the problem.

**Respondent 37-Abudu opinion leader**

Many of the reports against the Abudus were false but because the Yaa Naa was killed in the fight everybody sympathized with the Andanis. We shall not perform the funeral of our chief any where except the Gbewah palace. That is our stands. If they know those who killed the king let them arrest them.

**Respondent 38-reporter with private newspaper**

It was the first time I was reporting a conflict. It was difficult because of the dimensions to the conflict. Because of the paper I was reporting for that supported government I was not trusted by a section of the factions. But I tried to report to help bring peace. Some of them will ask you which side you belong if you wanted to interview them.

**Respondent 39-reporter with private radio**

The issue of trust was a problem for me because I am a member of the Andani family. No matter how hard you tried people found faults with you. The security once called me in connection with reports I wrote. The regional security council had to meet the media and dialogue for a way forward.

**Respondent 40-survivor of the Gbewah attack**

We had two categories of media-one to expose the crime and another to bury it. The government is not committed to arresting the culprits. The NDC also promised to set up a commission to investigate but failed. The wuaku commission also did not help matters.  (off record he told me the Yaa Naa was hit by a bullet but could not tell if it was the one that killed him).

**Respondent 41 Andani opinion leader**

The day of the incident is something that I will never forget in my life. when the firing was going on, Joy news hooked me and the then member of parliament for the area who was also the interior minister, he told them he is the MP and at the same time the interior

minister so what am telling them is not true and I told him that I just returned from Yendi and we had to reverse before we moved to safety so this is something that I will never forget in my life so I was thinking that at that time the press or that media house would have gone further beyond the two of us to investigate what was transpiring in Yendi and report to the whole world, not only in Ghana.

**Respondent 42-Abudu chief**

Well the media did well at the start of the conflict, but things went wrong later. The performance of na mahamdu Abdulai's funeral is the only thing that can bring peace to Dagbon. If the kampakuya naa is regent (of Na Yakubu Andani) who is regent of Mahamadu Abdulai? The BNI interrupted some press conferences of the Abudu youth.

**Respondent 43-civil society**

You know we have people working in the area of health and agriculture, when there is conflict situation and the people move out of the area then you should know that these sectors will suffer in terms of human resource due to the conflict. Education also will suffer. We collaborate with other civil society organisations to minimize the impact of the conflict.

**Respondent 44-civil society**

The conflict affected several aspects of human live especially with the displaced persons. We collaborated with other civil society groups to try to help the displaced. Good the conflict is beginning to resolve.

**Respondent 45-civil society**

We do not support any of the factions but work to ensure we help people who are affected in many ways. We trained some displaced women to undertake small businesses. We also educate them on the need to stay peacefully.

**Respondent 46-media person with private radio station**

That act was condemnable, the media in some cases rather gave information to the BNI instead of getting information from them. Journalists need to do self introspection in reporting conflicts.


**Respondent 47-media expert**

Definitely the situation was a highly volatile one, it had all the characteristics of anything that could explode and affect human life and it did indeed affect human life, several people died and as a result there is an element of social responsibility in journalism that when the

situation is very explosive, you have to be very careful to make sure that you don't end up jeopardizing the situation to end up causing more deaths.

Overall I will say that the media was quiet measured in reporting, there were a lot of self-censorship I must admit on the part of practitioners not because deliberately they had some agenda but more likely because they were not very sure of the implications of such reportage.

There were elements of propaganda as 27 people dead turned to be reported as 40. Government also acted like funeral coordinator instead of enforcing law and order.

**Respondent 48-University worker**

Of course a number of events happened before the faithful day, even long before the murder they had been rumors that the NPP which was sympathetic to the course of the Abudus, were going to deskinned. When the Abudus felt that their party was now in power and so from that time they started putting up certain behaviors and they started running a parallel authority in terms of the kingship in Yendi, they started organizing activities around the Bolin Lana palace to the extent that the Yaa-Naa was worried and even tried to question the president when he paid the visit to Yendi, all these things were denied but people were emboldened leading to the carnage.

**Respondent 49-Man on the street**

Decision by the Interior minister to resign was good because his denial of tension in Yendi was irresponsible. The other security members also resigned because government asked them to. Once Mahamadu Abdulai was buried at the palace it is good his funeral should be performed there. There was propaganda even before the murder and during the campaign period that the NPP government will help the Abudus to perform the funeral of Mahamadu Abdulai.

**Respondent 50-media person with private radio in Tamale.**

There were lots of censorship from intimidation to bribery, one was scared to speak the truth. We were also afraid of the security because we did not want to be invited by them. Both NDC and NPP have not lived up to their promises.

**Respondent 51-University lecturer**

The media did very well, things that came to the forefront of public memory wouldn't have been there, my suggestion is that given the circumstances they did their best especially the private media, they reported issues as they deemed fit even though I must confess some of the accounts were a bit exaggerated. There was censorship as local radio stations were warned and some journalists called to explain the contents of programs etc. there was

propaganda as the Abudus classified the attack as a war. The Andanis claimed major Sulemana hired mercenaries and government framed the attack on the Yaa Naa as a war and also denied there was tension in Yendi.

**Respondent 51-Civil society**

The media took positions and some of the reports were skewed. The political parties used the conflict to canvass for votes, I expect government to resolve the issue but should stay clear of traditional matters.

**Respondent 52-Abudu chief**

Traced the history and said there has never been rotational system but the Andanis made it seem so. The major problem of Dagbon is government they have not been honest. The media did well but JOY FM reports about me trying to implicate me was not true.

**Respondent 53 University dean**

The conflict has affected dagombas and we can not have a common forum. Politicians have been festing on the conflict. Even though it occurred during the NPP regime, the NDC promised to resolve it but failed. I am impressed about media reportage especially you; not because you are here but you called a spade a spade. There was propaganda as the media was generally under the influence of government. The conflict can not be resolved by government but by Dagombas.

**Respondent 54 peace builder-Catholic church Yendi**

We are working to build peace. When the conflict occurred, people said the government supported the Abudus against the Andanis. We have been able to form a peace committee comprising the factions and we are working towards peace. We have since met about 125 times to try to reconcile the factions and it is working.

**Respondent 55-A costodian of Dagbon culture**

Mahamadu Abdulai by tradition did not die in office so his regent cannot be called Bolin Lana. His funeral cannot be performed at the Gbewah palace. Abdulai was not installed by us the custodians but by military and so he was never a Yaa Naa in the first place. Our aim is to protect tradition.

**Respondent 56-Abudu chief**

What brought about the conflict, the Yaa-Naa was too recalcitrant, he didn't listen to the people because when the late Naa Mahamadu Abdulai died, you know he was removed due to the fact that Rawlings was playing politics with the issue so the supreme court ruled for

his removal but he was asked to remain as former Yaa-Naa. The supreme court said Mahamaha Abdulai was former Yaa Naa. The mediation team is doing the bidding of the Andanis. The media was biased, and the interior minister also did not tell the truth when he said nothing was happening in Yendi. We want our funeral performed first because our king died first.

**End**

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**NB:** Candidates on whose behalf a bar on access has been approved by the Academic Registry should use the following version of **Statement 3:**

**Statement 3 (bar):**

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying, for inter-library loans and for electronic storage (subject to any constraints as defined in statement 4), after expiry of a bar on access.


Signed …………………………………………… (candidate)

Date ………………………………………………


**Statement 4:**

Choose **one** of the following options

| | |
|---|---|
| a)    I agree to deposit an electronic copy of my thesis (the Work) in the Bangor University (BU) Institutional Digital Repository, the British Library ETHOS system, and/or in any other repository authorized for use by Bangor University and where necessary have gained the required permissions for the use of third party material. | Chosen |
| b)    I agree to deposit an electronic copy of my thesis (the Work) in the Bangor University (BU) Institutional Digital Repository, the British Library ETHOS system, and/or in any other repository authorized for use by Bangor University when the approved **bar on access** has been lifted. | |
| c)    I agree to submit my thesis (the Work) electronically via Bangor University's e-submission system, however I **opt-out** of the electronic deposit to the Bangor University (BU) Institutional Digital Repository, the British Library ETHOS system, and/or in any other repository authorized for use by Bangor University, due to lack of permissions for use of third party material. | |

*Options B should only be used if a bar on access has been approved by the University.*

**In addition to the above I also agree to the following:**

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3. That I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the Work is original and, to the best of my knowledge, does not breach any laws – including those relating to defamation, libel and copyright.

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Signature: …Mahama Seth Sayibu……………………………………………………… Date: August 7, 2019……………………………………