



Post-war Peacebuilding for Development in Ganta City, Liberia

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DECLARATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my loving and caring mother, Mrs. Dorothy Sunday Yorlay, whom I affectionately call Mamie D.S. Yor, and my beloved wife, Mrs. Martha Tawah Fayiah Yorlay. It is also decided to the memory of my late father, Mr. John Tozay Yorlay.

May God Almighty keep my wife, mother and children alive and healthy to enjoy the fruits of this degree and my labour.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABCD	Asset-Based Community Development
ADR	Alternative Dispute Resolution
AFL	Armed Forces of Liberia
ACORD	Agency for Co-Operation and Research in Development
AR	Action Research
CBP	Community-Based Peacebuilding
CLF	Community Leadership Forum
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Accord
DPC	District Peace Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ECOMIL	Economic Community of West African States Mission to Liberia
DPC	District Peace Council
FNL	Forces for National Liberation
GoL	Government of Liberia
GYSLA	Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy
IDP	Internally Displaced People
IDEG	Institute of Democratic Governance
IK	Indigenous Knowledge
LCBI	Local and Community-Based Initiatives
LP	Liberal Peacebuilding
LPBC	Local Peacebuilding Committees
LPC	Local Peace Committee
LD/LRD	Liberian Dollars
LSGA	Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA)
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy
MIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
MI-PAREC	Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation
MODEL	Movement for Democracy in Liberia

NC	Nimba County
NCDA	Nimba County Development Agenda
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPA	National Peace Accord
NPC	National Peace Council
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia
NSC	National Steering Committee
PAG	Participatory Action Group
PAR	Participatory Action Research
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UCRT	Ujamaa Community Resource Trust
UN	United Nations
UNMIL	United Nations Mission in Liberia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD	United States Dollars
VDC	Village Development Committees
WPDC	Wajir Peace and Development Committee
WPG	Wajir Peace Group
ZIMCET	Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust

ABSTRACT

Ganta City, with a population of about 62,000 and located approximately 200 miles from Monrovia, is a post-war multi-ethnic community entangled in inter-ethnic land disputes attributable to the roles played and the sides supported by the various ethnic groups during the Liberian civil wars from 1989 to 2003. These land disputes are about returning Mandingo refugees claiming that their parcels of land have been occupied by people from the Dan and Mah ethnic groups. This situation has undermined tranquillity and harmony in the city, fractured relationships, and is retarding progress and development. This situation needs to be resolved to ensure peace and tranquillity amongst the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo people, as well as the other residents in this major business hub outside Monrovia in Liberia. The Government of Liberia has applied two major efforts to resolve the issues. These efforts and the courts have resolved some of the issues, but they have not restored peace and improved the relationships among those ethnic groups. As a result, the peace in Ganta City is fragile, with underlying conflicts owing to the lack of genuine efforts to repair the broken relations.

Based on the above, I used an action research approach and qualitative research methodology to collect qualitative data from eight focus groups, between twenty-five to fifty interviews, and at least ten observations. I analysed the same using thematic analysis, with the specific objectives of measuring the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the land disputes in Ganta City. My research participants and I examined the issues around the inter-ethnic land conflict in the city, and I used the theoretical framework of conflict transformation including peacebuilding, indigenous knowledge, and the asset-based approach to community development to resolve the conflicts and improve the relationships among the three ethnic groups. I experimented with the local peace committee concept and formed an action committee that has implemented a peacebuilding intervention to resolve the local conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence.

The overarching aim of my research has been to contribute to communal harmony, resulting in sustainable community development in the post-conflict multi-ethnic Ganta City. A locally driven peacebuilding mechanism has been used to contribute to the peacefulness of the city. The local peace structure that has been created has worked on improving the relationships among the three

ethnic groups. The relationships have improved, and the foundation necessary for peace has been laid to address the conflictual issues surrounding the land disputes in Ganta City.

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CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

This study has been carried out in Ganta City, Nimba County. Ganta has 62,000 inhabitants (Divon, Bøås and Sayndee 2016: 3) and encompasses rural villages within its eight-square-mile radius. The city is located in rural Liberia, specifically in Nimba County, and comprises of 28 communities. The city is situated within a Mah environment in Nimba County, thus, the Mah ethnic group is the largest ethnic group in the city. The second-largest ethnic group is the Dan or Gio, while the Mandingo ethnic group represents the third-largest group in the city, followed by the Krahn and Gbi ethnicities. The Nimba County Development Agenda (Republic of Liberia 2008: 7) confirms that Nimba County comprises of five ethnicities: the Dan or Gio, Mano or Mah, Krahn, Gbi, and Mandingo, even though other smaller ethnic groups are resident in the county. The five major ethnic groups in Ganta are part of the sixteen ethnic groups constituting Liberia's indigenous population, excluding Americo-Liberians. Ninety-five per cent of Liberia's population is made of indigenous African tribes: the Bassa, Belle, Dan, otherwise known as Gio, Dey, Gbandi, Gola, Grebo, Kissi, Kpelle, Krahn, Kru, Loma, Mandingo, Mah, Mende, and Vai. Americo-Liberians account for 2.5 per cent, while the Congo people account for the remaining 2.5 per cent (Jaye and Alao 2013: 194; Nyanseor, 2013). Americo-Liberians are the descendants of freed slaves repatriated from the United States of America after the abolition of slavery. The Congo people are also the descendants of freed slaves, originally from the Congo but returned to Liberia with the other repatriated slaves.

The first Liberian civil war began on 24 December 1989, when about 100 men of the National Patriotic Front (NPFL) invaded Liberia through Buutuo, Nimba County (Meabe and Woodfork 2018: 6). It led to the death of about 250,000 people (Abraham, Persson and Themnér 2019: 6). Members of four of the five ethnic groups in Nimba County – the Dan (Gio), Mah, Krahn, and Mandingo - fought on opposite sides during the first and second civil wars.

According to the First Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba Land and Properties' Disputes (Johnson 2008: 5), land and properties' occupancies deriving from the wars have given rise to numerous land disputes in six cities of the county: Karnplay, Bahn, Tappita, Saclepea, Ganta, and Sanniqueellie.

The return of internally displaced people and those who have lived away from their land for years as refugees has sparked land disputes in Liberia (Vapnek, Boaz and Fofie 2017: 289). The returnees have returned to find their parcels of land or ancestral homes occupied by individuals who claimed and occupied them during the warring periods. It is this that ignited the land disputes, and this situation threatens the already fragile peace and undermines the stability of the state at present. Addressing this is therefore a compelling necessity. The land disputes in Nimba County today are a conflict situation unique to the post-conflict realities in post-war Liberia.

The debilitating Liberian civil upheaval has worsened the land ownership problems as it has caused many conflicts regarding properties and plantations (Doss et al. n.d.: 4). These authors make it known that the ethnic Mandingoes who fled Liberia to neighbouring countries left their land in the rural and urban parts abandoned, and the land was occupied by those who did not flee. The accusations of fraudulent occupancies of those parcels of land by those who have returned to the country and are claiming them to be theirs, and their efforts to reclaim those lands have been numerous and have led to land conflicts in Ganta City. Most of the parcels of land have been claimed or occupied by squatters who are not willing to surrender the land to the claimants. The "illegal occupants" have demanded that the returning claimants provide valid documentation to support their claims of ownership, but this documentation was lost in the war (if it ever existed), resulting in tension and conflict between some of the Mandingo and Mah ethnicities (Vapnek, Boaz and Fofie 2017: 289). This requires mediatory interventions to solve the conflict, build peace and lay the foundation for sustainable development in Ganta City.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Chapter Two of this research work provides a more detailed description of the theories underpinning this research. This research to promote peace and development at the community level is underpinned by four theories: community-based peacebuilding, indigenous knowledge, conflict transformation, and the asset-based approach to community development. These theories are deemed relevant to this research because the theory of liberal peacebuilding has been recognised as not giving sufficient attention to the local capacities for peace. Liberal peacebuilding depends on outside actors, skills, and knowledge to bring peace, and community-based peacebuilding, the indigenous knowledge theory, and the asset-based approach to

community development have strengths that cover the weaknesses of the liberal peacebuilding framework. They identify and rely on local capacities for peace as essential elements in establishing and maintaining communal harmony.

Community-based peacebuilding, indigenous knowledge theory, and the asset-based approach to community development recognise and utilise the skills and knowledge in the community as fundamental to local peacebuilding and development. These theories and approaches require working with the communities and using peace capacity assets to achieve lasting peace and sustainable community development. They are valuably interconnected and therefore useful to this research conducted in a local community.

1.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM

Protracted land conflicts involving the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo ethnicities and the tense relationships between these ethnicities in Ganta City have given birth to and sustained the attitudes of anger, mistrust, and fear among these ethnic groups. The peace in the city remains fragile, indeed threatened, and advancement and transformation of the city have slowed down. Amid these realities, the "resolving [of] divisive land disputes" has been singled out as one of the "necessary next steps for advancing positive peace" in Liberia (Pul 2016: 1). Ganta City is an urban community in Liberia with its share of land disputes. Legal efforts to resolve the land disputes have resulted in further strained relationships and need attention to build and solidify the peace in the city.

The strategic nature of Ganta City in Nimba County means that a threat to the city results in a threat to the entire county, and the strategic significance of Nimba County to Liberia's peace and stability cannot be overstated. Meabe and Woodfork (2018: 6-7) report that the Liberian civil war resulted from historical antagonism between President Samuel Kanyon Doe's own Krahn ethnic group, supported by the Mandingo ethnic group, and slain General Thomas Quiwonkpa's Gio and Mah ethnic groups. The war started on 24 December 1989 in Buutuo, Nimba County (Meabe and Woodfork 2018: 6), and these four ethnic groups that battled ferociously during the war were resident in huge numbers in Ganta City. The Mah and Dan ethnicities of the NPLF rebel forces fought fiercely against the Krahn and Mandingo ethnicities of the Doe government forces during the war. During that time, what affected the Krahn people affected the Mandingo people on the one hand, and what affected the Dan people affected the Mah people on the other. The collaborative and supportive relationships between the respective

ethnic alliances remain strong, and if full-blown conflict was to break out between these groups in the city, the conflict would most likely spill over to the rest of the county and then spread to the other counties where these ethnic groups and their allies exist. Such an eventuality would jeopardise the current fragile peace and stability that the Liberian state enjoys.

The building of peace in Ganta City has now become crucial. In the article, *Future Capital City? Changing Face of Ganta in Nimba County*, Front Page Africa (2016: para 7 line 2 and Para 8 line 1) reports that Ganta City is not only the central commercial hub in Nimba County; it is also a major transit point to the Republic of Guinea and to other parts of Liberia. Ganta is one of the cities that houses all of the major ethnicities in Nimba County, as well as other commercial interest groups from Liberia and neighbouring Guinea. Any violence that breaks out in Ganta between the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo may spill over to the other parts of Liberia. Lofa, Bong, and Grand Gedeh Counties, among others, contain the Krahn and Mandingo ethnicities and there is a visible presence of the Dan and Mah ethnicities, even though in smaller numbers.

These disputes and unrepaired relationships have resulted in tension in the city. This tension has made potential investors wary of investing significantly in the infrastructural and economic developments of the city, so investment and development have slowed down substantially. This would not be the case were the tension not present. Against this backdrop, this study of peacebuilding and undertaking a peacebuilding intervention via action research was deemed necessary. This research helped to unearth the issues, and the intervention also helped solve some of the issues that needed to be addressed for the city to progress in terms of development and growth.

Efforts have been made by two Ad Hoc Presidential Commissions to document the issues of conflict in post-war Ganta, and some work has been done to mediate the disputes (Johnson 2008). However, something remains lacking, namely sustainable structures and mechanisms to resolve the conflict and build peace to enhance development. This research was undertaken to reinforce the rebuilding of relations and promote social cohesion. Steps were taken to work with the community of Ganta to build and operationalise a structure or mechanism that promotes peace and enhances its development, namely a local peace committee has been experimented with.

This research sought, among other things, to search for answers to these questions that were considered strategically important:

- i. What constituted the principal threat to peace and stability in the post-conflict environment in Ganta City and required peacebuilding efforts to lay a firmer and better foundation for lasting peace and development?
- ii. What were the consequences of the inter-ethnic conflicts, in relation to the growth and development of the city? And
- iii. What caused the attitudes of mistrust, anger, and fear amongst some members of the three major ethnic groups in Ganta City?

1.4 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

The overarching aim of this research was to reinforce the rebuilding of relations and the promotion of social cohesion, and to work with the city and its residents to build and operationalise a structure or mechanism that promoted peace and enhanced its development.

1.5 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

This action research was carried out to achieve the following specific objectives:

- i. To identify the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the inter-ethnic conflict in Ganta City.
- ii. To establish the link, relevance, and relationship between peacebuilding and development.
- iii. To use an action research methodology, undertake a peacebuilding intervention to promote development, and to evaluate the short-term outcomes of the intervention.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The significance of this study has not only been to, most importantly, find out and evaluate the nature, degree, sources, and aftermaths of the land disputes among the Dan and Mah ethnic groups on the one hand and the Mandingo ethnic group on the other hand in Ganta City but to also work with local capacities for peace and contribute to peaceful coexistence that results in sustainable community development in a post-conflict multi-ethnic environment. The study explored ways and possibilities of internalizing the idea of a local peace committee as an instrument of community peacebuilding by using indigenous knowledge as an essential vehicle to enhance local harmony.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study utilised an action research (AR) approach within a qualitative research method or design. The research sought to create social change involving social actors, with the researcher as the facilitator and the research participants as co-researchers (MacDonald 2012: 37; Harris and Kaye 2017: 244). The AR approach and qualitative research design were used to help better understand the issues at hand. The research findings were reported in ways that represented the realities of the problems and possible remedies for them.

This study pursued an action research (AR) approach that clarified the situation under study and facilitated the individual and collective involvement of the researcher and the participants in planning and implementing the research to arrive at meaningful solutions to the problem, for the benefit of the people of Ganta City. AR is a participative and democratic process that provides practical solutions to problems of interest to people and their communities. The researcher is the facilitator of the research but does not direct it, and more learning occurs about the situation being studied as a result of the facilitated participation (Harris 2017: 262). AR requires the researcher and participants to collaborate to diagnose and solve an existing problem (Business Research Methodology n.d.:1). It is an approach that requires working in a spiral of 'self-reflective cycles'. These cycles are: planning to initiate change; implementing the change (acting) and observing the process of implementation and its consequences; reflecting on the processes of change; re-planning, acting and observing; and reflecting (Business Research Methodology n.d.:1). Operating in this spiral permitted the examination of the land dispute and the relationship issues in Ganta in greater depth with each cycle of the process.

This study, among other things, sought to understand the nature, extent, causes, and effects of the land disputes in Ganta City. The study was a qualitative one as it was about understanding and finding an explanation for a societal reality involving social beings and social situations (Hancock, Ockleford and Windridge 2001: 7). It was about a social action emphasising how people used their experiences to understand societal reality by interpreting and making sense of it (Mohajan 2018: 2). Creswell (2013: 42-44) indicates that this research approach positions an activity that situates the researcher to interpret essential practices that transform and make the world clearer using conversations, field notes, interviews, photographs, memos, and recordings.

1.8 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

This research used focus groups, interviews, and observations as its essential qualitative data collection tools or techniques. They were useful and relevant to each other to obtain the data needed, and the utilisation of all of these tools ensured triangulation of the data.

Interviewing was used as a qualitative technique for discussions with the intent to gather primary data from the individuals being interviewed and questioned (Davies and Hughes 2014: 194; Adhabi and Anozie 2017: 2). Sixty persons were interviewed to learn the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the land disputes in Ganta City. Face-to-face interviews with the research participants were the best way to collect the data.

Getting together to discuss interesting issues is a natural part of human life. This practice was incorporated as a data-gathering instrument, in the form of a focus group discussion. Focus groups are used as another qualitative approach to gain a thorough understanding of issues being researched, with the intent of getting "data from a purposely selected group of individuals" (Nyumba et al. 2018: 20). They are used as an essential means of understanding the views of others on the researched issue and to recognise the relevance of discussion on social or natural issues (Bennett et al. 2017: 94). These focus groups helped detect the problems and find the remedy necessary for Ganta's harmony and advancement. As the researcher, I played an active part in the discussion and interaction of the group and drew from their experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes as participants representing the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnicities in the city. I was able to discover new information and obtain different views on the topic. It allowed me to learn how others influenced people and uncovered controversial issues on the sensitive subject of the land disputes and the strained relationship among the ethnic groups in Ganta.

Observation is also used as an essential research method to allow researchers to pay keen attention to people's social lives, behaviours, and surroundings (Ciesielska, Boström and Öhlander 2018: 33), and I used this methodology in Ganta City. I visited the communities for a protracted period to understand how people from the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnicities interacted with each other on a regular basis.

1.9 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organised into five parts and eight chapters. Part one, the introduction, has presented the research problem and the context, provided a brief literature review, the aim and objectives of the research, briefly discussed the research methods used, and provided an overview of the study. Part two of the study encompasses chapters two and three. Chapter two deals with the theoretical foundations, examining the theories of liberal peacebuilding, indigenous knowledge, and the assets-based model of community development, while chapter three presents stories of related empirical studies. Part three contains chapter four, which is about the use of an action research approach and qualitative research methodology to collect qualitative data via the use of focus groups, interviews, and observations. The data is analysed using thematic analysis, with the specific objectives of measuring the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the land disputes in Ganta City. Part four, which is about the data and the data analysis, contains chapters five, six, and seven on the exploration (data and analysis), planning and implementation of the intervention, and evaluates the short-term outcomes. Finally, part five contains chapter eight, which presents a summary of the reflections, sustainability, and scaling-up mechanisms for the interventions proposed.

1.10 OVERVIEW OF THE MAJOR FINDINGS

When the Second Liberia Civil War ended in 2003, returning Mandingo refugees and internally displaced people found their plots of land in Ganta City, occupied by some people of the Mah and Dan ethnic groups. Some parcels of land were illegally occupied by the decision of some citizens, while others were occupied based on the authorization of the Ganta City Corporation. Most Ganta Mandingoes lost their properties (houses and plots of land) during the First Liberian Civil War and did not recover them until the second war took place in Ganta in 2003. The desire to recover their properties pushed Mandingo members of the LURD rebel group to have battled for control of Ganta City during the Ganta War in March 2003. The fight between the LURD and the Government of Liberia's (GoL) Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) to control Ganta City destroyed many parts of the city centre. The main roads leading to Sanniquellie and Saclepea cities were the centres of fierce battles between LURD and GoL forces. The LURD forces were defeated decisively by the GoL forces, who took complete control of the city as members of the Mandingo ethnic group fled the city in fear and sought refuge in refugee camps in the neighbouring Republic of Guinea and other parts of Liberia.

The civil wars kept many members of the Mandingo ethnic group out of Ganta City for a protracted period until 2006, when a new Government of Liberia was inaugurated, state authority was fully restored in the county, and local authority accordingly restored in the city. That absence was exploited by some members of the Dan and Mah ethnic groups who either occupied plots of land by themselves or with permission by way of the squatter's rights issued to them by the Ganta City Corporation. Before December 24, 1989, when the First Liberian Civil War kicked off (Meabe and Woodfork 2018: 6), Ganta Main Street was dominated or replete with stores, shops, gas/petrol stations, garages, warehouses, and other commercial facilities operated or run by some members of the Mandingo ethnic group who fled during the war and left vacant places when the wars kicked in.

The Ganta City Corporation has been an originator or instigator of some of the land disputes in the city since 2004. From 2004 to 2005, the Office of the Ganta City Mayor issued 33 squatter's rights on private properties that mostly belonged to members of the Mandingo ethnic group (Johnson, 2008:7). The City Authority of Ganta had no legal or moral basis or authority to issue the squatter's rights on privately owned parcels of land.

The land occupancy or grabbing by the Dan and Mah occupants was initially an expression of their disapproval of the return of the Mandingoes. Howbeit, the commercial nature of Ganta City has made land in the city along Ganta Main Street a valuable economic commodity. As the acquisition and retention of plots of land generate enormous profits for the occupants, not easily relinquishing them became an obsession of some Dan and Mah businesspeople who have taken centre stage as the controllers of the economy and commerce of the city. Ganta City is a center of an economic revolution in favour of the Dan and Mah merchants, who dominate the Ganta Main Streets over the Mandingo merchants operating on the periphery of the city's commercial centres. The Mandingoes have little or no access to prime and strategic plots of land on the main streets.

Interreligious marriage issues also emerged as one of the contributing factors to the tension in the city. The Mandingo ethnic group, predominantly of the Islamic religion, would not allow their daughters or ladies to marry any non-Mandingo or non-Muslim Dan and Mah person for religious reasons, while the Dans and Mahs allow their daughters to marry men from the Mandingo ethnic group. This situation has infuriated some Dans and Mahs, who feel overlooked and disrespected by such action, for which they harbor some dislike for the Mandingoes.

The land disputes in the city can be categorised as:

- (a) disputes over parcels of land involving returning refugees or internally displaced Mandingo people who had come back to find their land occupied illegally by those to whom the City Authority of Ganta had given squatter's rights;
- (b) disputes between claimants and those occupants who just took the land because no one was around to lay claim to them;
- (c) disputes between claimants and those occupants claiming that their forefathers had originally owned those places and they had not been appropriately acquired by the Mandingo people who occupied them before the war;
- (d) disputes between some occupants and claimants in which the occupants were willing to leave the land but were yet to be given compensation like others to whom the Government of Liberia had given compensation (peace packages) to leave in 2011 and 2012;
- (e) disputes between some occupants and claimants where the initial occupants had been willing to accept the Government of Liberia's compensation to leave. The initial, willing occupants had since met their demise, and their families were no longer willing to live by the spirit and intent of the agreements reached by their deceased relatives; and
- (f) disputes between some occupants and claimants in which the occupants argued that they were willing to accept the Government of Liberia's compensation but contended that those who had evaluated and valued their properties on the occupied parcels of land had undervalued them, so the compensation offered was not sufficient/fair.

The Government of Liberia declared eminent domain on the Ganta Market land without initially identifying and providing just compensation to those on whose land the eminent domain was declared. Hence, the frustrated or disgruntled claimants languish in and outside the city, searching for help anywhere they can get it. The market land remains occupied by the marketeers, and the claimants remain unattended to. Some Mandingo land claimants who have not regained their land have returned and cannot develop their land as they wish. They have negotiated with occupants to stay and, in return, provide them with lease or rental fees.

The youth of Ganta was identified as key to peace and violence based on how they are engaged. On two separate occasions in 2016 and 2019, they were involved in violent acts that led to the deaths of two suspected ritual killers and the burning of the Alvino Hotel, respectively. They stood ready to defend their respective ethnic groups in terms of tension. In response to a court-ordered demolition of properties claimed by some Mandingoes, Mandingo youths burned a warehouse used by Dan and Mah merchants (Respondent 001, Focus Group 3, Ganta, 2021).

The situation resulted in tension in the city and paralysed normal economic and social activities. The youth from the various ethnic groups began to mobilise and armed themselves to defend their people. Against this backdrop, the need to adequately engage and train the youth in good citizenship, peaceful co-existence, unity in diversity, and tolerance emerged.

During engagements with the research participants, it came out that the best way to handle the remaining situation in the city was by conciliation, arbitration, negotiation, and mediation to resolve the relational issues (Manning 2015: 3). Efforts were, thus, applied to help the conflicting parties and those with strained relationships in the city to understand the root causes of their issues, work together to change their minds and attitudes, and to see the conflict as an opportunity to promote win-win solutions that benefit all (Kopecek, Hoch and Baar 2016: 445). Hence, the LPC and peace cells used the ADR approach in the city to involve a range of collaborative, informal, non-binding, and participative initiatives to improve the relationships among the different ethnic groups. The LPC and the peace cells have made 65 interventions, succeeded in resolving 59, and recommended 2 for further interventions beyond their control

1.11 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMINOLOGIES

The key terminologies used within the context of this research are included in order to understand this work better. Below are definitions and contextualisation of a few key terms.

a. Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding is about the actions that local, national, or international actors carry out to institutionalise peace when there are no international activities or peace operations to avoid conflict and promote peace (Issifu 2015: 65). In the *Agenda for Peace* (Boutros-Ghali, 1992:211), peacebuilding is defined as "the process by which an achieved peace is placed on durable foundations and which prevents violent conflict from recurring by dealing with the underlying economic, social, cultural and humanitarian problems responsible for the conflict". It is a necessary condition that needs to be present for conducive environments for sustainable development to occur.

b. Development

Development is defined as "a comprehensive societal process to move the underdeveloped nations from their state of economic backwardness, and slow socio-cultural change to a

dynamic state characterized by sustained economic growth and socio-cultural and political transformation that improves the quality of life of all members of society" (Rabie 2016: 8). Development is a long-term strategy implemented in peaceful environments to reduce inequality, poverty, and unemployment (Seers 1972, cited in Abuiyada 2018: 115). A development strategy usually needs to encapsulate a holistic societal process that covers all features of life and encompasses all key cultural, economic, political, and social actors to have the society advance from one positive level to another.

c. Community

Queen (1923: 375, cited in Lai 2016: 379) says that "a community consists of a group or company of people living fairly close together in a more or less compact, contiguous territory, who are coming to act together in the chief concerns of life". A community is a group of people who share common features or concerns and the same place and space. A community, among other things, contains a group of people who live in that specific geographic space, and those people have a sense of identity and connection. The inhabitants of such a geographic unit are functionally interdependent.

d. City

A city can be described as a geographic space that offers manifold benefits to its inhabitants because it produces an economy of scale. The inhabitants share amenities like business services, broadband connections, transport, sports facilities, entertainment facilities, etc. They provide a place for many people to live in close proximity to each other, allowing new ideas to evolve from the exchange of ideas and innovation, and generate employment opportunities (Ramaprasad, Sánchez-Ortiz and Syn 2017: 2).

e. Mah

The Mah, otherwise known as the Mano ethnic group, is one of the six ethnic groups in Nimba County (Dan, Mah, Mandingo, Krahn, Gbi, and Keplleh) and one of the sixteen ethnic groups of Liberia. People of this group generally call it Mah, while the other ethnic groups refer to it as Mano.

f. Dan

The Dan ethnic group, otherwise known as the Gio, is one of the six ethnic groups of Nimba County (Dan, Mah, Mandingo, Krahn, Gbi, and Keplleh) and one of the sixteen ethnic groups of Liberia. People of this group generally call it Dan, but the other ethnic groups refer to it as Gio.

1.12 CONCLUSION

This chapter provides the context of the study: Ganta City which remains the commercial hub and most populous city in Nimba County, with people of the Mah and Dan ethnic groups being the majority of its inhabitants, including Krahn, Gbi, and Mandingo, even though other smaller ethnic groups are resident in the county (County Development Agenda, 2008: 7). It explains that the use of community-based peacebuilding, indigenous knowledge, conflict transformation, and the asset-based approach to community development as the theories underpinning the study. It highlights that land conflicts involving some elements of the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo ethnic groups created strained relationships in the city. It highlights that to unearth and understand the situation better and find possible solutions to some of the conflicts, an action research design using a qualitative research method was used. The purpose was to work with the local capacities for peace to rebuild relations, promote social cohesion, and make operational local structures or mechanisms that promote peace among the citizenry to facilitate sustainable development.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This section discusses the theories underpinning this research: community-based peacebuilding, indigenous knowledge, conflict transformation, and the asset-based approach to community development. For these theories to be appreciated fully, efforts are made to define and discuss the concepts and types of peace, conflict, and violence. The different approaches to manage, resolve, and transform conflict for community harmony are discussed. Peacebuilding and development are defined and discussed in terms of the objectives they seek to achieve and their interrelatedness. I found the four theories outlined above quite useful in facilitating the central issue of community-based peacebuilding and sustainable development in Ganta City, given the land conflicts and strained relationships between the different ethnic groups.

The utilisation of these theories to undergird the research was driven by their interrelatedness in promoting peace and development at the community level. These theories are assessed separately and/or jointly, and their strengths and weaknesses are highlighted below. The weakness of liberal peacebuilding is that it does not give sufficient attention to local capacities for peace. It depends on outside actors, skills, and knowledge to bring peace. The community-based peacebuilding theory, indigenous knowledge theory, and the asset-based approach to community development have strengths that cover this weakness of the liberal peacebuilding theory. They identify and rely on local capacities, skills, and knowledge to achieve lasting peace and sustainable community development. as essential elements in establishing and maintaining communal harmony.

2.2 COMMUNITY-BASED PEACEBUILDING

The problem with development and peacebuilding work is that the people driving the initiatives often ignore what is already known by the people in the communities that they seek to help, especially in Africa and other developing countries. This approach makes solutions unworkable and unsustainable. Community-based peacebuilding has subsequently become central to sustainable community development and peace, as it is a framework that advances the need to rebuild relationships and to discover innovative means of social interaction to reduce violence

and resolve conflicts to guarantee a desirous future (Serafin 2008, cited in Khairi and Mior Jamaluddin 2017: 156). Peace needs to be built at the community level to ensure a durable and sustainable solution that promotes peaceful coexistence in a community (Mika 2008, cited in Khairi and Mior Jamaluddin 2017: 156). Therefore, community-based peacebuilding involves interventions in local conflicts at the grassroots level to facilitate sustainable peace and development (Ramnarain 2015: 2). This kind of peacebuilding is a crucial component of local and community-based initiatives (LCBI) that improve effectiveness and efficiency, reduce poverty, empower the underprivileged, maintain community assets, and strengthen local governance.

Peacebuilding at the community level encompasses an understanding and a coming together of community development and conflict resolution in ways that identify common or mutual concerns, create a mutual idea of development, and rebuild relationships (Ramnarain 2015: 3). The community is then treated with importance and taken seriously when building, rebuilding, maintaining, and sustaining personal, intergroup, intragroup, and social relationships and avoiding conflicts or strained relationships. The need to emphasise and ensure community-based peacebuilding has emerged as central to peacebuilding efforts in local communities, and Ganta City is one such community. Community-based peacebuilding remains a mediatory process at the local level by conflict solvers who can use a community's approaches, experiences, knowledge, and resources to solve their conflict. The bottom-up approach to resolving community conflicts is critical. This approach manages conflicts by avoiding violence and creating a culture of non-violence or peace. This research considers this workable and sustainable approach very central to resolving the conflict and improving the strained relationships in Ganta City.

2.3 PEACEBUILDING OR LIBERAL PEACEBUILDING: THE TOP-DOWN APPROACH

Peacebuilding emerged from peace studies and conflict resolution in the early 1990s, at the end of the Cold War. Increased significance was placed on building and maintaining sustainable systems for harmony and tranquillity. Cravo (2017: 46) posits that Johan Galtung coined the term 'peacebuilding' in 1976 in his ground-breaking work: *"Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking, and Peacebuilding"*. Peacebuilding seeks to help people to recuperate from violence by preventing, reducing, and transforming conflict in ways that avoid

further conflict. It aims to find the best ways to make improvements and repair dysfunctional relationships.

The world is unfortunately plagued by wars, poverty, racism, oppression, and crime. As a result, the United Nations presented liberal peacebuilding as an "external guarantee" to facilitate peace agreements, and its actions are described by Paris (1997:56) as "an experiment that involves transplanting Western models of a social, political and economic organization into war-shattered states to control civil conflict". Zambakari (2016) claims that liberal peacebuilding "is often driven from above, driven by external actors, justified as apolitical, and benevolent" and he postulates that "the problem is internal, but the solution is external". From its conception, foundation, and formation, peacebuilding has been an outside approach to addressing and influencing internal conflicts. Liberal democracies, capitalists, non-governmental organisations, and international institutions over which they have control pursue a path of restructuring the global system and their desire is to solve conflicts. This led to the emergence of the concept of liberal peace, which is the foundation of liberal peacebuilding. Liberal peacebuilding seeks to promote democracy and its associated market-based benefits.

Liberal peacebuilding and its product, liberal peace, are offshoots of the international community's enthusiasm to transfer methodologies, norms, and objectives into new post-conflict governance structures as mechanisms to create democracy, and advocate for the rule of law, human rights, and the free market. The international community sees this as "needs-based and rights-based approaches to peace". With the vested interests of key states and donors, peacebuilding is driven from above by outside actors. Those external actors pretend to be apolitical but use the practices of the donors, institutions, and organisations to operationalise their agenda. Kieh (2015: 37) advocates that liberal peace needs to be prohibited. He contends that liberal peace should not be a pathway for the democratic reconstitution of the states being assisted. He furthers that this approach concentrates on political and civil rights and does not address "the issues of economic democracy, social justice, equality, human welfare and the fundamental restructuring of the asymmetrical power relations in all spheres..." (Kieh 2015: 37).

Liberal peace has thus come under reformist and structural critique. From the perspective of reformist critique, Paris and Sisk (2009, cited in Cravo 2017: 54) present five contradictions that inhibit the applicability of liberal peacebuilding and the actualisation of lasting peace:

- (i) External intervention is used to promote self-government;
- (ii) Internal control is required to create local ownership;
- (iii) International values are promoted to tackle local issues;
- (iv) The break with the past is concomitant with the affirmation of history; and
- (v) Short-term and long-term imperatives are often conflicted

The above-articulated realities present challenges to local peacebuilding when the interference in the host countries' internal affairs becomes visible. Local participation in peacebuilding is limited, and dependence on international actors for the sustainability of the peace they have brought becomes the order of the day. Because the foundation of peace is foreign and not local, it lacks the support and enthusiasm needed locally to ensure that it lasts. That is why countries emerging from conflicts soon see a recurrence of their conflict, as in the cases of Angola, Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia (Cravo 2017: 53). The peace efforts in these countries collapsed soon after the signing of the peace agreements that appeared to have ended their conflicts.

Structural critiques of liberal peacebuilding point to four critical questions or concerns. Contained in the criticisms are the fact that liberal peace has "imperialist features" that promote the Northern countries' agendas; it "favours order and stability at the expense of emancipation"; it curtails local participation and imposes on the community; and it promotes dependency and downplays "endogenous contributions" (Cravo 2017: 56). Liberal peacebuilding ignores and refuses to use local capacity for peace. It refuses to see the compelling need for local ownership of the peacebuilding to ensure that sustainable peace is actualised. Local ownership encompasses the amount of control that domestic actors have over their domestic politics/political processes and decisions and any peace process that is not embraced and owned by the local actors is bound to culminate in a fiasco.

It is quite reasonable to understand that, whether by military or whatever other means, peace does not need to be imposed or forced upon any group of people or society by outsiders/external actors. Peace must be nurtured carefully to fit the local context, with sufficient flexibility and patience exercised during the process. Capacities, powers, and resources must be transferred to local communities to help with peacebuilding activities. Peacebuilding can no longer be construed as liberal peace. A transition to a more goal-free or open-ended approach to peacebuilding has thus emerged, with increased relevance placed on the means or process of achieving peace; open to interpretations, and context-specific (De Coning 2018: 1).

2.4 INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE (IK)

Indigenous knowledge should not be brushed aside as irrelevant, unsophisticated, and primitive. People in indigenous communities need to be seen as "participatory colleagues" with valuable knowledge to share, rather than as "objectified subjects" (Bruchac 2014). Viewing them as mere subjects disempowers them and subjects them to hostile living conditions, and this disorganises their traditional communities in ways that negatively affect their cohesion (Bruchac 2014). The essence of utilising IK to foster peace, development, and other goals has become a necessary imperative. It is a testimony to liberal thinking that they are seen as colleagues and not as unsophisticated and irrelevant.

Ademowo and Nuhu (2017: 37) view traditional, indigenous, or local knowledge as indigenous knowledge (IK), and it is "the knowledge and proficiency unique to a given society or culture". Magni (2017: 439) argues that IK encapsulates local people's worldviews, beliefs, values, and culture. These, Mu Xiuping and Kissya (2010, cited in Magni 2017) indicate, contain the specified taboos, rules, and beliefs of a particular group of people and are attributable to their customary laws.

Within the African context, IK can be defined as systems that have evolved over a protracted period. IK is the knowledge of the local people and is expressed in the local languages. It includes knowledge of the local environment, local creativity, and the local social, economic, cultural, and political norms and contexts, and exists alongside knowledge of modern and international systems. IK has been identified as the traditional, distinctive, and local knowledge of specific geographic spaces and develops in accordance with the particular conditions of the people in these spaces. It empowers people and builds their capacity at the local level to increase their self-reliance and independence. When local people are asked to provide information about a phenomenon in their particular geographic area, their IK allows them to provide trustworthy and culturally acceptable information to researchers. In the case of this study, their IK allows them to provide relevant indigenous solutions to resolve the conflict situation in their city.

This study does not seek to vilify the Western concept of knowledge, nor is there an intention to canonise indigenous knowledge. Instead, it incorporates the positive aspects of both knowledge systems in the research. According to Bruchac (2014), "indigenous knowledge is not wholly unscientific, and concepts of 'science' and 'tradition' need not stand in opposition

since these are potentially complementary ways of organizing human understandings and interactions with the natural world". I agreed with Bruchac (2014) and involved the research participants in the cyclical process of reflection, action, planning, information gathering, and data analysis required by action research to add value to IK; one of the very useful theoretical foundations for this study.

Agrawal (2014: 2), however, has advanced that indigenous knowledge contrasts with scientific or Western knowledge on a substantive, epistemological, methodological, and contextual basis. Substantively, they differ in subject matter and characteristics. Methodologically and epistemologically, they use different means to investigate reality. And contextually, indigenous knowledge is profoundly rooted in its locality. IK epitomises a marked deviation from technical and centralised solutions that have not improved the material conditions of marginalised peoples. IK is local and environment-specific knowledge that is communicated orally, demonstrated and imitated, and forms an integral link between people in local communities (Mistry and Berardi 2016: 1).

2.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE FRAMEWORK TO THE STUDY

Indigenous knowledge features as one of the frameworks of this study and prides itself on local peacebuilding initiatives that utilise local capacities for peace. IK helped local peacebuilding in Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and other countries. It was against the backdrop of the usefulness of IK in local peacebuilding in those countries that I chose to apply it to experiment with the Local Peace Committee (LPC) idea in Ganta City. Its relevance and appropriateness to the study were demonstrated when using the local capacities to come up with an appropriate peaceful solution in the city. The LPC applied IK and used a participative process to address Ganta's issues using conversation, resolution strategies, and facilitation. The use of IK marked a deviation from the use of Western models of approaching conflict resolution. These models appear to discount the knowledge and capacities of the locals involved in the conflict in an African setting and consider ready-made external solutions to local problems as necessary. The study discovered IK's usefulness as an analytical tool in forming an informal LPC on the strength of the knowledge of the citizens of Ganta. Their customary values, norms, and approaches to addressing the conflict and violence to facilitate peaceful coexistence were tapped into.

2.6 THE ASSET-BASED COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Asset-based community development (ABCD) is an approach to community empowerment by the very community identifying and addressing the problems confronting it, by using locally available assets (Blickem et al. 2018: 2). The ABCD approach:

Focuses on identifying and developing individual capabilities, relationships, engagement within communities, and outcomes that are meaningful to people and consistent with relationships and support that are reciprocal and acceptable. ABCD is likely to be most effective in supporting vulnerable people where building trust is mirrored by an institutional and relational environment that is trustworthy and facilitative of developing people's capabilities (Harrison et al. 2019: 1).

The asset-based community development model or the asset-based model is based on the hypothesis that every community contains unique resources that can be utilised and built upon to engender positive societal changes. The concept was developed in contrast to the argument and perception that a community receives services as a client from external agents instead of using its local resources or capacities. This approach takes a keen interest in checking in the community to identify and mobilise a practical means to define and address its issues and problems. Relationships drive this framework. It is focused internally and is asset-based. This asset-based framework calls for community development, using the local people's experiences as a component of peacebuilding and relying upon the people's knowledge about the matter in question. It holds that community members have the requisite capacity to handle community issues and achieve more as a team than a single person. It highlights the significance of cooperative teamwork by community members to achieve their desired goals and build relationships.

Liberal peacebuilding has made a minimal impact in fostering peace and sustainable development locally because it ignores the local capacity for peace that IK, the asset-based approach to community development, and community-based peacebuilding theories recognise and use to help foster peace and development at the community level. IK, the asset-based approach to community development, and community-based peacebuilding have useful and unique similarities necessary to deal with the Ganta situation under study. Most importantly, they recognise, rely on, and seek to use local people, local capacities, local resources, and local knowledge to define and address the peace and development concerns of the city.

I needed to utilise the local capacities for peace and the knowledge of peacebuilding to build peace locally. Hence, community-based peacebuilding was placed at the heart of this research. It brought together, relied upon, and made appropriate use of the indigenous knowledge and the asset-based approach to community development to resolve the conflict and repair the strained relationships in Ganta City. The intention was to actualise conflict transformation in order to promote sustainable development. Community-based peacebuilding was the overarching theory used in this study. It related to the Ganta situation as Ganta is a rural community in Liberia with capacities for peacebuilding that could help find more lasting remedies to the problem.

2.7 IMPORTANCE OF THE ASSET-BASED FRAMEWORK TO THE STUDY

The study aimed at identifying local capacities for peace in Ganta that could be used to engender a peaceful environment and promote peaceful co-existence among the Dan, Mandingo, and Mano ethnic groups in Ganta. The asset-based framework was necessary for identifying the assets of those who eventually became local peace committee members. The assets included their historical pro-peace co-existence in the city, and their valuable skills in arbitration, negotiation, and mediation to help resolve existing conflicts and soured relationships peacefully. The framework identified and empowered assets of the community to achieve its agenda and was not necessarily associated with peacebuilding in the same way that the indigenous knowledge framework was. It concentrated on the relationship within and between people and groups. The peacebuilding, asset-based and IK frameworks had their points of divergence, but they converged at the point where they identified the skills and capacities of the community and promoted relationships to overcome the community challenges. The asset-based framework's usefulness to this study emerged at this point. At the same time, it buttressed the indigenous knowledge framework to achieve the overall objective of the study to take steps in working with local capacities for peace in Ganta City to build and operationalise a structure or mechanism, in this case, the local peace committee, that promoted peace and enhanced sustainable development.

2.8 CONTEXTUALISATION OF THE CONCEPTS OF CONFLICT, VIOLENCE, AND PEACE

2.8.1 Introduction

Ganta City is one of the communities in Liberia in which returning internally displaced people and refugees returned to find their land and homes occupied, and their desire to reclaim them has sparked land disputes (Vapnek, Boaz and Fofie 2017: 289) which are yet to finally be resolved. The returnees came back to the city to find their legally owned land and/or ancestral homes occupied by individuals who had occupied them during the civil wars. Leaving the situation unresolved threatens the already fragile peace and undermines the stability of the state that is still trying to recover from the effects of 14 years of civil war. The situation of the land disputes in Ganta City is one of the conflict situations unique to the post-conflict realities in post-war Liberia.

The debilitating Liberian civil upheaval worsened the land ownership problems in the country as it has resulted in the competition for properties and plantations. The ethnic Mandingoes fled Liberia to neighbouring countries during the wars and abandoned their land and homes in both the rural and urban parts of the state (Doss et al. n.d: 4). The land and homes were occupied by other residents in their absence. The subsequent numerous accusations of fraudulent occupancy of those parcels of land by those who occupied them and efforts to reclaim those lands have led to land conflicts in Ganta City. This has made land an issue of immense interest and a source of tension in the city. Most of the parcels of land had been claimed or occupied by squatters, some of whom were unwilling to surrender the land to the claimants. In many cases the vacant lands had been taken over by squatters who were reluctant to relinquish them because they had built durable buildings on the land. The so-called “illegal occupants” usually demanded that the returning claimants provide valid documentation to support their claims of ownership, but this documentation could not be provided. It had either never existed, or it was lost during the wars when the claimants fled. This resulted in tension and conflict (Vapnek, Boaz and Fofie 2017: 289).

It is against this backdrop that the concepts of conflict, violence, and peace have become three realities that need to be discussed, interpreted, understood, and appreciated by investigating the lived meanings in the context of the situation in Ganta. Lived meanings refers to interpretations of a situation that make it felt and visible to human beings, both mentally and physically.

Conflict, violence, and peace are lived experiences for the people in Ganta, and as in any human society, these experiences are inseparable from their existence. In this case, the conflict is a result of the human needs, rights, and efforts of the Mandingo people in the city to reclaim their land and property that has been occupied by people of the Dan and Mano ethnic groups. These clash with the needs and rights of the Dan and Mano occupants who feel that their occupation is valid as the land and properties had been abandoned. In some cases, their occupation had even been approved as they had been given squatters' rights to the land. This has led to conflict and left the Mandingo people with the unresolved land claims and conflict feeling degraded and humiliated. They have become defensive and even aggressive and violent in some cases. Unresolved conflict sometimes begets violence, and resolved conflict begets peace, especially when the conflict is managed adequately. Maintaining peace and tranquillity in Ganta City requires the absence of conflict and violence.

In addition to a lack of conflict and violence, social justice is also required if peace is to be achieved and maintained in Ganta. Without an understanding of these concepts, the work required for conflict transformation and peacebuilding cannot be understood. A clearer understanding of these concepts would help to reduce, resolve, and transform the conflict successfully to ensure lasting peace and enable sustainable development.

The next sections shed necessary light on conflict, violence, and peace. Peacebuilding and conflict prevention, management, and transformation efforts have been discussed. They are well-targeted and properly positioned efforts to achieve their desired impact when conflict, violence, and peace are well understood and internalised. The typology and stages of a conflict and the relationship between peacebuilding and development have been discussed. While efforts have been made to clarify these concepts, they have been explained in accordance with my desire to bring contextual relevance to them in terms of the Ganta situation under study. So, as these concepts are discussed, they are discussed with specific reference to their importance in the Ganta situation.

2.8.2 The Concept of Conflict

The word "conflict" has its origin in the Latin word "*conflictus*", which means collision or clash (Berezhna 2019: 421). McKibben (2017: 3) defines conflict as a regular and inevitable occurrence arising from social relationships and transformation, and poor management thereof. It is an interpersonal disagreement between two or more persons because of different beliefs, competition, negative views, and improper roles. Expectations or the absence of

communication might be the result internal disharmony within a person (intrapersonal), resulting from role confusion. It might be about differences in ideas and objectives between two or more persons that result in provocation and tension (interpersonal). It might also be disharmony between two or more groups because of dissimilar goals (intergroup). With the mismatch of views and expectations, conflict emerges.

Duke and Agbaji (2018) have used several descriptions of conflict by different scholars and authors to generate their own description of it. They have resolved that in order for a situation to be termed as a conflict, it has to have the following "discernible" constituent elements:

- i. There has to be a contentious issue that breeds resentment and hostility.
- ii. The recognised parties in a contentious situation have to have opposing interests, whether they are individuals, groups, states, or nations.
- iii. Each party has to believe that the other party would act against them.
- iv. This belief is likely to be justified by actions taken.
- v. The action taken could be the use of words (usually, but not necessarily) at the initial stage – or ultimately the use of brute force.
- vi. It has to have developed as a process during past interactions. It is a characteristic of human existence, a part of the dynamics of life that motivates people but needs to be managed constructively.
- vii. Violent conflict has to be the result of a fundamental disturbance in the 'normal' social dynamics of state-societal systems, i.e., the warfare is symptomatic of the degree to which social conflict, coupled with ineffective conflict management, has transformed collective action from constructive to destructive modes of behaviour. And
- viii. It has to be undesirable and have resulted in the loss of human lives, crops and livestock, resulted in property destruction, displaced people and thus worsened a refugee crisis, and diverted human and financial resources away from development (Duke and Agbaji 2018: 3-4).

Conflict can be described as a perception of or the existence of a mismatch of goals between two or more persons or groups or parties, and often arises as a contest or struggle between or among people due to their beliefs, objectives, thinking, needs, or principles. It reflects the irreconcilability of people's positions on issues. It is even often present in peaceful environments but restricted to isolated cases that are unimportant so does not claim society's attention. It can be handled using rules governing the society or dealt with creatively, leading to the generation of socio-political establishments via non-violent change. When people feel or believe that their needs are being inhibited or threatened by others because those obstructing

the meeting of their needs want to satisfy their needs, then conflict occurs. It can, however, be constructive when avenues are found or used to ensure that the needs of all involved are satisfied.

2.8.3 Typology of Conflicts

In every society, there are four situations associated with conflicts: the situation of no conflict, the situation of latent conflict, the situation of open conflict, and the situation of surface conflict (Fisher et al. 2000: 6). The situation of no conflict reflects a peaceful environment and group of people that must integrate conflicts of behaviour and objectives and deal with them creatively to eschew violence. In latent conflict, the conflict exists below the surface and is not out in the open. It can be addressed innovatively and effectively to avoid it escalating into open conflict. Open conflict is a deep-rooted and very noticeable type of conflict that bursts into the open. It requires interventions to resolve it, by addressing the root causes and the observable effects. When conflict looks mild (not deep-rooted) and is just about a misunderstanding that can be resolved relatively quickly by improving communication, it is surface conflict. Conflict hurts and consciously and/or unconsciously destabilises people, relationships, and society when it is not acknowledged and addressed. Fisher et al. (2000: 6) present three situations in which conflicts, when not resolved and addressed, can turn or become violent: inadequacy of means for the exchange of ideas and disagreement; when deep grievances and opposing voices cannot be heard and the issues addressed; and when the wider society or community is plunged into a state of terror, discrimination, and instability.

Additionally, Singer (1996: 43-7) advances what he calls conflict typology, which deals with conflicts based on the conflicting parties' political statuses, and classifies conflicts as (a) interstate conflict that involves conflict between two or more countries; (b) extra-systemic conflicts that are chiefly colonial wars; (c) non-interstate conflict that is about civil conflicts in which an insurgency group is one of the conflicting parties within the established territorial limits of a country.

2.8.4 The Stages of Conflict

There are seven stages of conflict, as laid out by Adenyi (2016: 1-8):

1. **The Conflict Development Stage.** At this point, the causes of the issues of disagreement begin to emerge and are fertilised. This is when the need to prevent

conflict is more important. Failure to prevent or solve disagreement or clashes of view leads to the formation of enemies.

2. **The Enemy Formation Stage.** Here, the minor issues of disagreement that have developed degenerate to the point where enmity emerges, and enemies are formed. This gives birth to a deliberate attempt by conflicting parties to misinform their followers by falsifying the truth to prepare them for battle better.
3. **Mobilisation/Preparation Stage.** At this stage, the conflict generates and gathers momentum as the conflicting parties mobilise support and resources to strengthen them to go after their interests.
4. **Pre-emption Stage.** This is the anticipation of an attack, as either of the aggressive parties can launch an attack, knowing full well the other party's response.
5. **Hostility Stage.** At this point physical violence emerges, with the possibility of lost lives and possessions.
6. **Cessation/Ceasefire stage.** It is at this point that fighting and aggressive behaviours come to an end because of third-party interventions, especially after the conflict has peaked, and de-escalation is the only option available.
7. **Reconstruction Stage.** At this point, identifiable differences are resolved, and rebuilding lives, properties, and relationships becomes the focus point.

2.9 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO MANAGE, RESOLVE AND TRANSFORM CONFLICTS

After the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s, many previously suppressed conflicts began to surface in the form of civil wars. Before, wars were chiefly fought between nations or states. To address the issues of conflict that visit destruction and untold suffering upon nations and their people, essential efforts need to be applied to reduce violence and its debilitating effects on development in the societies in which they exist. To this end, terminologies, concepts, and approaches to manage, solve, and transform conflict have emerged. Conflict transformation outlines basic concepts and approaches that generally give a more comprehensive understanding and better knowledge of the field: conflict prevention, conflict settlement, conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation.

2.9.1 The Concept of Conflict Prevention

The *Handbook of Conflict Prevention* defines conflict prevention as a combination of actions, approaches, and tools that are designed to prevent conflict or "its recurrence by tackling both the root causes of conflict and its immediate triggers, both endemic and external to that setting" (Igarapé Institute 2018: 7). Conflict prevention is a continuous process that supports peace. It creates an environment to resolve conflict non-violently. It seeks to prevent the conflict on hand (operational) and to address the long-term sources of the conflict (structural) (Cliffe and Steven 2017: 2).

Conflict prevention is vital when the conflict is below the surface and requires taking preventive steps and actions to help stop the escalation into full-blown violence. At this point, means are found, and strategies are developed and used to maintain the conflict in its latent stage and solve it to avoid violent conflict. Investing much necessary energy and time for primary prevention is far better than investing in tertiary prevention. Primary prevention requires actions to prevent the conflict from existing and allowing it to become full-blown and widespread. Intervention at this stage helps avoid the intensity of violence, open confrontation, increased tension, casualties, and straining relationships. Conflict prevention requires an adequate and holistic comprehension of the occurrence of a conflict. It does not focus attention solely on the conditions that give rise to the existence of the conflict and the fundamental changes necessary to remove the conditions. Instead, it also focuses on the advancement of the objective conditions that will create a conducive environment for supportive relationships.

2.9.2 The Concept of Conflict Management

Madalina (2016: 809) argues that conflict management encapsulates "planning measures to avoid conflict when possible and taking rapid and effective measures when it is made". Conflict management is the same as avoiding conflict, as it has been established that conflicts are destructive and counterproductive. If not appropriately managed or avoided, and is instead mismanaged, it leads to wasted chances of guaranteeing peace or peaceful coexistence. Effective conflict management requires adaption, avoidance, compromise, and collaboration. This entails being available for cooperation, being less assertive, and ensuring that a fight does not ensue. For their part, Gonçalves et al. (2016: 727) outline what they call the "five main styles of conflict management", namely "integrating, avoiding, dominating, compromising, and obliging" as the means of enhancing cooperation and conflict resolution.

Conflict management controls a conflict situation purposefully to ensure that conflicting parties' open attitudes or behaviours are contained. Conflict management seeks to control permanently, but not necessarily resolve, deep-rooted and long-term conflict. It is an approach that is necessary when complete settlement of the conflict is difficult or impossible and requires that something be done to halt the continuation of the conflict. It is about handling fierce conflict in a positive way to contribute to its containment and settlement.

2.9.3 The Concept of Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is a concept that bridges the gap between the state of peace in its narrow sense (no war) and the broader concept of the state of peace (justice), to end fights, solve incompatibilities, and to make sense of the issues that result in conflict. It is a wholistic approach that contributes to ensuring lasting peace (Fusch and Fusch 2015: 23; Wallensteen 2018: 10-11). Manning (2015: 3) avers that conflict resolution is "regarded as any process that resolves or ends conflict". She indicates that conflict resolution can be adversarial, derived from courts or tribunals as legally binding decisions, or non-adversarial, encompassing practices like conciliation, arbitration, negotiation, and mediation to resolve or end the conflict. The non-adversarial practices are typically associated with conflict resolution from the perspective of facilitating and supporting a win-win solution. It deals with alternate dispute resolution (ADR) and involves a range of collaborative, informal, non-binding, and participative initiatives.

Conflict resolution has a different meaning to different groups of people and professions. For instance, conflict resolution for the military may mean using deadly attacks as an effective means of deterrence to control enemies and prevent them from attacking and prolonging a war. Conflict resolution in a court of law could include the passing down of a death sentence for a convicted and sentenced offender. Even though this death penalty results in the loss of the convicted offender's life, the court sees it as the final resolution of conflict between parties (the offender and the lawyer prosecuting the case on behalf of the victim). A corporate negotiation/decision that ends with the loss of several employees' jobs to save the company can be viewed by the company as a way to resolve the conflict between their interests and those of the workers. Conflict resolution, in the field of peace studies, encapsulates the application of concerted efforts aimed at ending conflict, using analytical methodologies that get to the root of the conflict. It allows one to understand the nature of the problems correctly, helps to eliminate the sources of the conflict and works to prevent the occurrences of others effectively.

Conflict resolution deals with strategies that resolve open conflict, with the hope of reaching an amicable end to violence. These strategies also address some of the irreconcilable differences underpinning the conflict. It also involves transforming the deep-rooted origins of the conflict, especially when violent behaviour and hostile attitudes have settled. The structure of the conflict is altered during the course of the process.

A conflict resolution process must follow specific steps for the conflict to be resolved adequately. According to the Department of Corrections (n.d.), this process has six steps:

1. Clarify the disagreement.
2. Establish a common goal for both parties.
3. Discuss ways to meet the common goal.
4. Determine the barriers to the common goal.
5. Agree on the best way to resolve the conflict; and
6. Acknowledge the agreed upon solution and each party's responsibilities in the resolution process.

Ultimately, conflict resolution is an effort to address the root causes of violence and conflict. Resolving conflict effectively requires a change in conflictual behaviour to the remove clashes of interests that cause the conflict. It eventually leads to the improvement and transformation of relationships between conflicted parties. Once this point is reached, programmes must be put in place to ensure that security and just peace are emphasised to reduce/prevent future aggression.

2.9.4 The Concept of Conflict Transformation

Conflict transformation is about turning violent conflicts into 'constructive non-violent tensions' to incapacitate exploitative and repressive relationships (Schilling-Vacaflor and Flemmer 2015: 815). It is about generating productive change with the ultimate goal of promoting the reduction of aggression or hostility and an increase in justice to improve social relationships. Kopecek, Hoch and Baar (2016: 445) assert that conflict resolution operates to discover the root causes of a conflict to change the belligerent parties' attitudes and worldviews toward the conflict by viewing the conflict as an opportunity to promote a win-win solution that benefits all. The conflict transformation approach holds that contemporary conflicts very rarely enable the simple reformulation of positions and the achievement of solutions from

which every conflicting party benefit to transform relations and wellbeing entirely. Conflicts are slowly but surely transformed by a chain of small and large changes.

Wani et al. (2013: 36) describe conflict transformation as the "outcome, process, and structure oriented towards long-term peacebuilding efforts, which aim to truly overcome revealed forms of direct, cultural, and structural violence". They advance that it has to be a very wide-ranging tactic that must seek to address the root causes of the conflict in a variety of ways: from the grassroots to the elite actors, from local to global levels, from micro-to macro-issues, over short-term and long-term timeframes (Wani et al. 2013: 37). Its objective remains to address the conflict's broader political and social origins, with the intent of turning destructive energies into socially positive changes.

Conflict transformation is a democratic means of communication that cardinally addresses the root causes of conflict and develops or derives solutions that are satisfactory to all parties in a conflict, and it is centred on the following principles:

1. Identify experiences and issues that have caused a sense of harm, trauma, and injustice.
2. Build relationships between people in conflict, which hopefully lead to forgiveness and to the process of reconciliation.
3. Develop creative solutions that meet everyone's needs.
4. Empower all people involved to transform their own conflict (Schirch 2004: 48-49).

Conflict transformation is not only a process needed to end a conflict. It is also a necessary process that prevents conflict. It addresses the underlying causes, leaves no room for the conflict's relapse, and facilitates coalition and democratic dialogue opportunities between those involved in a conflict.

Wani et al. (2013: 40) stress that conflict transformation is a vigorous, open-ended, long-term, and multi-track process that works to find an amicable settlement to the significant issues and the parties' fears and needs. It seeks firstly to change equally harmful conflict attitudes and beliefs among parties, with the intent of laying the foundation for increased cooperation and harmonious communication between those involved in a conflict; and secondly, to foster and enable social justice by creating chances, empowerment, and respect for the deprived, the disadvantaged, and the subaltern groups.

2.10 THE CONCEPTS OF PEACEBUILDING AND DEVELOPMENT: THE INTERRELATEDNESS

2.10.1 Introduction

When applying efforts to build peace in Ganta City, the relationship between peacebuilding and development has to be clear so that society can be improved. Development and peacebuilding are reciprocally buttressing processes that operate alongside each other to accomplish the desired outcome of peace and improve people's quality of life in any given society. Development needs to be carried out to enhance peace, and peacebuilding activities must facilitate development concurrently. This section sheds light on the understanding of development and peacebuilding, their differences, and their relationships to better society.

2.10.2 The Concept of Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding refers to all efforts to nurture lasting peace by setting up societies that encourage and support the peaceful resolution of conflicts or disputes (Chetail and Jütersonke 2015). Peacebuilding promotes better understanding and teamwork to realise peace through social instruments developed by a society (Merdjanova 2016: 28). Peacebuilding is about taking actions "to preserve and ensure enduring peace in society, removing the root causes of the conflict and genuinely reconciling the conflicting parties" (Issifu 2016: 145).

Peacebuilding is not about ensuring that belligerent forces are kept apart so that there is an equilibrium of power or resolving a conflict to eliminate the origins of the disagreement and tension. Peacebuilding action includes the entire society, targets all characteristics of the national structure, and requires an extensive assortment of actors to put it into practice. Such efforts must be driven by internal actors and forces from within the society or state and must not be an imposition from outside forces. The internal actors lead and drive the process so that a conducive environment is created for the peace to be durable and self-sustaining and lays the foundation for preventing the re-emergence of conflict. Peacebuilding involves facilitating the establishment of durable peace and avoiding the recurrence of violence by addressing the root causes and effects of conflicts through reconciliation, institution building, and political and economic transformation. Peacebuilding is about dealing with why people fight in the first place and supporting societies to manage their differences and conflict without resorting to violence. It aims to prevent the outbreak, escalation, and recurrence of violence that can take place before, during, and after conflicts. It is also a process, not an activity, that refers to a

range of post-conflict activities addressing phonological, social, and political issues. Peacebuilding is a process that facilitates nourishing and maintaining peace sustainably by averting the relapse of violence and struggle between forces that oppose each other through economic and political transformation and reconciliation (McCandless 2014.: 2).

2.10.3 The Concept of Development

The term ‘development’ has different meanings to different people, depending on where they sit, their needs, and their context. The development needs of people differ from one community to another and from one country to another, etc. (Matowanyka 1991, cited in Abuiyada 2018: 115). Those who live in a community with running water, electricity, better health and schooling, and with better quality roads do not have the same development needs as those who do not have the same. Similarly, a community with a sufficiency of food might not have the precise development needs as a community with food insufficiency where people are hungry. Development, therefore, involves improvements in humans' lives and is measured by "a reduction in (1) poverty, (2) unemployment, and (3) inequality" (Seers 1972, cited in Abuiyada 2018: 115)

The concept of development has become an umbrella term that encapsulates the economic, human, political, and social well-being and improvement in people's lives. The rest of the development elements must always have their foundation in human development. Economic and political developments are only meaningful when they result in societal development. Development needs to first and foremost improve the lives of the people in society as essential improvement in the quality of their lives matters just as much as political stability and economic growth. Development must be a multi-faceted process that encompasses the restructuring and redirection of a society and its economic systems in ways that create and promote growth, progress, and positive change. Positive change must be manifested in the community's physical, financial, ecological, social, and demographic outlook. Its manifestation must be reflected in the quality of the people's lives in terms of their security, health, wealth, learning, and any other opportunities they enjoy. Development brings about societal change that allows people to achieve their human potential and leaves no space to separate the poor from the rich. For such development to occur, it requires effective management of the natural and human resources to create wealth.

2.10.4 Relationship between Peacebuilding and Development

Peacebuilding seeks to forestall the reappearance of conflict by addressing major grievances, societal imbalances, and other foundational grounds for conflict and concentrates on improving capabilities and establishments to manage conflict. Development seeks to achieve the actualisation of reduced inequality, poverty, and unemployment (Seers 1972, cited in Abuiyada 2018: 115). Development is about creating growth, progress, and positive change, while peacebuilding facilitates durable peace.

The first of Peter Uvin's "typology of seven paradigmatic shifts in the relationship between the peacebuilding–development enterprise" states that "development axiomatically reduces conflict" (McCandless 2014: 506). The relationship between peacebuilding and development is important because one cannot succeed without the other, so efforts to achieve them must be synchronised. This relies upon peace and development workers to cultivate and sustain give-and-take relationships in conflict-affected environments by addressing the conflict's underlying causes. Peacebuilding interventions after violent conflicts often address the same concerns as development interventions. Peacebuilding and development complement each other when peacebuilding objectives are purposefully inserted into the plan and goals of development interventions and when development objectives are purposefully inserted into peacebuilding objectives (Bayne and Vaux 2013: iii). This requires the identification, management, and reconciliation of any potential tension that may exist between development objectives and peacebuilding objectives during the planning stages of both development and peacebuilding interventions.

An ever-effective relationship between peacebuilding and development ensures that poverty reduction efforts work concomitantly with peacebuilding efforts. It is a truism that any development that does not recognise the need for peace to exist to be sustainable is blind, insensitive, and risky. Any peacebuilding effort that does not lay the foundation for and recognise the need for sustainable development is temporary, unhealthy, and troubling. Development interventions predominantly need to pursue a peacebuilding focus and ensure that development activities and objectives are integrated to support peacebuilding goals, and vice versa. It therefore goes without saying that the relationship between the two is important and mutually reinforcing for society's betterment, development, and peacefulness.

Conflict negatively impacts development. It diverts resources from meaningful undertakings, projects, or social expenditures. It leads to hampered or impeded development. It destroys

households, productive assets, and infrastructure, creates room for the collapse of law and order, and leads to capital flights in many instances (Assa 2017: 103). During peacebuilding, peace is emphasised to lay firmer foundation stones for sustainable development.

In post-conflict Ganta City in Liberia, efforts must be applied to build peace and enhance development in the country's fastest-growing city. This conversation on the relationship between development and peacebuilding comes with the understanding that it is only with peace that sustainable development can be present in Ganta. The understanding that development works to promote peace and peace works to promote development is central to this research. The research seeks not only to uncover the causes and effects of the land conflict and strained relationships between the citizens in Ganta City but also, more importantly, to apply efforts to repair their broken/soured relationships. Shedding light on the relationship between development and peacebuilding is reasonable here, given their centrality and significance in this study

2.11 VIOLENCE AND THE TYPOLOGIES OF VIOLENCE

Violence can be best described or defined as aggression in its extreme form that results in deaths, serious injuries and the destruction of property (Allen and Anderson 2017: 2). Violence is any activity, approach, arrangement, system, or difference of opinion that originates and causes environmental, bodily, mental, and social destruction that prevents anybody from attaining his or her full human potential. Violence occurs when individuals feel little compassion for others and cannot use peaceful methods to meet their needs, and when conflicts are addressed in a manner that does away with or injures relationships by rejecting the human needs of others. For any behaviour to be construed as violent, it must contain the following intrinsic features: it must be harmful; it must be intentional; it must be unnecessary and undesirable; and it does not include accidents and self-defence. It must incorporate, among other things, child abuse, murder, and sexual offenses (Hamby 2017: 167). Hamby holds onto the view that when violence is described well, this can help trace or pinpoint the causes and its effects. The accurate description of violence creates room to find solutions to its effects and direct how prevention mechanisms can be evolved to bring it to an end. It is reasonable to define and know what the violence is and what it represents. Violence is a life-threatening form of hostility like "assault, rape, or murder", triggered by frustration, anger, and other factors (American Psychological Association n.d.). Cravo (2017: 46) argues that violence is

represented by and seen in any act of aggression, force, or terrorisation that leaves marks on any person or a people's body and mind and it has three types These are direct, structural, and cultural violence. Cravo is clear that violence is usually carried out by a person or persons whose intent remains to undermine and debilitate the other person (2017).

2.11.1 Typology of Violence

The typology of violence lays out the forms of violence observed in any society. Violence has three classifications: direct violence, structural violence, and cultural violence.

2.11.2 Direct Violence

Direct violence is a purposeful, visible act of aggression (Cravo 2017: 46). It is characterised by force, terrorisation, and damaging attacks, and can only be avoided or ended by changing and eliminating conflictual behaviour. Direct violence, at times, comes about when a person or a group of people feel belittled or degraded and choose to oppose and reject acts of injustice being meted out to them. In some instances, some people choose dying in the process of trying to protect their cultural, physical, and societal identity than letting transgressions of these go unopposed.

2.11.3 Structural Violence

Structural violence covers all those economic, political, and social structures of any conflict situation that sanction and perpetuate supremacy, dependence, and unequal power (Wani et al. 2013: 35). It is a form of hidden and indirect violence derivative of societal structures that facilitate, sanction, and perpetuate political repression and economic exploitation (Cravo 2017: 46). It can be ended by eliminating the structural contradictions represented by political repressions, deprivation, economic exploitations, and injustice in any society. When a structure becomes immersed in such violence, it contaminates an entire society and its ways of life and creates inequality in meeting that society's needs and rights. It results in secondary violence in the form of domestic violence, civil war, substance abuse, and suicide. This secondary violence thus occurs when disabilities, inequalities, and deaths occur due to systemic, institutional, and policy failures to meet the human needs and rights of all members of society, rather than just the needs and rights of a select few.

2.11.4 Cultural Violence

Associated with direct and structural violence comes cultural violence that reflects norms and fundamental behaviours that make one see and accept political repression and economic exploitation as natural, normal, and hard to remove from society (Cravo 2017: 46). Cultural violence affects those features of a culture reflective of arts, ideological and religious alignments, language, and other things that represent a way of life that can give legitimacy to direct and structural violence. Over time, it has been used to provide some sense of correctness or rightness to the occurrences of direct and structural violence. It is anchored in the lives and beliefs of people who feel justified in participating in and meting out violence. It manifests itself in a cultural and societal stamp approving the rightness of political, economic, and social domination of and discrimination against a group of people. Cultural violence can be ended by changing attitudes or the way of life to give a sense of disapproval and wrongness to the economic exploitation, dispossession, political repression, and injustice in a given community, nation, or nation-state.

2.12 THE CONCEPT OF PEACE

Peace is about the non-existence of conflict or violence and the existence of the mental state and societal reality that, among other things, contains the conditions of "harmony, accord, security, and understanding" (Krishnamurthy 2015: 88). Peace is a necessary condition that needs to exist as a precondition for development (Spillane 2015: 101). Peace has been described by Galtung (2018: 35) as "the absence of violence". It is about creating no distance between a people's potential and actual needs and rights. The absence of a clash between people's interests that results in hostility when said clash is not reconciled and addressed suggests peace and its accompanying partner - a peaceful environment. Peace is a multi-faceted and endless process to transform violence. It is comparable to healthiness, whose absence in any person marks the stage of its recognition. A culture of peace must exist for peace to be sustained. For the culture of peace to exist, there has to be a culture of the non-existence of hostility.

Looking at things from a holistic perspective, peace means the non-existence of physical or mental aggression and harassment that leads to improved interaction or relationships between and/or among people. Such a condition is void of a clash of interests and embodies tolerance, cooperation, and respect for each other's views, feelings, needs, and rights. Political repression, economic exploitation, deprivation, lack of social justice, marginalisation, hunger, poverty, and

underdevelopment are unfriendly and antithetical to peace and the peacefulness of any person and society. On the one hand, their absence allows peace to exist and be enjoyed, among other things. On the other hand, their presence makes one miss and appreciate peace dearly.

2.13 TYPOLOGY OF PEACE

Peace, like anything, has types that must be understood and views about what those types mean and offer. It is thus necessary to identify the types of peace, and they can be categorised as follows:

- a. **Negative peace or cold peace** is the non-existence of confrontation or "the tendency to see that the job is complete once the fighting stops ". This leaves room for abuse of the rights of a people (Shields 2017: 6).
- b. **Positive peace or warm peace** exists when universal human rights are respected, when the economic well-being of the people is prioritised, their ecological and environmental concerns are addressed and protected, and when other core values of the people are appreciated. Peace is positive when reconciliation occurs, and the conflict is creatively transformed, leading to improved relationships (Noll n.d.). It encapsulates justice, order, cooperation, effectiveness, harmony, collaboration, democracy, freedom, and engagement, void of open or hidden aggression or tension (Shields 2017: 8).
- c. **Direct peace**, drawing from the meaning and intent of direct violence, is the absence of force, terrorisation, and damaging attacks resulting from a change and elimination of conflictual behaviour.
- d. **Structural peace**, drawing from the meaning and intent of structural violence, covers the absence of all those economic, political, and social structures that sanction, give legitimacy to, and perpetuate political repression, economic exploitation, deprivation, supremacy, dependence, unequal power, and lack of social justice.
- e. **Cultural peace** represents those features of culture or ways of life that can be used to give legitimacy to direct and structural peace.
- f. **Just peace** is a concept that emphasises that one achieves injustice as an end result when justice is pursued aggressively and maintains that the sustainability of peace is not likely to exist and be guaranteed without justice (Shields 2017: 10; Post, 2018: 17-18).

- g. **Liberal peace** is about promoting the Western way of life, identity, and standards over the ways of life, identity, and standards of others (Visoka and Richmond 2017: 4). It is an offshoot of liberal peacebuilding. It is the imposition of a top-bottom model of peacebuilding. It assumes that the best solutions to national problems or conflicts are carved outside and brought in as ready-made ones. This type of peace gives decreased relevance and limited recognition to the local capacity for peace.
- h. **Hybrid peace** promotes internal and external values by internal and external actors facilitating and ensuring the non-existence of hostility and encouraging peaceful co-existence (Cravo 2017: 46).

2.14 CONTEXTUALISING THE THREE CARDINAL APPROACHES TO PEACE IN GANTA CITY

As was mentioned before, peace can only be appreciated and missed when absent. It is its absence that leads to the need to have it restored. Its restoration is not magical. Peace comes about, among other things, by way of concerted efforts through Johan Galtung's three approaches to peace: peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding (Cravo 2017: 46). Peace cannot maintain, destroy, or restore itself. People destroy it, so people's efforts must bring peace back into existence when it is destroyed. Peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peacebuilding were the human efforts aimed purposely at restoring and maintaining peace in Ganta City and in Liberia at large, especially during the period leading up to the Second Liberian Civil War and during consolidation of the peace that emerged after that.

2.15 PEACEKEEPING

Peacekeeping is a human effort to reduce violence in a conflict situation (Beardsley, Cunningham and White 2019: 815). Peacekeeping in conflict areas, amongst others, concerns itself with protecting civilians and their human rights. It involves the provision of two forms of security: firstly, securing the belligerent forces from each other, and secondly, securing the security of the civilian population from the combatants (Bara 2020: 981). In the Ganta situation, the 2003 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was enough to secure the LURD and GoL forces from each other and secure the citizens of Ganta City from the belligerent forces. Peacekeeping emerged in the 1950s as an action of the United Nations to prohibit force in any initiative (Berdal 2018: 722). It is about steps taken purposefully to inhibit and bring the

continuation of hostility, aggression, or armed conflict to a standstill. Peacekeeping efforts in Ganta City sought to assist and take steps to ensure that the forces of the LURD and GoL ceased fire and stopped fighting, even though they did not necessarily trust each other when the ceasefire was declared. This was an Economic Community of West African States' (ECOWAS) intervention as a third party to extract assurances from the conflicting parties not to break the ceasefire rules and to discontinue their belligerent activities. ECOWAS first had to calm the antagonistic forces of the LURD and the GoL down and get them to cease their operations so as to pave the way for further necessary interventions in the peace continuum. No other course of action could have been taken in Ganta, and Liberia as a whole, to foster peace. That is why peacekeeping preceded the peacemaking and peacebuilding activities in Liberia and more specifically in Ganta City, the focus of this research.

2.16 PEACEMAKING

The core objective of peacekeeping is to limit conflicts (Di Salvatore and Ruggeri 2017: 9). Peacekeeping aims to advance human rights, reduce violence, stop violent actions by combatants against non-combatants, and promote temporary peace (Beardsley and Gleditsch 2015: 68). After the assurances were extracted and actions manifested by the signing of the CPA in August 2003 in Accra, Ghana, hostilities between the LURD and GoL forces in Ganta came to a stop, with visible changes in their conflictual behaviour. Noll (n.d.) advances that using supportive and constructive avenues to resolve social conflict with the sole purpose of repairing broken relationships and ensuring that they are restored is the core focus of peace intervention. The peacemaking efforts of the Economic Community of West African States' Mission to Liberia (ECOMIL) and the United Nations' Mission in Liberia's (UNMIL) forces and civilian staffers in Liberia, and Ganta in particular, were not about turning their attentions away from injustices or abuses and submissively stomaching mistreatments of the people. Hence, issues of injustices, abuses, and mistreatment of some of the citizens of Ganta were given attention so that they could be corrected. Against this backdrop, the GoL, under the leadership of former Liberian President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, set up two Ad Hoc Presidential Commissions to investigate and, if possible, resolve the land dispute issues that had arisen from the return of Liberian refugees to Nimba County. In the case of Ganta City, and in some other cities and communities in Nimba, the returning refugees and internally displaced people could not access their land and properties as they had been occupied. Hence, the need for intervention

to solve this problem emerged and brought peacemaking to the fore after peacekeeping had paved the way.

2.17 PEACEBUILDING

Peacebuilding involves an assortment of activities that include formal or informal players who work "to prevent, contain or end violent conflicts, and seek to establish conditions in which political, social, economic and identity-based conflicts are less likely to result in violence and more likely to produce constructive change" (Rosbe 2018: 1). Peacebuilding requires addressing the root causes of a conflict. When they are satisfactorily dealt with, the conflict will not return. While peace has been achieved and maintained in Ganta, the time has come for peacebuilding efforts to facilitate development. Interventions are required to address the socio-economic development and socio-political issues or concerns that laid the groundwork for the conflict in the city in the first place. The development and peacebuilding requirements in Ganta City are thus intertwined as compelling necessities. The development work after the conflict has to promote peace, and the peacebuilding efforts have to lay the foundation for and encourage and foster sustainable development, using local capacities. This action research has been undertaken in Ganta City to investigate the process.

2.18 RELEVANCE OF THE DISCUSSED THEORIES AND CONCEPTS TO THE GANTA CITY SITUATION

The land conflicts and strained relationships between some members of the Dan, Mandingo, and Mano ethnic groups in Ganta have their roots in the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003, especially the fight between the LURD and the GoL forces for control of Ganta City. Like any other conflict, the Second Liberian Civil War and the fight for control of the city went through the five stages of conflict discussed earlier in this chapter. The conflict developed, enemies were made, forces were mobilised by the opposing groups to battle for control of the city, aggressive attacks and counterattacks were launched on the city in March 2003 (Rincon 2010: 14), and hostilities ensued and characterised the warring activities. In the end, a ceasefire was "established at 00:01 hours on 18th June 2003" that resulted "in the observation of a total and permanent cessation of hostilities" between the GoL, LURD, and Movement for Democracy in Liberia (MODEL) forces. Before the signing of the CPA and the evocation of the ceasefire, Ganta City had already been recaptured from the LURD forces by the GoL forces. The

ECOMIL forces landed in Liberia to ensure the full implementation of the CPA, and they were later followed by the UNMIL forces.

The hostilities between the LURD and the GoL forces came to an end in Ganta in 2003, as stated. The LURD forces were predominantly comprised of members of the Mandingo ethnic group and the GoL forces were predominantly comprised of members of the Dan and Mano ethnic groups. Confidence and calm were restored in Liberia with the arrival of the ECOMIL forces and later the UNMIL forces. After that, the need arose for internally displaced people and refugees to return to their hometowns and communities, and Ganta City was one of these. When the returning displaced and refugee Mandingos arrived in Ganta, they found their properties occupied by squatters. The squatters refused to leave, so these returnees were left homeless and landless. The disagreement between the squatters and the returnees began to ferment and escalate, and the need to prevent full-blown inter-ethnic land conflicts became more urgent and essential. State and non-state actors intervened to prevent and diffuse clashes, but the real issue remains unresolved.

As discussed in the section of this chapter that provided descriptions of the different approaches to managing, resolving, and transforming conflicts, Ganta City has had its share of issues that require management, resolution, and transformation to lay a solid foundation for sustainable peace and development. Actions have been designed to prevent a recurrence of the conflict and to create an environment where solutions to the conflictual issues can be found. These solutions have to be non-violent and include ways to address the origins of the conflict. The land conflicts and the resultant strained relationships between the affected citizens require attention to pave the way for their continued peaceful coexistence. This includes gaining a better understanding of the underlying issues that have led to the people's roles on their sides of the warring factions when fighting in their city. With the underlying issues unearthed, appropriate measures can be taken to avoid the situation escalating into another full-blown conflict.

Efforts to prevent new conflict and to stop the reoccurrence of the old conflict work hand-in-hand with promoting sustainable development in the city. This is where conflict management becomes relevant. The situation in Ganta requires concerted effort to manage it adequately before it escalates out of control. Ganta faces land conflicts and strained relationships between some people of the Dan, Mandingo, and Mano ethnic groups. This situation is still ongoing after the end of the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003. For this reason, the peace in Ganta can best be described as a negative or cold peace. While there is no open confrontation in the city,

there is an undercurrent of tension that needs to be managed and addressed to avoid further conflict and transform the conflict creatively to contribute to improved relationships (positive peace).

The need has also emerged for conflict resolution among the Dan, Mandingo, and Mano. This process can be used to arbitrate, negotiate, and mediate a resolution to the conflict in the city. Supporting and facilitating win-win solutions by means of alternate dispute resolution (ADR) have become necessary to address the underlying causes of the conflict and to prevent its recurrence. ADR can facilitate participative dialogue opportunities between those involved in the conflict. With this approach, the work needed to facilitate improved teamwork and harmonious communication between those involved in the conflict can be done. This will foster and enable social justice by creating acceptance and support for the various marginalised groups in the city.

The situation in Ganta does not require peacekeeping and peacemaking, as the situation in the city lacks all the necessary elements to invoke such actions. What is required to aid the situation in the city is peacebuilding. The issues that have laid the foundation for the land conflicts and strained relationships need to be addressed carefully to avoid a recurrence of the conflict and continuation of the strained relationships. Peacebuilding will drastically reduce any tension and aggressive behaviour present and will lay the foundation for development interventions to address the essential day-to-day issues in the city.

There is an urgent need to encourage better understanding and cooperation among the citizens, and their social instruments (peacebuilding) can be used to achieve peace. Additionally, means need to be found, and strategies developed and used to maintain the conflict in its latent stage. This constitutes primary prevention and solving of problems to avoid violent conflict (conflict prevention). Conflict management needs to be employed to avoid open conflict and to solve incompatibility problems. Win-win solutions need to emerge from alternate dispute resolution (conflict resolution) initiatives. All of these need to be employed in Ganta City to generate productive change and improve the social relationships, especially after all the forms of violence that have occurred. The cultural, direct, and structural violence have to be addressed and solutions found that are satisfactory to all parties involved, and this will result in conflict transformation. The two concepts most relevant to the situation in Ganta are peacebuilding and conflict transformation. With peace established in the city, and the conflict transformed,

sustainable development anchored in investment security can be guaranteed. All of this can be achieved quickly and successfully by using the city's local resources, capacities, and skills.

Against this backdrop, community-based peacebuilding is the overarching theoretical framework of this research. It is underpinned and supported by indigenous knowledge and the asset-based approach to community development theories to build peace and transform the conflict in Ganta City in more meaningful ways.

2.19 CONCLUSION

Peace is a concept that is difficult to describe. Even when described, said description cannot be all-encompassing and exhaustive of what the concept is and stands for. It is, therefore, safer to say that efforts have been made to conceptualise and describe peace as the non-existence of aggression, belligerent behaviour, discrimination, and subjugation (Rosbe 2018: 1). Clashes of interest exist as part of normal daily life and they need to be addressed. In Ganta City the clashes of interest are manifested in the land disputes and strained relationships among members of the three majority ethnic groups: the Dan, Mandingo, and Mano. When clashes of interest are not addressed, the possibility exists for them to escalate into full-blown violence. Just as in any other society, conflict is present among the people of Ganta City and it has to be addressed continuously to keep the city peaceful and stable. Violence might erupt in the city if the conflict is not managed correctly and resolved. Peace and violence are opposite concepts that make the law of impenetrability a reality. They cannot exist simultaneously in the same place and as one emerges, the other dissipates. Society needs the presence of one - peace - and the absence of the other - violence. The need for peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding must be given increased attention in any society overwhelmed with conflict. Since peace has been established and maintained in Ganta City, peacebuilding has become the core focus of contributions to the continuous tranquillity and stability of the city.

The peacebuilding efforts needed in Ganta City require a community-based approach that relies upon and makes sufficient and proper use of local capacities and resources for peace in the city. This approach is needed to address the root causes of the conflict, repair the broken relationships, and improve the interactions among the once aggrieved parties. The local capacities for peace in the city are viewed as essential elements in establishing and maintaining the communal harmony and achieving sustainable development. In Ganta, local capacities, skills, knowledge, and resources need to be recognised and utilised adequately as they are

identified as integral to local peacebuilding for sustainable development in the city. Development and peacebuilding processes in Ganta City need to be reciprocal. They must support each other in order to accomplish the desired outcomes of peace and improved quality of the citizens' lives. Development interventions undertaken in the city need to enhance peace, and the peacebuilding activities have to facilitate concurrent development.

CHAPTER THREE: EMPIRICAL STUDIES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter, among other things, reviews and discusses the post-conflict land situation that has laid the foundation for the conflicts and strained relationships in Ganta City. Historical factors that led to the tense relationships among the citizens of Ganta and Liberia emanating from land issues are laid out clearly. The four broad categories of land disputes and properties are presented, highlighting the land issue in Ganta City, a post-conflict environment, and the three types of land disputes in Ganta are outlined.

The two major government interventions made in Ganta to return seized or occupied properties to their rightful owners are discussed. The story of how the Mandingoes acquired their parcels of land in central Ganta and the refusal of the Mano people to buy the parcels of land legally is presented to better understand how the Mandingo ethnic groups gained access to parcels of land along Ganta Broad Street (the new main road in the city). The conflictual issues in Ganta relate to the strained relationships arising from the acquisition of land and land disputes. The issue of acquisition of public land is highlighted, and how these issues have contributed to the disputes is also discussed.

As mentioned in chapter two, this research is underpinned by the theories of community-based peacebuilding, indigenous knowledge, conflict transformation, and the asset-based approach to community development. The overarching theory is community-based peacebuilding, supported by IK. IK relies upon and makes sufficient and proper use of local capacities and resources for peace, with the sole intent of addressing the root causes of the conflict in the city, repairing broken relationships, and improving interactions amongst the people. The community conflicts in some rural communities like Ganta are identified. The means used to resolve them using a community-based peacebuilding approach and local capacities for peace are discussed. The community of Ganta needs to identify and use its local capacities for peace to establish and maintain communal harmony, so that sustainable development can be achieved in the city.

Local peace committees are reviewed and discussed as community-based instruments used to restore or create communal harmony. Since these local infrastructures for peace have proved quite helpful in laying solid foundations for peace in the rural communities in Liberia,

experimenting with one in Ganta City will be a better way of facilitating and guaranteeing sustainable peace and development. The nature, types, characteristics, challenges, and successes of the LPCs that have worked in some rural communities are presented to indicate what they encompass when building peace at the community level between the locals. The conflicts in Ganta have derived from land and property disputes, and those unsatisfactorily resolved have led to strained relationships. That is why the most appropriate instrument to use to build peace in the local community in Ganta is a local peace committee (LPC). The local peace committee is discussed as an instrument to enhance and ensure peace in Ganta city.

Local peace committees' successful and valuable works in building peace at local levels and helping to transform conflicts in Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, and Zimbabwe have been highlighted or discussed.

3.2 LAND, CONFLICT, VIOLENCE, AND PEACE CONCERNS IN GANTA CITY

There are four types of land in Liberia: private, customary, government, and public (Liberia Land Authority 2019: 5-6). Private land refers to a private individual's parcel of land. Customary land is owned by a community and used or managed for customary and traditional purposes and interests. Government land is land that hosts public facilities such as government hospitals and government offices. Public land is land that is not customary, government or private land. The land and property disputes in Ganta city are over private land. These disputes involve returning refugees and internally displaced citizens of Ganta who returned to find their claimed parcels of land occupied by others.

The debilitating Liberian civil upheaval has created more conflict over properties and plantations (Doss et al. n.d: 4). Ethnic Mandingoes who fled Liberia to neighbouring countries left their land in the rural and urban parts of the country abandoned, and the land was occupied by other residents in their absence. The accusations of fraudulent occupancies of those parcels of land by those who claim them to be theirs are numerous and efforts to reclaim those lands have led to land conflicts in Ganta. Land ownership and occupancy is thus an issue of immense interest and a source of tension in the city.

The key threats to peace and stability in Liberia have been identified as disputes over land, and the resultant mounting tension and violent conflicts have become prevalent in urban areas.

Ganta City is one of the urban communities in Liberia where the civil war forced some of its inhabitants to flee to refugee camps in neighbouring Guinea. When the refugees returned, they rushed to reclaim their former land, but as stated, this land has been occupied by illegal squatters, and they do not want to relinquish the land to the original owners. The squatters want documentation to prove the original owners' claims, but this is not available, so tension and conflict between the squatters and the original owners has mounted over time (Vapnek, Boaz and Fofie 2017: 289).

The situation in Ganta therefore involves the returning refugees' claims that their land that had been occupied without their knowledge, and in some instances given to the squatters by the government in the city Ganta during their absence. This situation represents multiple allocations of land and violent land acquisitions (Wehrmann 2008: 15). Under the leadership of former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, the Government of Liberia set up two Ad Hoc Presidential Commissions on Land Disputes in Nimba County to resolve the disputes. As reflected in Appendix L, Ganta City registered the highest number of land dispute cases, namely 214, representing 29 per cent of the 730 land dispute cases reported in Nimba (Bility 2010: 8). Most of the disputes in other cities in Nimba County have been resolved. The unresolved disputes have led the unsatisfied Mandingo returnees to take legal action against the Liberian Government in the ECOWAS Court, where they have asked to be paid "US\$500 million as compensation for the violations of their human rights to life, dignity, housing, property, development, and peace" (Sonpon 2018). The resolution process has been Monrovia-led, rather than a Liberian-led effort involving the local actors, so not all of the claims have been resolved. For this reason, I elected to use a local peace committee, to see if they can provide local solutions that will resolve the remaining claims and assist the community to remain peaceful and united.

In Liberia, and more specifically Nimba County and Ganta City, the land disputes fit two of the four situations that are usually prevalent in post-conflict land disputes (Wehrmann 2008: 18). They are (a) returning refugees are claiming that their land is being occupied illegally by other people, and (b) the government has given some of the land claimed by the returnees to other residents during their absence.

The competition to own land has always led to land conflict. The quest for ownership of land exists in every society because land is a valuable asset with cultural, economic, and political value (Irene and Majekodunmi 2017: 189). The nature of the conflict in Ganta City is that

returning refugees and internally displaced people who fled the area because of civil war have returned to the city to find their land being occupied illegally by squatters. Most of the squatters are unwilling to relinquish the land to the claimants. Who obtains, owns, and retains land has always mattered. Based on the value of land, illegal occupants and government authorities can exploit the absence of people (original owners) who subsequently return and lay claims to land. The illegal occupants and government authorities wrongly interpret the lack of occupancy of land as a lack of ownership, and therefore proceed to occupy it or convey it to anyone interested in owning and using it.

Land conflict often results from a person, people, or groups claiming a parcel/s of land. It results in clashes of competing interests about the land in question, especially when the clashes of interest cannot easily be mediated locally or resolved legally by existing legal mechanisms for adjudicating such matters. The land conflicts in post-war Ganta City are the result of illegal occupancies and conveyance to occupants by the city authority, without the owners' knowledge during their absence.

The Government of Liberia established two Ad Hoc Presidential Commissions to resolve the post-conflict land disputes in Nimba County. Ganta City registered 212 cases, representing 29 per cent of the 730 land dispute cases following the war (Bility 2010: 18). Most of the disputes in Nimba County have been resolved, and the unresolved ones have been referred to the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS) Court of Justice for resolution (Sonpon 2018). Some of the land disputes have been resolved, but some still remain unresolved after the intervention by the government.

Conflict is a reflection of the disparity of goals between two or more individuals or groups of people who are parties to the conflict. The disparity may be real or perceived. Conflict often results from competition and/or disagreement among people because of their views, needs, and values. The conflict reflects the irreconcilability of people's positions on issues. Conflict is part of human relationships and is often also present in peaceful environments. In these instances, it is restricted to isolated cases that are not important enough to claim society's attention. The good thing about this type of situation is that it can be resolved using creative means and is reliant upon societal rules to establish societal arrangements that are cooperative, supportive, positive, and lead to non-violent and positive societal changes. Conflict always occurs when people believe that their needs are not being met because of the actions of others, especially when those actions favour the ones inhibiting their needs. Fortunately, conflict can be

constructive when avenues are found and used to ensure that the needs of all those involved are met, as violence is avoided (Fisher et al. 2000: 4; Galtung 2018: 35).

While the situation in Ganta has not turned violent, the peace in the community is negative in nature because the people still have burning concerns that need to be addressed in order to turn the peace into positive peace. The peace in Ganta represents the obvious absence of a clash between the people's interests that can result in hostility. When such a clash exists and is reconciled and addressed satisfactorily, it suggests peace and its accompanying partner, a peaceful environment. In Ganta, some attention has been given to ensuring that the conflicts are resolved satisfactorily and that the relationships between the community's citizens are restored. Attention is given to ensuring that the citizens value and respect the unity in their diversity. This will foster the development of their city and their potential in an environment where they can live freely and happily without fear, intimidation, or dispossession of their land and other rights.

Full peace can be restored in Ganta City when the relationships between the Dan, Mandingo, and Mano ethnic groups are characterised by mutual respect, respect for authority, respect for the rights of all men and women, tolerance, harmony, and cooperation. With those characteristics ingrained in the attitudinal and behavioural DNA of these three ethnic groups in Ganta City and Nimba County, there can be a culture of peace. However, while the situation in Ganta appears peaceful and people appear to be tolerant of each other, there are simmering tensions that are concerning.

3.3 TWO MAJOR RESOLUTION EFFORTS BY THE GOVERNMENT OF LIBERIA

3.3.1 The First Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba County Land and Properties Disputes

Upon former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's appointment as the president of Liberia, she recognised that land disputes were a major stumbling block to attaining genuine peace in the country (Kieh 2015: 12). Such land disputes that threatened the peace and reconciliation were widespread across Nimba County, and it was against this backdrop that the President established her first Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba County Land and Properties Disputes in June 2006. The commission comprised of 17 persons (Johnson 2008: 3).

Table 0.1: Members of the First Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba Land and Property Disputes

No.	Name	Position	Role on the Commission
1	Ambulai B. Johnson, Jr.	Minister of Internal Affairs	Chairman
2	Dr. Eugene Shannon	Minister of Land, Mines, and Energy	Co-Chairman
3	Cllr. Frances J. Morris (later replaced by Cllr. Phillips Z. Banks)	Minister of Justice	Member
4	Cllr. Pearl Brown Bull	TRC Commissioner	Member
5	Harrison S. Karnwea, Sr.	Former Superintendent of Nimba	Member
6	Senator Saye Taayor A. Dolo	Nimba Legislative Caucus Chairman	Member
7	Representative Worlea-Saywah Dunah	Nimba Legislative Caucus Secretary	Member
8	Robert Kamei	Superintendent of Nimba	Member
9	Loseni Donzo	Minister of Public Works	Member
10	Rev. Christopher Toe	The Representative of the Liberia Council of Churches	Member
11	Iman Habib Sheriff	National Muslim Council of Liberia	Member
12	Cllr. Abba G. Williams	Association of Liberian Female Lawyers	Member
13	Liberia National Bar Association	Liberia National Bar Association	Member
14	Cllr. Emmanuel Gbalazeh	Prominent Nimbaian	Member
15	Madenyen Jabateh	Prominent Nimbaian	Member
16	Yah Belleh	Nimba Women's Representative	Member
17	Martin Saye Kollah	Nimba Youth Representative	Member

Source: Johnson (2008: 3)

The commission was mandated to:

- Investigate matters relating to the land and other real estate disputes amongst the people of Nimba;
- Investigate all outstanding issues that impacted the peaceful coexistence of the people of Nimba;
- Make recommendations to the President for an amicable resolution of all land, real estate, and other disputes in Nimba (Johnson 2008: 3).

The commission, after its consultations, then constituted a 13-member technical committee that consisted of trained and experienced surveyors, police officers, 3 commissioners, and a clerical staffer (Johnson 2008: 5). The technical committee registered the claims (inclusive of the occupants on claimed properties); carried out spot visitations; verified the claims; in most instances, made meaningful interventions for resolution of the issues of dispute; and reported its progress to the commission. The technical committee concentrated its work on Ganta City as the commission realised that Ganta City had most of the land dispute cases, some of which were very controversial. When solved, a similar strategy was to be replicated in other parts of Nimba County, with lessons learned to resolve similar disputes in Nimba in particular and in Liberia at large.

The commission and its technical committee worked and succeeded in registering 112 land dispute claims, verified 96, and resolved 17, while 9 cases remained unresolved (Johnson 2008: 6). At the same time, 95 remained under negotiation until then-President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf appointed a new commission. The commission also succeeded in getting the United Nations Mission in Liberia to map out the streets of Ganta City and open a new road bypassing the city centre. This new road led to Saclepea in one direction and to Monrovia in the other. The logic behind the opening of the new road was to decongest the city centre and to create opportunities for disputants who wanted land along the roadsides for commercial purposes to obtain such locations. Unfortunately, the efforts did not immediately attract many business people as the city centre remained the centre of attraction and concentration. Those involved in the land disputes did not make use of this opportunity to relocate to the new location as it had little or no immediate business prospects.

The work of the first commission ended in 2009 without much progress. The recommendations of this commission covered the following: (a) convening of a multi-stakeholder meeting to engage the citizens of Ganta in sustained dialogue to resolve the issues; (b) the establishment of a special court for land disputes; (c) the mapping out of Ganta City; and (d) the expropriation of the entire market in Ganta (Johnson 2008: 11).

3.3.2 The Second Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba County Land and Properties Disputes

The second commission established by former President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf on the land and property disputes in Nimba County had a similar mandate as the first. However, its membership

was made exclusively of citizens from Nimba County from the Dan, Mandingo, Krahn, and Mano ethnic groups of the county, as seen below:

Table 0.2: Members of the Second Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba Land and Properties Disputes

No.	Name	Ethnicity	Role on the Commission
1	Musa Hassan Bility	Mandingo	Chairman
2	Senator Prince Y. Johnson	Dan	Member
3	Senator Saye Taayor A. Dolo	Mano	Member
4	Representative Worlea Saywah Dunah	Dan	Member
5	Representative Nohn R. Kidau	Mano	Member
6	Representative Martin M. Farngalo	Dan	Member
7	Representative Edwin P. Gaye	Dan	Member
8	Representative Jackson Fiindor	Mano	Member
9	Representative Francis L. Karwaye	Mano	Member
10	Representative Evan V. Koah	Mano	Member
11	Cllr. Karmo Soko Sackor	Mandingo	Member
12	Ansuman Kromah	Mandingo	Member
13	Mandeyen Jabateh Kromah	Mandingo	Member
14	Superintendent Robert Kamei	Mano	Member
15	Michael Wiles	Krahn	Advisor
16	Dr. Marcus Dahn	Mano	Advisor
17	Harrison S. Karnwea, Sr.	Dan	Advisor

Source: Bility (2010: 2)

This commission of two senators and nine representatives (elected members of the 52nd Legislature from Nimba County), plus other prominent sons and daughters of Nimba, set up seven Local Peace Building Committees (LPBC) in Sanniquellie City, Karnplay City, Bahn City, Saclepea City, Ganta City, Tappita City, and Sokopa/Kpain. The committee's work was to register all land dispute claims; mediate, where necessary and possible, all registered cases to mitigate brewing tension; resolve cases; and leave the unsolvable for intervention by the commission.

Bility (2010: 8) reflects that the commission registered 745 land disputes across Nimba County. The commission negotiated 592 cases where the claimants and respondents agreed to settle for a cash payment from the Government of Liberia in return for relinquishing their claims in Sanniquellie, Saclepea, Tappita, and Karnplay, Ganta, and Bahn Cities. One hundred and thirty-eight remained unresolved and needed negotiation. It was established that there were 433 structures on claimed properties in Karnplay, Bahn, Saclepea, Ganta, and Tappita Cities, at an estimated value or "peace package" of L\$71,389,000.00. Of this total, the amount of L\$27,

371750 (38.35%) was intended for claimants, while L\$44,017,250.00 (38.35%) was intended for the occupants of the structures (Bility 2010: 8).

Based on the estimated values of the properties on the claimed parcels of land, it can safely be concluded that valuable structures were built on the disputed land in the county. Bility (2010: 11) outlined his local peacebuilding committee's assessment of the number of occupants and claimants in each city against the estimated amount to be given as "peace packages", to lay the issues to rest. Bahn City contained 25 claimants and 25 occupants, based on which it was recommended that both claimants and occupants receive L\$2 945,000.00 and L\$3,290.00.00, respectively, totalling L\$6,235.000.00. Ganta City reported 212 claimants and 212 occupants, with a recommendation that they receive L\$2 795,000.00 and L\$28,587,000.00, respectively, totalling L\$31 373,000.00. Karnplay City reported nine claimants, and nine occupants received L\$1,005,000.00 and L\$395,000.00, respectively, amounting to L\$1,400,000.00. Saclepea City registered 163 claimants and 163 occupants, for which settlements of L\$20,206,750.00 and 7,716,250.00 respectively were recommended, totalling 27,923,000.00. Sanniquellie City, the capital city of Nimba County, registered nine claimants and nine occupants who were recommended to receive L\$300,000.00 and L\$3,132,000.00, respectively, amounting to L\$3,432,000.00. Tappita City registered nine claimants and nine occupants, who received a "peace package" of L\$120,000.00 and L\$906,000.00, respectively, thus amounting to the sum of L\$1,026,000.00.

Most, if not all of the commissioners on the 2nd commission, who were neither Dan nor Mano, had some interest in claiming land in some parts of the county. Chairman Musa Hassan Bility (Mandingo) disputed his family land in Saclepea. Cllr. Karmo Soko Sackor (Mandingo), a member of the commission, had a land interest in Sokopa. Ansuman Kromah (Mandingo), a commission member, claimed that his family land was occupied by the offices of the Ganta City Council, the Ganta Women's Centre, and other occupants. Mandeyen Jabateh Kromah (Mandingo), who worked on both commissions, had a family land interest in Kpein. The remaining commissioners had not registered any claims, and they were from the Dan and Mano ethnic groups.

3.4 The Invoking of Eminent Domain by President Sirleaf on the Ganta Market Land

During the 26 July 2010 celebrations (Liberia's Independence Day) in Sanniquellie City, Nimba County, themed "Utilizing our Diversity to Enhance National Unity and Harmony", President Sirleaf called on the citizens of Nimba to take the lead in promoting diversity, owing to the number of ethnic groups that were found in the county. President Sirleaf used the occasion to inform the county and the people of Liberia that the Special Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on the Nimba Land and Properties Dispute had submitted its report on 30 June 2010 (Sirleaf 2010). She indicated that she had informed the commissioners that the land disputes in Nimba County had dragged on for too long and created constraints for some of the things that her government intended to do. The former Liberian leader made it known that her government could only facilitate the peace process, as peace could not be legislated or commanded. She furthered that peace had to come from the individual and their willingness to accept things, mediate, collaborate, reconcile, and compromise. She then called on all Nimbaians to see the report as the beginning of a great step forward in reconciling the area's people. She evoked Eminent Domain on the controversial Ganta Market area, following the commission's recommendation when no compromise could be reached, declaring the Government of Liberia's re-categorisation of the land as public property for the construction of public facilities for all.

3.5 Conclusion

Illegal occupation of land is a sad reality in many post-conflict societies, with Ganta City, Liberia being no exception. These issues lay the foundation for communal conflicts and strained relationships. When these issues are resolved using formal or legal structures, the strained relationships between the complainants and the respondents persist and require special local peacebuilding attention. Against this backdrop, literature on post-conflict land disputes and communal structures that build peace has been reviewed. The causes of land disputes in post-conflict environments have been examined, including those in Ganta City, Liberia. The land acquisition process in Liberia has been reviewed and is discussed below. Other communities across Africa and in other countries have been examined to identify the best practices for local conflict resolution and peacebuilding, and a conclusion has been reached on

the relevance of local peace committees in the resolution of conflict and strained relationships in Ganta City

Local peace committees have proven to be useful and effective mechanisms for resolving conflicts at the community level. They create the room and address the need to continue contributing to restoring calm in societies once afflicted by hostilities. When formed, local peace committees have to remain cognisant of the need to exercise sufficient patience and exude tolerance, make necessary adjustments if and when needed, and remain focused on their tasks. Committee members need to have the courage to deal with contentious issues and expect delays when carrying out their functions. The participative approach has been utilised to find people who share a common interest, agree to participate in the commission, create an avenue for equal participation by all, and collaborate to find remedies to the problems identified.

3.6 LAND: ACQUISITION, OCCUPANCIES, AND ASSOCIATED CONFLICTS

3.6.1 Introduction

Land has come to be a valuable asset, desired by all. Land has an economic value which is determined by the conditions of the prevailing land market (de Vries and Voß 2018: 383). Land also has a social value that individuals use to connect and identify with their community. It can be used to add value to the general public and what the public values when used for "public service systems". Such systems include public facilities such as schools and other educational facilities, hospitals and other health facilities, public markets, soccer fields, and parks, etc. (de Vries and Voß 2018: 387).

The process for land acquisition is predicated upon its value. Conflict usually ensues because of competition for land when it is associated with the clashing interests of different parties. With its value and the importance that people attach to its acquisition and ownership, land has become one of the properties that have come to be entangled in conflictual situations in some communities, including Ganta City. Sadly, land conflicts impede growth, delay development projects, drive away investments, and threaten livelihoods (Wahi 2019: 143).

This section of the research discusses land in terms of its acquisition, occupancies and associated conflicts, the causes of conflicts associated with it, and what it represents. Efforts

have been applied to review and discuss the post-war land conflict in Liberia and shed light on the land conflict in Ganta City.

3.6.2 Land: what does it symbolise?

Briassoulis (2020:15, citing FAO 1995:6) indicates that:

“Land is a delineable area of the earth’s terrestrial surface, encompassing all attributes of the biosphere immediately above or below this surface, including those of the near-surface climate, the soil and terrain forms, the surface hydrology (including shallow lakes, rivers, marshes, and swamps), the near-surface sedimentary layers and associated groundwater reserve, the plant and animal populations, the human settlement pattern and physical results of past and present human activity (terracing, water storage or drainage structures, roads, buildings, etc.)”.

Land means different things to different communities. Land in Liberia represents more than mere earth as it represents "a symbol of identity, heritage, and hope" (USAID 2016: 1). For poverty-stricken Liberians, the piece of land they occupy represents their wealth. It is therefore unsurprising that any attempt to take their land from them is a threat and a source of tension. FAO’s definition of land recognizes that land represents the place where humans conduct their activities and where materials for the conduct of said activities are sourced. As an important fixed asset, land can be used for housing, agricultural, recreation, transportation, and marketable purposes. It possesses cultural, economic, and political value, and ownership disputes can lead to tension and conflict if they are not dealt with properly (Irene and Majekodunmi 2017a: 189; Desautel 2020: para 1).

The economic value of land is reflected in its use for production purposes as an important source of livelihood for people. Land thus has economic benefits for the people using it so they will not willingly lose their source of income. Land has political value because of where it is located and who has political control of the area. Land is allocated to tribes/ethnic groups by the state as a reflection of their power as a tribe, and it allows the tribal leaders to exert control and influence over their populations and their economic development security. Land has become a strategic and much-politicised resource, and communities and nations have gone to war because of this. The quality and location of the land determines who lives in poverty and who benefits from growth and development on the land. The protracted control of land and housing by a few in society often serves as a source of disgruntlement and has ignited conflict and uprisings. Land is culturally relevant because it projects and symbolises cultural identity

and belonging to a community. Additionally, the acquisition of land, access to it, possession of it, its defence and control over it, and the resources located on it are often sources of tension when politicians who want to enrich and reward their allies and proxies manipulate the citizens and draft them into conflicts locally and/or nationally.

3.6.2 Causes of Land Disputes or Conflicts on All Properties

Wehrmann (2008: 33, cited in Kalabamu 2019: 33), states that land conflicts have three dimensions or classifications, and these are expanded on in the below table:

Table 0.3: The Dimensions and Classifications of Land Conflicts

Micro-social dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundary conflicts between neighbours • Ownership conflicts due to inheritance conflicts • Occasional multiple sales of private property • Individual occupation of private land • Building extensions on the private land of another person
Meso-social dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal lease/sale of somebody else's private land • Boundary conflicts between tribes or villages • Illegal sale/lease of communal land/tribal land • Illegal allocation of state land by a private individual • Group invasion of private land • Land-use conflicts between farmers and pastoralists • Occasional building extensions on state land • Occasional illegal use of state land • Illegal use of one's own land • Violent attacks on property
Macro-social dimension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ownership conflicts due to legal pluralism • Land grabbing • Illegal sale/lease of state land • Evictions (by force) by governmental authorities • Improper land privatisation • Land-use conflicts between private and public utilisation due to a general disregard for land use regulations by a majority of people • Expropriation without compensation

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal acquisition and sale of somebody else's private property by individuals, supported by corrupt public agencies or courts • Multiple allocations of particular plots by officers working at the land registry
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Source: Wehrmann (2008: 33, cited in Kalabamu 2019: 33)

The land conflict in Ganta falls within the micro-social, meso-social, and macro-social dimensions. In terms of the micro-social dimension, people's private plots of land are being occupied by other individuals. In the meso-social dimension, land belonging to others is being used illegally. In the macro-social dimension, the government of Liberia has expropriated the Ganta Market land without compensating the illegal occupants or the claimants.

Wehrmann (2008: 14-15) places disputes over land into four broad categories: (1) conflicts occurring on all types of property; (2) special conflicts over private property; (3) special conflicts over common and collective property; and (4) special conflicts over state property. These four broad categories of land disputes are further separated into thirty-five types of land disputes, and these are illustrated in Appendix M. Wehrmann (2008) argues that land conflicts that lead to massive protests can serve as change instruments. Such a situation results in policy reforms and implementation that deal constructively with land conflicts rather than brushing them aside or just stopping them. The land conflicts that are taking place in Ganta City can be classified as below:

1. Illegal authorisation by the Ganta City Corporation for private citizens to squat on the private land of others without cautioning them that they can only build temporary structures.
2. Conflicting ownership claims in the post-2003 Ganta war conflict situations.
3. The state's expropriation (declaration of eminent domain) of the Ganta Market Land that is privately owned, without compensation.

3.7 POST-WAR LAND CONFLICT

Internally displaced people and those who have lived away from their land for years as refugees lives have begun returning to the post-conflict environments in Liberia now that the civil wars have ended (Vapnek, Boaz and Fofie 2017: 289). These returnees have arrived home to find their land and ancestral homes occupied by individuals who have claimed and occupied them during the wars, and this has resulted in land disputes. The situation threatened the already

fragile peace and undermines the stability of the state still recovering from the war. The land dispute in Nimba County is just one of the conflict situations unique to post-conflict realities. Another example of this has occurred in Kunduz in Afghanistan, as land disputes have arisen following confusion over land due to the return of internally displaced people and refugees. They have also returned to find that their land has been occupied illegally or sold by local commanders (Gaston and Dang 2015: 8). Their demand to access their land and resettle has resulted in conflicts. There are four types of land claims that are usually prevalent in post-conflict environments:

- (1) Claims by returning refugees and internally displaced people against other people occupying their land without authorisation;
- (2) claims by owners that returning refugees and internally displaced people are occupying their land without authorisation;
- (3) claims by refugees that internally displaced people are occupying their land without authorisation; and
- (4) conflicts due to the fact that the former lands of refugees have been allocated by the (former) government to other people during their absence (Wehrmann 2008: 18).

The two Liberian conflicts have not only led to the loss and destruction of land records; they have also led to contestations between the returning owners and the squatters (Kieh 2015: 12). Returning refugees and internally displaced people have experienced problems when trying to reclaim their parcels of land because the land has been occupied in their absence. It is interesting to note that those who have occupied others' land are the ones who are demanding proof of prior ownership. They themselves are not in possession of ownership documents that authorise them to occupy the disputed land. Whether or not the returnees or occupants produce ownership documents, it remains clear that the occupants did not occupy these parcels of land before the wars, while the claimants can establish their proof of occupancy before the wars to some degree. This has been ascertained from a study participant during an interview conducted in 2021. The reluctance of the occupants to leave the land is not only linked to the establishment of ownership by claimants. It is also heavily linked to the economic importance of the land they occupy and their investments in/on it. The occupants cannot afford to leave the land and their investments.

3.8 LOCAL PEACE COMMITTEES: STRUCTURES TO OPERATIONALISE THE BOTTOM-TO-TOP APPROACH TO PEACEBUILDING

Local Peace Committees are "committees or structures formed at the level of a district, municipality, town or village to encourage and facilitate inclusive peacemaking and peacebuilding processes" (Issifu 2016: 142). Issifu argues that LPCs have used agreement, awareness creation, community-level capability building and empowerment, consensus building, traditional advocacy, mediation, and negotiation to resolve conflicts and build peace. These LPCs are usually made of a collection of people at the local level who agree as a group to work together to rebuild strained or damaged relationships to prevent communal or interpersonal tensions, violence, and conflict (2016).

According to Van Tongeren (2013b), local peace committees play significant roles in many countries on the African continent affected by conflict. He acknowledges that they invest in local people in a meaningful way to assist them to become builders of peace, solvers of community tensions, and reducers of community violence. Conflict is a natural part of human relations, and how questions are raised, debated, and resolved to lead to progress is an integral part of societal transformation. The main priority is to avoid violence. Violent conflicts connected to or derived from ethnic, political, religious, and local leadership issues, among others, have proven difficult to solve, irrespective of efforts to build peace by international and national development actors and local governments. To help address local conflicts, LPCs have emerged as necessary structures that incorporate customary and contemporary measures to inhibit, manage, and transform conflicts within an ethnic group or that involve ethnic groups (Adan and Pkalya 2006: vii, cited in Irene 2018: 3). These LPCs are important "precautionary, responsive and supportive mechanisms to prevent the eruption or escalation of nascent micro-level conflicts into violent and more widespread conflicts, as well as to promote development ideals" in any African society (Chivasa 2017: 1, cited in Chivasa and Harris 2019: 132). These committees are useful mechanisms that facilitate discussions in communities beset by conflict. They help solve the communities' problems and ensure that they do not get plunged into violence. LPCs have therefore emerged as a useful idea to deal with the land issues in the local Ganta community. They also add an ethnic dimension that requires the use of local means for resolution.

Against this backdrop and predicated upon the usefulness of LPCs for community peacebuilding, the researcher has chosen to discuss the concept as it has proved relevant to resolving the land conflicts in Ganta City. LPCs are "human-service-oriented structures designed and created to represent the interests of local people" (Chivasa 2019: 131). The failure of liberal peacebuilding arrangements to resolve conflict at community levels leaves much to be done. On the other hand, the success of local peace committees in working in the communities to restore calm, build peace and enhance social cohesion brings much to the fore to be appreciated. So, where liberal peacebuilding has failed to guarantee peace at community levels, local peace committees have clearly succeeded in filling the gap and delivering to the communities the peace and tranquillity needed. LPCs are culturally sensitive, traditionally friendly, and produce home-grown peace. They get the local people involved in the entire process and are essentially locally owned and operated.

3.9 FORMATION AND CLASSIFICATIONS OF LOCAL PEACE COMMITTEES

There are two key classifications of local peace committees: one is recognised by the state (formal), and the other one has an informal status and is not recognised by the state (Irene and Majekodunmi 2017b: 28). The LPCs that are formally recognised by the state are established through national peace agreements like the South African version that was established in September of 1991 concerning the National Peace Agreement (NPA). The informal LPCs are usually established by civil society actors, enjoy no recognition by the government, and are "more embedded in local initiatives and local ownership" (Tsuma, Pentori and Mashiko 2014: 48). Irene and Majekodunmi (2017) postulate that the informal committees' strength and weakness is their informal nature. There are many pieces of evidence to indicate that their acceptance and applicability in conflict resolution at the local or community level has increased.

The formation of formal local peace committees varies from that of informal peace committees. Formal local committees are formed by the state authority's establishment and formal recognition. In contrast, forming an informal local peace committee is community-driven and does not necessarily have the state and state authority's recognition and authorisation to proceed with its establishment and operations.

The informality of local peace committees suggests that they are not answerable to the government or political actors and are made of volunteers who are personally interested in peace. The formality of peace committees is recognition that such committees have formal state recognition. These LPCs are usually established at the sub-national level in districts, chiefdoms, clans, zones, cities, towns, and villages. They primarily seek to bring an effective end to violence. They try, as much as possible, to prevent the resurgence of violence and recognise that collaboration is needed to take necessary actions to handle the immediate dangers that a community faces. They are relevant and useful in finding urgent solutions to situations which, if left unattended, are likely to plunge the communities into chaos with far-reaching consequences and implications for the communal unity and peace. The members of the informal LPCs are committed volunteers. These volunteers are very passionate about peacebuilding and are seriously willing to resolve local conflict using more innovative means in contrast to the members of the formal committees. Regrettably, these informal LPCs usually lack the influence to engage governmental and political actors and leaders, who possess the political powers to get things done but often pay little or no attention to them.

The term “local”, as used here, must be understood contextually. It is suggestive of a small-scale geographic space that is home to a population, in which its inhabitants easily understand practices and whose peace and other needs are common. The inhabitants can relate to geographic and political units outside of their space by adopting, co-opting, or resisting practices that they encounter during the said processes (Öjendal, Leonardsson and Lundqvist 2017: 35). Therefore, if something is local, the capacities and knowledge in that locality need to be tapped into and built upon as a foundation for any form of intervention.

3.10 NAMES ASSOCIATED WITH LPCS ACROSS COUNTRIES

LPCs have become essential elements in building peace and maintaining tranquillity across many communities in and outside Africa. Van Tongeren (2013: 45, 47) establishes that the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially in North Kivu and Ituri, has LPCs known as peace cells or local committees for peace, and local peace initiatives respectively. They are known as peace committees in Burundi, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda (ibid: 42, 49). These committees are known as local peace committees in Zimbabwe (Chivasa 2015: 6). The one that operates in Wajir District in Kenya is known as the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (Cuppen 2013: 19).

LPCs also exist outside the African continent and also operate under different names. For instance, they are called local peace committees in Nepal (Tandukar et al. 2016: 10), peace shuras (temporary groups of elders) in Afghanistan (Van Tongeren 2013: 50), and peace zones in Indonesia, particularly in Aceh (Chivasa 2019: 6).

3.11 THE INHERENT CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LPCS

The local communities must be allowed to own and manage their local peace committees without any outside interference or prescription. They must be allowed to decide the committee's membership or composition. There is no universal stipulation on the composition of the LPC membership because situations differ from one place to another based on the cultural values and the nature of the conflict.

An example is the inclusion of groups that have been identified as marginalised, as this is construed as the best way to proceed in promoting equity and justice. While this has proved to improve effectiveness in conflict resolution in some cases, it has undermined the effectiveness of a committee in others (Glowachi and Gonc 2013: 22). Male elders are known to dominate traditional conflict resolution structures in pastoral communities, but this is not favourable to government officials, women, and the youth who are at variance with the local cultural standards. In these instances, the LPC members are not necessarily well respected. LPCs should ideally reflect community power structures and include community leaders (elders, women, youth, and traditional leaders) and representatives of the local authorities (Tsuma, Pentori and Mashiko 2014: 48).

In Kenya, non-governmental organisations have insisted that women and the youth be included in the LPCs. This stipulation has weakened the LPCs and rendered them ineffective because it contrasts with the roles defined by Kenyan tradition. Conversely, in the Nepalese situation where the marginalisation of women is partly the reason for the conflict, the inclusion of women is a major prerequisite for the success of the work of the LPCs.

It is, therefore, advisable that an LPC's composition be the sole decision of the local people as they are the ones who know what is required to find remedies to their communal conflicts or problems. While the membership of an LPC varies according to its locality and mandate, the inclusion of civil society organisations needs to be considered during the composition of the committees. They should be included regardless of whether they are the major stakeholders in

the conflict or not (Glowachi and Gonc 2013: 22). It is always best for a community to appoint committee members (whether men, women, elders, or youths) who have the aptitude and vision to build peace and engage in peacebuilding. Also, very important is the fact that they enjoy the community's confidence (Sangqu 2014: 423), and Sangqu agrees that an inclusive LPC needs to be "comprised of different social groups, including youth, women and children, and religious groups" (ibid 2014: 42).

3.12 OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED BY LPCS

LPCs are born to "foster social reconstruction" (ibid 2014: 424) and offer great opportunities for community harmony when local communities are engaged in or threatened by heated conflicts. They intervene readily to prevent conflict from escalating into violence. They create the means for conflicting parties to engage constructively to solve their problems. They create dialogues that involve the parties and peacebuilders and promote a common understanding of the problem, and they find practical and amicable resolutions to conflict. Their work is associated with creativity and a commitment to creating and maintaining a peaceful community. Whether or not there exists political or administrative support for LPCs, and irrespective of the existing political and administrative situations that might militate against or support the success of these LPCs, there is one thing to be sure of: they can be successful when their members commit themselves to working for and achieving peace in their communities. Successful LPCs have trustworthy members according to the lens and worldview of their communities, have the abilities and skills to build peace, and possess the desire and inner motivation for peacebuilding (ibid 2014: 423).

Using the conflict sensitivity lens and ensuring the actualisation of the Do-No-Harm approach, LPCs offer a unique opportunity to ensure that peace is mainstreamed in development interventions in the community to address the fundamental causes of violence and actual violence (Leeuwen et al. 2016: 10). It is by what LPCs have done and achieved that one can appreciate what LPCs attend to and offer to communities to restore peace and tranquillity in rural communities. It is the opportunities that the LPCs offer for the resolution of local conflict that make them useful. LPCs have thus been recognised as the correct tool to deal with the land conflicts in Ganta City.

3.13 CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH AN LPC AND ITS WORK

The members of informal LPCs are committed volunteers who are zealous about peacebuilding and seriously committed to resolving local conflicts using more innovative means, as opposed to the members of the formal committees. Regrettably, while the informal LPCs contribute meaningfully to keeping communities peaceful, they usually lack the necessary influence and power to engage governmental and political actors and leaders who have what is required politically to get things done. These actors and leaders sadly often pay little or no attention to them (Irene and Majekodunmi 2017b: 28). Despite all the good work that the local peace committees do, they still do not have sufficient local or international recognition from political actors and leaders (Issifu 2016: 155). When formal local peace committees that depend on the local and national structures for support are not supported to do their work, they can be rendered ineffective in meeting their desired objectives.

Local peacebuilding can be challenging when local elites, officials, and actors present themselves as stumbling blocks to efforts aimed at building peace because of corruption and greed. They are unwilling and unable to bring the local people together to build peace in this instance (Öjendal, Leonardsson and Lundqvist 2017: 35). Ylönen (2012: 18) provides the example of the local elites in South Sudan to illustrate this point. These elites are consumed by greed and more focussed on pilfering international aid than the peacefulness and stability of the country or its peace process. When middle-level and top-level political actors are not considered and connected to the building of peace at the local level, there is a tendency for what Donais and Knorr (2013: 58) call putting the “up” in bottom-up peacebuilding. This subsequently leads to minimum impact of any peacebuilding interventions and the LPCs go unrecognised for their useful efforts and initiatives. This undermines all meaningful contributions that their efforts can make to their country's overall national peacebuilding initiatives.

External support can threaten local ownership of an LPC because funding agencies often advance their own agendas. In some instances, it may even lead to a multiplicity of LPCs existing in a single community, making it unclear which of the committees possesses community legitimacy. This has happened in Northern Kenya (Glowachi and Gonc 2013: 22). Additionally, the inclusion of government officials on LPCs tends to undermine their legitimacy as those officials tend to pursue the government's agenda in preference to the local communities' agendas. Informal LPCs lack the effective enforcement power that government

authorities have to compel citizens to comply with their recommendations. Instruments used to compel compliance include the police, the army, and other state security agents. The lack of said power is acknowledged and often compensated for with reliance on consensus and respect for the LPC members to render and implement their decisions.

3.14 BUILDING PEACE THROUGH THE COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACH: LOCAL PEACE COMMITTEES

3.14.1 Introduction

The outstanding work of local peace committees and what they have achieved should serve as motivating and compelling reasons for why their establishment and utilisation should be worthy ideas deserving emulation in resolving communal conflicts. The work of LPCs in the following countries has added value to their peacebuilding and conflict transformation: Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. Whether formal or informal, LPCs have served as essential structures to enhance and promote peace at local levels. Driven from within and recognising and using local capacities for peace in communities, LPCs have succeeded in fostering and ensuring communal harmony, as evident in the communities in the countries highlighted herein. Essentially, the work of an LPC is a community-based peacebuilding approach that uses innovative local means of social interaction that contribute to reducing violence and resolving conflicts to guarantee a desirous future (Serafin 2008, cited in Khairi and Mior Jamaluddin 2017: 156). LPCs rely on the utilisation of local skills and knowledge for peacebuilding. They work knowing that in order to guarantee a durable and sustainable solution that promotes peaceful coexistence in a community, peace needs to be built at the community level (Mika 2008, cited in Khairi and Mior Jamaluddin 2017: 156).

3.14.2 The Kibimba Peace Committee in Burundi

After the declaration of independence in 1962 from Belgium, Burundi had experiences of ethnically influenced political violence that led to "political assassinations, civil war, and genocide" (Burihabwa and Curtis 2019: 6). The country held its first-ever democratic elections in 1993, and an ethnic Hutu, Melchior Ndadaye, was elected as president of the nation (Alfieri 2016: 241). The killing of this first Hutu president by military elites of the Tutsi ethnic group threw the country into more than ten years of civil upheaval (Burihabwa and Curtis 2019: 8; Nganje 2021: 74;). His assassination by Tutsi extremists plunged the country into prolonged

ethnic division and civil war with deadly consequences from 1993 to 2005. This war led to the deaths of an estimated 300,000 people (Hajayandi 2015: 141; BBC 2008, cited in Issifu 2016: 154).

A final and lasting settlement to the crisis was initiated by the deployment and intervention of the UN peacekeeping mission in the country, and the intervention of other leaders in Africa seeking peace between the fighting forces. A peace agreement was signed in 2000, even though the Forces for National Liberation (FNL), militant Hutu groups, were active and causing political chaos. While the peace agreement served as a significant move for resolving the conflict and restoring peace and stability, it took the local peace committees' interventions to return the country to real and lasting peace and stability. The Arusha peace agreement ensured that the warring parties ceased hostilities and left the battlefield. It facilitated ethnic balance and integration in political arrangements (institutions), succeeded in demobilising the fighting groups, and subsequently transitioned the country to democratic governance (Hajayandi 2015: 150; Niyukuri 2020: 131).

Two civil society institutions were instrumental in helping the communities cultivate local peace. They were the Ministry for Peace and Reconciliation (MI-PAREC) and a British NGO whose presence in the country dated back to 1995, named the Agency for Co-operation and Research in Development (ACORD) (Niyukuri 2020: 136). These institutions set up and organised training sessions for the local peace committees, emphasising leadership, forgiveness, reconciliation, restorative justice, and conflict transformation. They provided the necessary skills required to help with peacebuilding and conflict resolution locally. Local peace committees were formed at the commune, zone, and colline levels¹.

The narrative of MI-PAREC is not easily captured, understood, and appreciated in the absence of Burundi's renowned peace committee in Kibimba. Kibimba, a colline in Burundi, is advantageously situated close to the second largest town in Burundi, Gitega, with the majority of the population being Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups. Its reputation as a vibrant township was lost in October 1993 after the assassination of President Ndadaye, when Hutus in the area rounded up Tutsis and burned them alive at a petrol station. This resulted in the deaths of 450

¹ A colline means in this context villages around the hills.

people (Leach 2016: 11). The killings made the community dangerous for ethnic Tutsis for a while thereafter.

The idea of restoring dialogue between the Hutu and Tutsi groups was advanced by a Tutsi, a former primary school teacher and an escapee of the Kibimba petrol station killing, M. Mathias Ndimurwanko. He reached out to religious leaders, the military, teachers, and local leaders with the idea and subsequently succeeded in establishing the first peace committee in Kibimba in December of 1994 (Leach 2016: 11). This committee encompassed ethnic Hutus and Tutsis, including religious and military leaders, Tutsis who had been displaced internally, and returned exiled Hutus. The committee brought the people together, had conversations about the issues they faced, and facilitated thinking of possible solutions.

The LPC succeeded in the following (Issifu 2016: 154):

1. It brought Tutsi women from the internally displaced's camp and Hutu women from the surrounding communities (hills) together to form an income-generating association.
2. Petitioning the Ministry of Education to reopen the primary and the secondary schools in Kibimba since most of them had been closed owing to the conflict.
3. Contributing to a reduction in the killings that had engulfed the area, by hosting regular meetings with young Tutsi, the Hutu rebels who were mostly natives of the region, and the military,
4. Reducing the number of attacks on the internally displaced Tutsis' camps.
5. Undertaking interethnic visits and cultural events (beer sharing, dances, etc.) between the Hutus who lived in the collines (hills) and the Tutsi who lived in the IDP camps.
6. Restoration of cordial and harmonious relationships between the two communities that resulted in the retuning from exile those who had fled the crisis.
7. Reopening of the health centre in Kibimba to take care of the medical needs and concerns of everybody, inclusive of the returnees who had grown confident of returning and had a significantly reduced fear of violence.
8. Mobilisation of support from the missionaries living in Kibimba for activities geared towards income generation, like mat weaving for the women and brick making for men, and the provision of cash to mixed groups that worked together. And
9. It succeeded in building some community schools and hospitals, and after that, encouraged and ensured a process of co-management of those facilities by the formally feuding groups.

There was initial apprehension about the process because of the hostilities and their associated losses. While it took a while, fears gradually vanished and confidence was restored in the

people. They came to see and use the process for genuine healing and peace in Kibimba. Owing to its consequential role in repairing the strained relationships, resolving the inter-ethnic conflict, and restoring peace and tranquillity, the Kibimba Peace Committee gained recognition in the country as the most effective and efficient local mechanism for the people. MI-PAREC committed itself to replicating the peace committee model and the Kibimba experience around the province. The testimony below of a Hutu reveals the extent to which the committee improved and changed perceptions:

Dialogue helped us to clearly identify and understand the underlying causes of the Burundian conflict. In the past, we were pushed to violence against our poor neighbours by ill-intentioned politicians, and we blindly followed them. When the conflict intensified, they flew to Europe and America, leaving us in inhumane living conditions. Thanks to this dialogue approach, we have unanimously recognised that we have a lot more to share with our neighbours of both ethnicities than with politicians, even if they belong to our ethnic group. Our future is there (Niyonkuru, 2012: 34).

Five to six hundred LPCs were established at commune, community, and zone levels across 14 of the 17 provinces in Burundi. This was in recognition of the important roles they had played in restoring peace and stability to the country (Niyonkuru 2012: 39).

3.14.3 Local Peace Committee in Ghana

The National Peace Council Act (Act 818) of 2011 created the National Peace Council, a formal LPC, to address the issues of violence and conflict that plagued Ghana (Awinador-Kanyirige 2014: 1). The NPC played significant roles in foiling post-elections violence in 2008 and 2012 and contributing to peaceful democratic transition in the country.

Like any other country, Ghana has had its own experiences of violence and conflicts that culminated in the loss of lives. Between 1990 and 1994, Ghana witnessed ethnically-driven violent clashes (14 between 1990 and 2002). The Konkomba Nanumba war resulted in 5,000 deaths, and the 2002 violence that broke out in the Dagomba Kingdom resulted in the deaths of 40 persons and the King of Dagbon (Irene 2018: 5). Among other things, these led to the need to develop a mechanism to build peace. Based on this, the National Peace Council Act (Act 818) was passed in 2011 by the Ghanaian parliament as a way of giving statutory legitimacy to the National Peace Council as an autonomous national mechanism to work to prevent conflicts (Awinador-Kanyirige 2014:1). The work of the NPC helped in instilling the

culture of negotiation, peace, the rule of law, broadmindedness, and understanding among Ghanaians. This helped in lessening tensions during the 2008 and 2012 "closely contested presidential and parliamentary elections" (Awinador-Kanyirige 2014: 4). The National Peace Council played significant roles nationally and locally and ensured the smooth handover of power after contributing hugely to the peaceful conduct of elections in 2008. When counting the votes, it was realised that the loser and winner only had a difference of 50,000 votes. Tension arose and conflicts emerged. The National Peace Council's mediatory efforts calmed the tension and resolved the conflicts.

Issifu (2015a) presents an additional example of the positive effects of the work of the NPC: Prior to "the 2012 presidential and parliamentary elections, a tripartite initiative in Kumasi (Kumasi Declaration) organized by the NPC, the Asantehene, and the Institute of Democratic Governance (IDEG) resulted in a peace accord of fair play declaration by all presidential candidates to accept the will of the people after the election". Citizens came to rely on the NPC, and whenever the fear of violence or conflict arose anywhere in the country, they called on the committee to address and resolve it (Issifu 2016: 153).

3.14.4 Local Peace Committees in Kenya

3.14.4.1 The Wajir Peace and Development Committee in Kenya

Wajir is a district situated in Kenya's north-eastern province confronted with a scarcity of resources, inadequacy of its human capital, discrimination, increased poverty, and marginalisation. As such, it is vulnerable to extremisms and the "survival of the fittest syndrome", and there is rivalry between different clans over controlling and utilising the scarce natural resources (Issifu 2016: 142). It is a community confronted with a lack of social infrastructure (including but not limited to health and educational facilities) and underdevelopment. It has experienced a lack of economic progress that has contributed to high youth unemployment. The fight for scarce natural resources led to the loss of countless lives and properties. Clashes over natural resources in 1991 and 1992 led to over 1,200 deaths, left thousands of people robbed, raped, or wounded, and an estimated \$900,000 worth of livestock was destroyed (Menkhaus 2008; Van Tongeren 2013b, cited in Issifu 2016: 142). Mohammed (2014: 12) asserts that it was mostly livestock raiding and the scarcity of water sources during the dry season that were the chief sources of conflicts within the Wajir Communities. Cewarn (2010, cited in Mohammed 2014: 11) reports that 592 deaths were reported between 2006 and 2009 in the Wajir West communities owing to raids. While the conflicts were mainly about

livestock raiding, they were classified as: "(a) conflicts among pastoral communities, (b) conflicts linked to the presence of refugees, (c) conflicts between pastoralists and crop farming communities, and (d) ethnic clashes" (Juma 2000, cited in Mohammed 2014: 3).

The need for peacebuilding and conflict resolution in the area emerged in the face of these challenges. According to Issifu, a local peace committee initially named the Wajir Women for Peace Group emerged, before undergoing a metamorphosis to become the Wajir Peace Group. Membership of this group was drawn from the various clans of the district. Consequently, the Wajir Peace and Development Committee (WPDC) was born to aid in building peace in Wajir after the violence. The WPDC encompassed businesspeople, elders, women, youths, and other people combined in a network of local peacebuilders (Leach 2016: 11).

Cuppen (2013: 19) provides a brief historiographical picture of the formation of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee. In the early 1990s, violent conflicts between three Somali clans in Wajir became unfortunate realities. Local leaders/authorities found it difficult to remedy the situation until clashes ensued between women of the various clans in the market. At this point, two women intervened in one of the fights, calmed it down, and saw the need to have a group conversation on the causes of the conflict and their possible solutions. This intervention consequently led to the establishment of the Wajir Women for Peace Group, which later expanded with the inclusion of other women of Wajir Town (Walker et al. 2003, cited in Cuppen 2013:19).

Additionally, the Wajir Peace Group was formed by educated professionals, and discussions were held with various elders, minorities, and warring clans to agree on mediatory interventions. This resulted in an agreement called the "Al Fatah-declaration" that encompassed rules for the return to peace. Meetings were held by elders and youths to fathom and conclude on the means to restore peace and tranquillity to the community. At the same time, businesspeople contributed funds to hold peace-promoting activities in the community. This example was soon emulated by organisations in semi-arid and arid lands, with support from local and international non-governmental organisations. Peace committees were then started as mechanisms for conflict resolution in Wajir.

Issifu (2016: 150) notes that bringing home-grown peace to the community or district was a monumental success of the WPDC. This initiative was replicated in various parts of the country, including in many pastoral and semi-pastoral areas, predicated upon the successes of

the WPDC. The Kenyan government supported local peacebuilding initiatives via its National Steering Committee (NSC). As a major contributory factor to peace at the communal level and owing to the success stories of the WPDC, the need for establishing district peace committees across Kenya was advocated for by the National Accord and Reconciliation Act of 2008. These committees made north-eastern Kenya invulnerable to violence, as manifested when the community remained peaceful during the post-electoral violence in the country in 2008. It dawned on the Government of Kenya and other organisations that using local peacebuilding and conflict resolution mechanisms such as the LPCs was consequential to national peace and stability and therefore deemed it fit to enhance the work of the committees.

During the post-electoral violence in the country in 2008, over 1500 and 350,000 people were killed and displaced, respectively (Oddsdottir 2014: 3). Districts with a District Peace Council (DPC) experienced less violence than those that did not have DPCs. Additionally, local peace committees worked throughout the country during the national referendum that followed the elections and made essential contributions to peacemaking during the process. Their involvement created conditions to avoid violence throughout the process.

The local peace committee in Wajir produced an admirable record of success and achievement, so much so that its concept was copied and replicated in other troubled communities as the Kenyan government's way of giving deserving recognition to the endurable peacebuilding examples the committee had achieved. The establishment of LPCs across all of the country's districts eventually became the manifestation of how the WPDC, an informal local peace committee, stimulated the formalisation of Kenya's local peace committees.

3.14.5 Peace Committee in Tana Delta, Kenya

Unlike the situation in Wajir, where the conflict was about clashes among three Somali clans, in Tana Delta the conflicts and their associated clashes were started by outside interferences that led to clashes over natural resources (Cuppen 2013:3-75). These clashes grew into ethnic conflict and culminated in the loss of over 180 lives, livestock (hundreds of cattle), and loss of properties (hundreds of houses). Elders lost control of the situation, and local government authorities did little to help resolve the situation. The need emerged for peacebuilding mechanisms to restore calm and peace in the community and to better manage the resources. Cuppen (2013) furthers that it was consequent upon this that peace committees were formed, and these were supported by the National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict

Management (NSC). The peace committees in Tana River District encompassed 15 persons, and their structure is depicted in Figure 3.1 below.

Cuppen (2013: 80-81) makes it clear that the members of every peace committee were expected to serve their entire community's interests. They were appointed for three-year terms and selected with ethnic sensitivity. When their terms of office expired, new elections were held, and the residents of each community picked 15 new members of the community to serve on the committee. Of the 15 positions, 2 to 3 were reserved for women, youths, and the disabled. If the committee chairman was a male, it was stipulated that his vice-chairman had to be a female. That demonstrated the extent to which women's presence and participation were emphasised and valued. Additionally, seats were reserved for the youth and the disabled community members to ensure the representation of such important societal groupings. The Tana Delta District peace committees' structure is depicted in Figure 3.1.

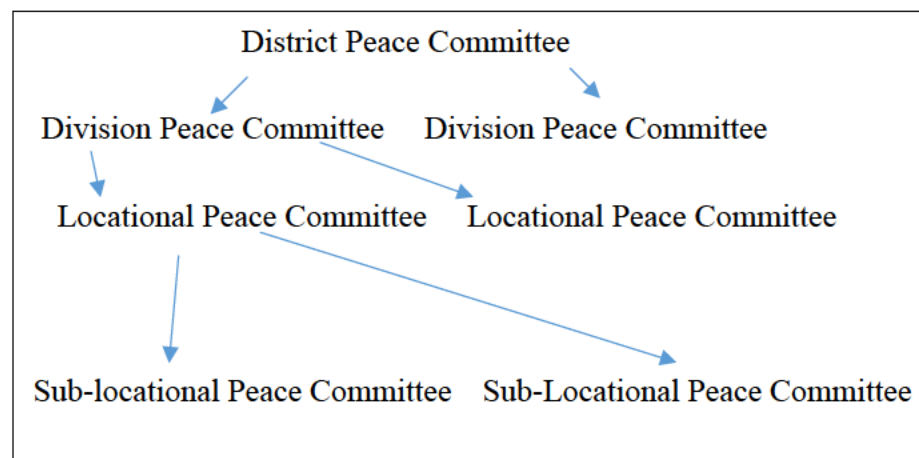


Figure 0.1: Tana Delta District Peace Committees' Structure

Source: Cuppen (2013: 8)

Cuppen avers that the members of the committees elected democratically were enrolled in capacity-building programmes to coach and mentor them and provide them with mediation and capacity building skills. Logistical challenges in terms of transportation to move the members from their communities to the district-level meetings inhibited their full participation in such essential gatherings. A two-thirds majority vote was required to settle on decisions, in

accordance with committee rules, however in most instances, not many committee members were present because their work was voluntary. Regardless of this, these committees always cooperated with the local and religious leaders, some of whom were involved in helping mediate and reach amicable settlements to conflicts in the community (Cuppen 2013: 8).

3.14.6 Local Peace Committees in Nepal

Nepal is a country that comprises 75 districts and 191 municipalities (Tandukar et al. 2016: 5). The country experienced a civil upheaval that lasted from 1996 to 2006, that led to an estimated 13,000 lives lost, and the violence only ceased when the Maoists, insurrectionists, and the Nepali Government formally accepted and signed the 2006 Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) (Babcock 2013: 2). The CPA, among other things, sought to create a conducive environment to restore sustainable peace and tried to resolve the conflicts at the communal levels (Government of Nepal 2009: 1). As an example, the Bardiya District, with an estimated 426,576 citizens established local peace committees with the chief objective to support the fulfilment of the mandates of the CPA (Tandukar et al. 2016: 9-10). The Bardiya District's ethnic populations were divided as follows: The Tharus ethnic group accounted for 52.6 per cent of the population; the Chhetris accounted for 10.6 per cent; the Brahmin accounted for 9.5 per cent; and the Muslims accounted for 3 per cent.

Rural communities in Nepal found it convenient to discuss and resolve their conflict in their communities instead of pursuing the formal legal system that they saw as difficult to access because of the traveling distance from their localities to the courts and because they found the process of taking their cases to the courts very costly (Lederach and Thapa 2018: 3). They thus had little or no interest in using the police and the legal system to find peaceful settlements to their conflicts. Against this backdrop, the dwellers in the rural parts of the country found it convenient to refer their cases to Village Development Committees, previously called Village Panchayats (elders' councils), or to locally based groups for settlement (Lederach and Thapa 2018: 3).

Lederach and Thapa (2018: 4) state that under the "USAID/Nepal's Strengthen Democratic Institutions in Nepal Project" of the Asia Foundation, a social anthropologist by the name of Dr. Paul F. Kaplan carried out a study on mediation in 12 districts in Nepal and realized 2 things: many people were not aware of the laws and their rights associated therein; and they preferred solving their conflicts in the community. Eventually, in 1999, the Nepalese government enacted the Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA) that required, among other things,

that the local layers of the government use the Village Development Committees (VDCs) and other mediation structures to undertake dispute resolution activities. In 2011, drawing on the Filipino and Sri Lankan experiences and programmes, an amendment was made to the LGSA that allowed local mediation and adjudication, with USAID providing support for the 75 village-level programmes in the 11 districts in the country (Lederach and Thapa, 2018:4).

Lederach and Thapa reported that in September 2011, the community mediation network received 19,144 applications from 12 districts, requesting mediation services. Of these cases, 16,473 were settled satisfactorily and successfully; 1,863 cases needed mediatory services; while 808 cases remained unresolved. The local mediation groups' work became so successful that the Village Development Committee began to refer unresolved cases to them for mediation. A working relationship was developed with the police. This made the police support and encourage mediatory and dialogue processes rather than chastise them (Lederach and Thapa 2018: 9-10).

Those who facilitated these mediatory efforts that led to such great success were people trained to deliver culturally appropriate mediation services in local languages and "in face-to-face meetings, novice mediators were taught how to facilitate a session through various phases, including introducing ground rules, storytelling, framing issues, generating options and writing agreements. Mediators were taught communication skills, listening, reframing, and question formation" (Lederach and Thapa 2018: 5). Essentially, these local mediators were well trained to exemplify the qualities of discipline, impartiality, and neutrality, both covertly and overtly. They, most importantly, avoided offering solutions or giving disputants a solution to their problems and suspended judgments with the intent of allowing the disputants or participants to reach their own solution through the provision of their mediatory pieces of advice (Lederach and Thapa 2018: 12). Their strategies were purposefully intended to facilitate harmonious relationships in the communities, and they worked.

These local mediation groups were comprised of people from across caste and economic lines and neatly reflected the community's diversity. They created room for common interaction and mutual respect derived from training activities. The groups created room for the participation of historically underprivileged community members. They were able to rub shoulders with others they would otherwise not have interacted with, had these groups not been formed. For instance, women and other low-caste participants actively participated in decision-making in

the group, developed self-esteem, and developed the confidence to express themselves, with some even becoming leaders (Lederach and Thapa 2018: 12).

The ward was the most organised local governance structure in rural Nepal. It was mostly composed of extended families. Their mediation was normally kicked off by a panel of three mediators, who decided by a simple majority of two. Voting to decide on a decision only emerged in the event that they could not agree on an issue. Both parties picked two mediators from a pool of trained mediators in the community. This only occurred when the parties to a conflict were willing to subject themselves to mediation. The coordinator of the mediation programme chose the third person. Choices by the parties to the conflict of who served on the panel as a mediator were informed by their trust in the person, their ethnic affiliation, their connection and their understanding that that person could best represent their interests on the panel. Some people were selected based on their perceived/observed moral and social standing, to ensure that solutions were enforced by both sides of a conflict. These people also had to be seen to be neutral (Lederach and Thapa 2018: 12). The panel's composition was reflective of a mixture of caste, class, ethnicity, and gender. The mediators of a group of three reflected a unique balance within the community and represented an impartial internal rather than a neutral external approach to mediation.

While the mediatory efforts sought to resolve local disputes through dialogue, they signalled that when mediatory services were available to respond to conflicts in the community, using local resources and local capacities, these services had the power to change the historical exclusion of some members of the society from community activities and participation. It provided greater room for community cooperation and offered new ways to handle community disputes better. This approach engendered social change at the communal level. Lederach and Thapa (2018) identified the strengths of the team of three mediators: their abilities to engage with and understand the disputants, and their capacities to relate to them. Achieving balance in the teams did, however, represent a critical challenge.

Community mediation offered opportunities for those who could not access the formal justice system easily. The mediators were trained to use the rights-based or interest-based approaches as they mediated. The supreme objective of community mediation was to offer access to justice to those who were otherwise excluded from the formal system. The programmes endeavoured to uphold human rights standards and empower individuals by training them as mediators. *Mukhiya*, *Anjuman*, and *Pancha haladmi* are traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in

Nepal that succeeded in resolving community disputes through adjudication, exchange of ideas, facilitation, and negotiation (Öjendal, Leonardsson and Lundqvist 2017: 39). The committees' impact was enhanced by the fact that local mediation services used local resources and the kind cooperation of the local community.

With trained mediators usually guiding the process and, in some instances, involving local government authorities, these community mediation processes occurred and were focused on local conflicts at the grassroots levels of the communities. The mediators addressed and resolved cases of destruction of crops, discrimination, mistreatment and assault, money lending, and other disputes between or among neighbours and relatives.

3.14.7 The Fambol Tok and National and the District Code Monitoring Committees in Sierra Leone

After the fratricidal civil upheaval in Sierra Leone, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) created a forum for actors to explain their roles and the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL) played its role in prosecuting those who bore the greatest responsibilities for atrocities committed. However, local or community-level issues also needed to be resolved. In an effort to live by the spirit and meaning of the proverb that a “family tree bends, but does not break”, the *Fambol Tok*, which in the Sierra Leonean national language of Krio means "family talk", emerged and rejuvenated "truth-telling, forgiveness, and reconciliation" to help address the limitations of the TRC and the SPSL (Cole, 2012:4-5) as “community-level reconciliation forums” (Cilliers et al. 2016:787). Many relationships were rebuilt, and communal harmony was restored.

The local peace initiative was helpful in facilitating communal peace in Sierra Leone after the country's civil war. For instance, the *Fambol Tok* community peace structures in Sierra Leone proved to be effective as a local peacebuilding mechanism. An evaluation of the initiative indicates that:

84% of people felt their local peace groups had helped prevent conflicts, and 96% said that levels of violence had been contained; 60% agreed that the programme had made them want to bring people closer together; over 85% thought it had changed their perception of others whom they had not previously liked, and that they had learned to forgive others (Vernon 2019: 13).

It was reported in Sierra Leone that the National and District Code Monitoring Committees turned out to be effective mechanisms to address contentious disputes by way of effective mediation and reconciliation activities. National and District Code Monitoring Committees did not only help in resolving issues, they “became a sounding board—not just to resolve but just to get a feel of what the situation was... an excellent early warning mechanism” (Jackson, 2018:10)

The National and District Code Monitoring Committees established local peace committees primarily responsible for mediating conflict involving political parties. The LPCs worked, maintained, and built peace in four districts in Sierra Leone after the civil war of March 1991 that led to "70,000 casualties and 2.6 million displaced people" (Tystad 2017: 6-7). Had the committee not been established and worked in such meaningful ways, the communities would have experienced electoral and post-electoral violence that would have threatened the peace and stability of those districts and negatively impacted the overall peace and stability of the nation.

3.14.8 Community Leadership Forum: A Local Peace Structure in Northern Tanzania

In Northern Tanzania, there were ethnic land disputes between the Maasai, Loita, and the Sonjo, otherwise known locally as the Matemi, an agricultural community. These occurred specifically in the Ngorongo District, over "unjust grabs of land" (Goldman Sinandei and DeLuca 2014: 163,158). In addition to the clashes over land, there were ethnic clashes over cultural attitudes and livestock thefts amid a scarcity of land for the Sonjo and their belief that the Loita Maasai had come from Kenya as invaders to take over their parcels of land. The Government of Tanzania was perceived as favouring the Sonjo as it did nothing about the Sonjo's expansion into the territory of the Loita. State and outside actors intervened to resolve the conflict with little success. Mediatory efforts, initiated by the government and led by its local officials, were considered an imposition and failed to bring about peace amongst the people. The Government of Tanzania did not involve the local people and did not consider their cultural values and practices (ibid 2014: 163). Hence, the intervention failed at its conception.

The need then arose for a local mechanism to facilitate and contribute to sustainable peace established on the customary values and practices of the communities. Outside interventions had made minimal improvements in the relationships between the ethnic communities. Against this backdrop, the Community Leadership Forum (CLF) emerged out of a creative partnership involving the Ujamaa Community Resource Trust (UCRT), a community-based organisation,

and the pastoral Maasai customary leaders. The CLF proved quite useful and helpful in mediating and addressing conflicts and building and sustaining peaceful relations within communities and beyond. The forum worked and diffused the tensions over the "unjust grabs of land." It used mediatory efforts that took the customary values and practices of the Sonjo and Loita ethnic groups seriously. Disputes between four of the six villages were resolved to strengthen recognition and support to local structures for peace and build on them to mediate and resolve conflict. The success of the CLF confirmed that internal or local actors, actions, strategies, and interests were quite useful and imperatives to the effectiveness of local peacebuilding (Autesserre 2017: 115).

3.14.9 Local Peace Committees in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe experienced years of violent conflict following its independence. The country's transition to independence was characterised by ethnic tension and political and electoral violence in the midst of economic challenges (Dzimiri et al. 2014: 227, 233). These conflicts, among others, jeopardised and worsened the economic conditions in the country to the extent that ordinary people were poor and hungry. The people were exposed to conflict and structural violence that disrupted their livelihoods. Conflicts existed along the lines of "hunger and food insecurity at households' level, unavailability of finances to pay school fees, rape cases involving the girl child, domestic violence, stock theft, robbery, fist fighting at beer parties, and disputes over land boundaries" (Chivasa 2019: 126). It thus became a compelling necessity to form peace committees at the ward and village levels (Chivasa 2019: 127). The memberships of these peace committees comprised of people who were recognised as being trustworthy, reliable, and from diverse political, economic, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds within the communities. Their chief tasks as committee members were to act as watchdogs to provide early warning systems regarding conflicts within the communities; to deliberate on conflicts that arose in the communities ; and to follow up on resolutions arrived at during deliberations (Makwerere 2017: 154).

Established in 2001 as a proletarian organisation resulting from farm invasions and election-related violence, the Zimbabwe Civic Education Trust (ZIMCET) became a peace structure. The existence of the peace committees in Zimbabwe was attributable to this. Its topmost aim was the promotion of tolerance and peace between groups and individuals. The peace committees were considered as liaison groups that sought to promote peace and tolerance between individuals and groups (ZIMCET, 2014, cited in Chivasa 2019: 127). Chivasa

indicates that the ZIMCET held 72 and 54 workshops, bringing 3,804 and 3,982 participants from Mashonaland West and Mashonaland Central, respectively. They concentrated on community awareness around issues of gender, violence against children and women, and conflict management.

In the Seke District in Zimbabwe, LPCs were created and proved to be essential for building local peace. The ward level peace committee initiative and the three village peace committees established between 2014 and 2015 (Chivasa 2019: 126) became valuable structures that supported community development work and increased participation of the community in taking ownership of their peace and development. The autonomy they enjoyed rendered them invulnerable to conflict and violence. Those LPCs became sustainable structures that showed resilience and legitimacy since they were established to respond adequately to local peace needs, facilitate social work for development, promote community cohesion, and supplement participative values. The peace committees represented self-initiated peace committees that were proven to be less expensive owing to their reliance on local capacities for peace from within the community. The community-level peace structures had unique ways of creating sustainable peace and social development in the communities. The challenges associated with the local peace committees arose firstly from their formation that required age and gender sensitivity. These considerations opposed the cultural considerations in Zimbabwe's patriarchal society. Secondly, its members were volunteers who paid less attention to the committees' work and more attention to their personal issues.

Not surprisingly, the idea of local peace committees gained traction as a tool, mechanism, or structure for context-specific means of resolving conflicts in many countries. However, a few weaknesses and challenges were discovered as the LPCs in the Zimbabwean worked to build communal peace:

- 1) There were traditional leaders with political connections outside of the localities that influenced them. These traditional leaders have reportedly been used over the years as political agents of the very conflict the LPCs were established to resolve. However, they could not easily be side-lined when forming the LPCs. These leaders found it difficult to become transformation agents and continued to be actors in the LPCs owing to their esteemed roles in their localities.

- 2) The difficulty existed for other committee members to express themselves freely. The members considered the possibility of interacting with those leaders in other spheres in the community that could militate against their interests.
- 3) Issues that were conflictual were the determination of those traditional leaders to maintain the status quo; the determination of the religious leaders to tell the truth in front of the traditional leaders who served on those committees with them; and the determination of the youth, women, elderly (the ordinary people) to bring forth issues of interest to them. The youth, women, and elders feared the supremacy of the traditional leaders and usually held back prior to the formation of these committees.
- 4) The committees worked to handle and resolve cases that were traditionally in the domain of the traditional courts, which made their efforts unwelcome duplication and usurpation of the function of the traditional courts. The traditional leaders did not appreciate the usurpation of their functions and opposed the LPCs' work, both directly and indirectly. Some traditional leaders demanded that the LPCs report their cases to their councils when making decisions.
- 5) The LPCs were rushed into decision-making and made adjudicative arrangements to bring finality to community conflicts in the cases from the Mazowe and Bindura Districts.
- 6) The indirect (structural violence), as well as cultural violence, especially against women and their rights, inhibited and in some instances, affected their participation in the work of the committees.

Additional challenges for the LPCs were that communities in Zimbabwe remained patriarchal, and the tendency existed to push for the inclusion of women on these committees. Based on that, the membership of all LPCs included but was not limited to women, children, and other marginalized groups in the local environment. Also, the LPCs were confronted with material (logistical and financial) challenges and support was needed for the success of their work. The local peace committees, notwithstanding their challenges, became useful tools in avoiding communal conflicts and served as a means through which conflicts were amicably resolved in Seke District.

3.15 CONCLUSION

Local peace committees have proven to be useful and effective mechanisms for resolving conflicts. They have been used to restore calm in societies once afflicted by hostilities and conflictual activities. Local peace committees have had to ensure the following when operating in order to achieve their goals: they have had to exercise sufficient patience; exude tolerance; make necessary adjustments if and when needed; remain focused; be courageous; and be aware of and prepared for delays when carrying out their duties as the local peace committees. The participative approach calls for finding people who share a common interest; getting their agreement to participate; creating an avenue for equal participation by all; and the need to collaborate to find a remedy of the problems identified.

LPCs have been found to be very useful community-based instruments for resolving communal conflicts. They use the existing local capacities for peace, cultural practices, and indigenous knowledge to promote harmonious relationships; and allow the community members to initiate and own their peace. When this is the case, they work to maintain and sustain the peace. Any local peace and peacebuilding initiatives imposed by outside forces and that ignore the local capacities for peace and ownership of the process are short-lived and bound for failure. On the other hand, when the process involves the people who claim it as theirs, they are bound to work to ensure that peace is sustained. Hence, it can safely be concluded that if peaceful solutions are generated from within a community that has been consulted on the process, they are bound to be accepted by the community and succeed.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The overarching aim of this research was to reinforce the rebuilding of relations and the promotion of social cohesion in Ganta City. Against this backdrop, steps were taken in working with local capacities for peace in the city to build and operationalise a structure or mechanism that promoted peace and enhanced sustainable development. This study succeeded in achieving its specific objectives. I identified the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the inter-ethnic conflict in Ganta City. I established the relevant relationships between peacebuilding and development. I used an action research methodology and undertook a peacebuilding intervention (the Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy, or GYSLA for short) to promote a culture of peace, good citizenship development, tolerance, and mutual coexistence. I evaluated the short-term outcomes of the intervention. The work operationalised and internalised the idea of local peace committees and local peace cells in the construction and design of peacebuilding in post-conflict Ganta, Liberia. All of this was achieved using community peacebuilding that used indigenous knowledge.

This study used an action research approach and a qualitative research design. The research participants (purposively selected from the city based on their knowledge of the land and relationship issues) as the co-researchers, and I, the facilitator (Harris and Kaye 2017: 244) carefully studied the land and the relationship issues among some members of the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups in Ganta City. The research design used to help understand the interactions among the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo ethnic groups in Ganta City was qualitative in nature.

To ensure triangulation, reliability, and validity, the data collection tools used were focus groups, interviews, and observations. The research was carried out while ensuring reliability and validity. It was predicated upon this that inter-rater reliability and test-retest reliability were the two reliability methods employed during the study. Additionally, internal validity and external validity were the two validity approaches used.

4.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

Action research was the approach that was applied in this research, as actions were taken with the ultimate intent of creating knowledge. Efforts were made to understand the problems through a participatory process. The research and its associated actions were processes that led to the generation of the research findings (Erro-Garcés and Alfaro-Tanco 2020:1). Greater participation by the research participants in decision-making characterised the entire research and action process. The approach of the research fitted neatly with what McIntyre (2008: 1, cited in Jensen and Laurie 2016: 16) best describes as:

(a) A collective commitment to investigate an issue or problem, (b) a desire to engage in self- and collective reflection to gain clarity about the issue under investigation, (c) a joint decision to engage in individual and/or collective action that leads to a useful solution that benefits the people involved, and (d) the building of alliances between researchers and participants in the planning, implementation, and dissemination of the research process.

In this AR, the participants and I took part in the cyclical process of planning, taking action, evaluating the action's outcomes, and monitoring the task(s) undertaken. It involved developing and implementing responsive and flexible action plans that were sensitive to the environment in Ganta City. The study encompassed McNiff's (2016: 17) key features of action research. It was practice-based to better understand the actions that were helpful to the research. The study was conducted to create and generate knowledge and practical theories. It focused on improved learning about the relationships among the three ethnic groups of Ganta City. Values-based practices were utilised in the knowledge creation process. The research participants and I collaborated to co-create knowledge to contribute to Ganta's socio-cultural transformation by promoting peaceful coexistence.

Kurt Lewin developed the AR model in the mid-1940s to respond to problems he perceived in social action “as a means of bridging the gap between practice and research due to a collaboration between the research participants and the researcher” (Gomez n.d.: 44). Gomez furthered that AR is an approach that encourages collaboration and moves away from the “professional expert model of research” in which an expert directs and leads research efforts, with little or no involvement of the research participants. AR emerged against the positivist concept of “objective knowledge” and the leading concept of “knowledge transferability”. For Lewin, AR is about having a conversation about an existing problem(s) and the development

of group decisions on how to proceed to find a solution to the problem(s). Hence, when investigating the Ganta problem using the AR approach, the researcher and research participants made decisions, monitored progress, kept notes of the results, and reviewed them regularly to better understand the situation. The approach motivated the participants to provide information and advance practical and meaningful solutions to the problems about which they had better knowledge.

AR establishes and recognises that behaviour varies over time under different influences and dissimilar environmental forces. AR uses social science to help solve social conflicts as a means of helping minority groups overcome and exorcise exploitation and other forces that have weighed heavily on the progress of their society.

The research approach helped produce a concrete understanding of some of the social realities in Ganta City. There was systematic collection and examination of the data used to decide on the actions necessary to make the changes needed to promote peace for sustainable development. I busied myself with carefully collecting and analysing the data that generated meaningful interpretations of the actions taken in the field. I recognised and protected the rights of the local people of Ganta City to participate in and decide on their development trajectory. The co-researchers participated meaningfully in all of the processes of the study. They helped by unpacking and identifying their problems realistically and contributed to the evolution and advancement of practical solutions to enhance sustainable peace and development. I worked with the research participants, exclusively recruited from Ganta City, to understand the issues behind and associated with the city's land conflicts and the sour relationships that existed between some people of the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo ethnic groups. This culminated in developing a much better understanding of the issues and helped advance solutions that would benefit the city and its inhabitants. The participants and I worked together to explore the situation, better understand the issues, and jointly identify ways forward during the process. A valuable part of this action research was facilitating the participation that enabled me to learn (Harris 2017: 262). Kayser's (2015: 10) recommendation to create constructive alliances for change by removing myself from "the role of expert" allowed me to accept my role as that of a facilitator, listening attentively and learning.

Karnsen (cited in Harris and Kaye 2017: 244) defines participation as "learning which is characterized by action, reflection, and theorizing involving researchers". Local peacebuilding requires bringing people together to find solutions to local problems with the intent of

promoting, supporting, and ensuring societal tranquillity and harmony. Against this background, my co-researchers and I deemed it necessary to contribute to building peace locally by developing and maintaining cordial relationships. Cooperative and participative collaboration (Harris and Kaye 2017: 132) between the co-researchers and I led to the identification of land and relationship problems/conflicts and the evolution of an intervention to solve the identified problems for the well-being of the city. The local capacities for peace in the city were utilised - the bottom-to-top approach to peacebuilding - as conventional top-to-bottom peacebuilding was identified as inappropriate. Local peacebuilding efforts were meaningful and worthy as they utilised the bottom-to-top approach to peacebuilding.

I considered the organisation and observation of practical ‘real-life’ activities in relation to remaining engaged with the people of Ganta City. The engagement contributed to gaining an understanding of the issues and evolved the means to do things in the most participatory way in a spiral of “self-reflective cycles” (Business Research Methodology n.d.: para 11):

1. Planning in order to initiate change.
2. Implementing the change (acting) and observing the process of
3. implementation and consequences.
4. Reflecting on processes of change and re-planning.
5. Acting and observing.
6. Reflecting.

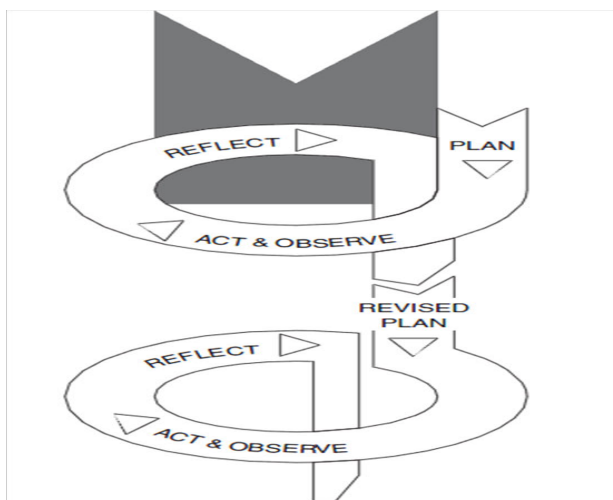


Figure 0.1: The Action Research Spiral

Source: Adapted from Sykes and Treleaven (2009: 216)

Chiefly, the utilisation of the spiral allowed me to examine the conflictual and strained relationships in much deeper ways at each stage. It resultantly culminated in a more profound understanding of the problems that were researched. The cyclical process helped build consciousness that led to social change by working together with the community under study to achieve the agreed-upon objective. The research participants and I worked hand-in-hand to understand the situation or problems in the city clearly. We found ways to contribute jointly to changing said situation for the city's betterment. Essentially, this study involved a partnership between the community and I to solve land disputes and relationship problems in Ganta. A democratic participatory process led to the evolution of practical knowledge to create cultural and social changes through individuals working together collectively (McNiff 2016: 2).

The participants and I worked together in the cycle of exploring the situation, developing a better understanding of the situation, taking actions to better the situation, making effective use of local knowledge, and using the PAC as a structure on the ground to work on conflict management, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding issues. I recognised that there were ways in which the community made use of local capacities to resolve conflicts peacefully. The study embraced and utilised the community's skills, knowledge, and experience without relying on ready-made remedies brought from outside and presented as the panacea to the local problems. External solutions would not have provided the best solutions to these local conflicts and helped build lasting peace. It was reflection, designing, and implementation of the intervention, and thereafter observation to determine the best course of action, that led the LPC to identify that the most important segment of the Ganta population needing attention was the youth. It was established that the youth needed capacity building in peaceful coexistence, responsible leadership, peace, reconciliation, human rights, and good citizenship to help reconcile the conflict among the people of the city and facilitate lasting peace. The theoretical foundation and the research approach were complementary, supportive, and mutually reinforcing.

4.3 REFLECTIONS ON THE RESEARCH

In agreement with Lewin's view (Gomez n.d.: 44), this action research pursued the path of reasonable investigation into the land and relationship situations in Ganta City among the three ethnic groups (Dan, Mandingo, and Mah). It involved some from those ethnic groups who had better knowledge of the problems. It was a way of finding solutions to the social problems through democratic means and by “self-critical reconnaissance”. Helskog (2014: 8) explained

this process as follows: “The idea is that by observing the observer, and listening to your listening, self-awareness of thoughts, feelings, and experiences, past and present, seep gently into consciousness”.

The participants played central roles in developing a number of decisions made during the research process and were not just sources of information. Some of the community members of Ganta City were carefully and purposively selected as my co-researchers. They participated in the research process from its commencement to the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the intervention (Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy) on December 10-11, 2021, at the Messiah Christian Academy in Ganta City. The exercise allowed the research participants and I to become jointly involved with the "research process from the initial design to the formal presentation of results and discussion of the action implications" (Whyte, cited in Harris and Kaye 2017: 241).

It is important to note that this community-based research approach created an opportunity for some of the residents of Ganta City (the research participants) and I to work together to identify and define the problems: the land disputes and strained relationships emanating from them. When reflecting on the situation, it was realised that the best approach to handling the situation was using local capacities for peace. Local capacities for peace were identified. Then, the cultural ways to remedy the situation were also identified. Most importantly, the team established the means to evaluate our work to establish its effectiveness, relevance, impact, and sustainability. The study's theoretical foundation (community-based peacebuilding, indigenous knowledge, conflict transformation, and the asset-based approach to community development) and approach (action research) complemented each other perfectly. I worked with the research participants and established a participatory action committee (PAC). Criteria about who qualified to be a committee member, what the work should be, and coverage of the committee's work were clearly defined. The co-researchers and I also established indicators to measure the committee's progress and evaluate the committee's work. The monitoring and evaluation of the committee's work was done to know the progress made and lessons learned that could be replicated in similar situations to help remedy local social and societal problems. Please refer to chapter six of this study (Planning and Implementation of the Intervention) for essential details of and about the work of the action committee (LPC).

4.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study sought to understand why some people of the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo ethnic groups in Ganta were involved in land conflicts and had had relationship problems since the Second Liberian Civil War. Keen attention was paid to understanding people's reactions to each other, how they had been affected by the issues of land conflict, and how it had affected their ways of life. It was an expedition to understand and explain Ganta's reality involving social beings. Hence, the research methodology that fitted best was qualitative in design. The use of the qualitative research method was necessary for two reasons. It helped me understand the reasons behind the behaviours of some members of the Mah and Mandingo ethnic groups in Ganta City. It also gave me a profound understanding “of the underlying reasons, attitudes, and motivations behind their behaviours” (Rosenthal 2016: 510). Cropley (2015: 5) states that qualitative research looks at how humans use everyday experiences to understand a situation by using “their own minds”, and also by using “their own words” and providing explanations for the “causes and effects of relationships”. Providing further clarity on the meaning of qualitative research, Mohajan (2018: 2) asserts that this research methodology is a social activity emphasising how people use their experiences to understand societal realities by interpreting and making sense of it. Creswell (2013: 42-44) indicates that this research design positions an activity that situates the researcher to interpret essential practices that transform and make the world clearer through conversations, field notes, interviews, photographs, memos, and recordings.

Hence, this research sought to enhance, facilitate and transform the citizens of Ganta and their city in more meaningful ways to make them live together peacefully. Against this backdrop, I elected to pursue a qualitative research methodology that used the action research approach and required the involvement of social actors in their natural Ganta environment. The research work looked more in-depth at the actions and responses of the people of Ganta to the land conflict that became pronounced after the end of the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003. The issues that led to the strained relationships were studied.

4.5 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

Ganta's population was 62,000, including rural villages within its eight-square-mile radius (Divon, Bøås and Sayndee, 2016: 3). The city was situated within a Mah ethnic environment in Nimba County. Thus, the Mah ethnic group was the largest ethnic group, followed by the

Dan or Gio and the Mandingo ethnic groups. The study adopted and used the purposive sampling method to better understand the phenomenon studied. Ghaljaie, Naderifar and Goli (2017: 1) have advanced that sampling deals with a part of a population being chosen to represent the whole population because of insufficient tools, enormous expenses, lack of accuracy, and lack of human resources to cover the entire population to enable any analysis to be more comprehensive.

I used a combination of quota sampling and consecutive sampling. When recruiting research participants from each of the ethnic groups that participated in the interviews and focus groups, a quota of members of each ethnic group was recruited, especially those knowledgeable about the causes, nature, degree, and results of the land conflicts and strained relationships in the city. Consecutive sampling involves selecting a fixed sample from subjects who meet the criteria for participation in the research, and it was utilised. An essential criterion for participation in the research was knowledgeability of the nature, extent, and consequences of the land disputes in the city and strained relationships between some people of the three ethnic groups of interest to this study.

The data gathering process in any research is fundamental as it contributes to a much clearer and better knowledge of a theoretical framework (Bernard 2002: 2, cited in Etikan, Musa and Alkassim 2016). Against this backdrop, the persons from whom data was collected and how the data was collected were informed by sound judgment. I recognised that the strength, length, and depth of analysis could not compensate for data that might have been collected improperly (Tongco, 2007: 1-12, cited in Etikan, Musa and Alkassim 2016). The purposive sampling technique or judgment sampling (Etikan, Musa and Alkassim 2016:2) was deliberately chosen. I was interested in the participants' qualities. I wanted to discover and know who could best provide the needed information due to their experiences and knowledge about the land conflicts and relationship issues in Ganta before, during, and after the wars.

A sample size of 103 persons participated directly in this study. Sixty persons participated in the interviews, while forty-three persons participated in the focus group discussions. The chosen persons came from these categories to reflect the diversity and layers of the human society in Ganta: youth, women, elders, and traditional and religious leaders who constituted stakeholders in the environment. Further details follow under the research methods. The decision of the sample size of 103 persons was informed by the theoretical and practical advantages of small sample studies. Practically, Davies and Hughes (2014: 166) maintain that

the smaller the sample is, the less problematic it is. The small sample permitted regular and quicker face-to-face encounters that allowed me to engage with the participants. Interviewers were engaged and talked to at length. Valuable and meaningful observations that necessarily lend validity to data-gathering were made to enrich the research.

4.6 RESEARCH OR DATA COLLECTION METHOD

4.6.1 Introduction

Focus groups, interviews, and observations were the essential data collection tools or techniques. They were useful and relevant to get the kind of data I needed. Notable scholars have confirmed the interrelatedness and supportiveness of the three instruments. These instruments have proven useful in qualitative research to understand and explain humans' behaviour in their natural settings. Utilizing these tools has ensured triangulation which is imperative in conducting research.

4.6.2 Interview

An interview is a qualitative technique, which is a discussion with intent, and the said intent is defined by the researcher (Davies and Hughes 2014: 194). Adhabi and Anozie (2017: 2) have concluded that: "[i]nterviews form the backbone of primary data collection in qualitative research designs" and have described it as "a form of consultation where the researcher seeks to know more of an issue as opinionated by the individual being asked". Sixty persons were interviewed to know the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the land disputes in Ganta City. I found face-to-face interviews with the research participants were the best and most useful way of collecting data from the interviewees.

I avoided the following during interviews with the research participants:

1. Getting involved in lengthy and pointless explanations of the study.
2. Diverging from the study plan, planned questions, and phrasing of the questions.
3. Allowing another person to interfere with the interview and provide answers for the respondent or offer their thoughts about my questions.
4. Suggesting an answer for the respondent and assenting or dissenting with the respondent's answer(s)
5. Doing anything indicative of my subjective views or ideas on the topic of the question.

The persons who fell within these categories were interviewed:

1. The city authority.
2. Religious leaders from the Muslim and Christian communities.
3. Women leaders and influential women.
4. Youth leaders and influential youth.
5. Elders from the ethnic groups.
6. Leaders and key members of the business community.
7. Political and opinion leaders.
8. Key members of the motorcyclists' union.
9. Leaders and members of other ethnic groups that were resident in the city.
10. Student leaders.
11. Community leaders.
12. Marketers (leaders and key members).
13. Traditional leaders.

The face-to-face interviews offered the advantage of observing the social cues in the interviewees' body language, voice, tone, etc. They presented sufficient information that helped add to the verbal answers of the interviewees to the questions posed during the interview. The study was interested in knowing and understanding the relationships among the city's Dan, Mah, and Mandingo ethnicities. That is why social cues became necessary to observe, and careful notes were taken. During interviews, my focus of attention was twofold. I simultaneously ensured that I listened attentively to the interviewees' responses to understand what they were trying to convey. I also kept in mind the research needs for which my questions sought answers and remained focused on those. These needs referred to the depth of the responses required and the essential details that the questions endeavoured to obtain from the answers provided.

During the interviews, I sought and obtained the respondents' consent to have their responses to the interview tape-recorded to ensure that more accurate data was available, as taking notes during interviews would be inadequate. The study took due cognisance of the fact that tape recording brought with it the tendency to overlook notetaking during the process as the respondents' voices would be available and could be used as the sources of data. The researcher therefore took notes to determine whether or not the questions were being answered, and to avoid being let down if the recorder malfunctioned.

There are three types of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured (Alshenqeeti 2014: 40; Adhabi and Anozie 2017: 3). Structured interviews can result in a tense environment

that causes respondents to become uneasy because the guidelines must be observed carefully (Adhabi and Anozie 2017: 4). Because of its nature, I elected to avoid this route that would have caused the research participants' discomfort. I elected instead to use a semi-structured interview by having conversations slanted in the research's direction. This type of interview gave me the latitude and flexibility to explore the issues by asking questions that served as important sources of information that were useful for this qualitative research (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree 2006, cited in Adhabi and Anozie 2017: 4). The choice of the type of interview was informed and bolstered by the fact that DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree declared that semi-structured interviews are the most important source of data for qualitative research.

As much as an interview proves to be an attractive data source for qualitative research, it has its challenges. Hence, I was mindful that what was said in an answer in an interview was informed by the kind of questions I asked. The interview guide was carefully crafted, reviewed, and shaped in a manner that eventually elicited the kind of data that was useful to the research. I gave due research acknowledgment that an interview alone was an inadequate source of data in studying the social issue in Ganta. That was why this study also used focus groups and observation as additional useful data collection instruments.

There is no scholarly agreement on a specified time limit for conducting an interview, although I tried as much as possible to eschew the development of boredom in the respondents. I assigned less than half an hour to the interview process to ensure that the interview questions were shorter to allow the respondents time to provide detailed answers when unravelling the investigated phenomenon.

Table 0.1: Demographic Characteristics of those Interviewed

Number	Composition	Age group	Sex	Language
1(n=1)	Religious leader	53	Male	Mandingo
2(n=1)	Religious leader	41	Male	Mandingo
3(n=1)	Youth leader	23	Male	Mandingo
4(n=1)	Youth leader	26	Female	Mandingo
5(n=1)	Elder	63	Male	Mandingo
6(n=1)	Elder	56	Male	Mandingo
7(n=1)	Businessperson	44	Male	Mandingo

8(n=1)	Women leader	59	Female	Mandingo
9(n=1)	Women leader	47	Female	Mandingo
10(n=1)	Student leader	21	Male	Mah
11(n=1)	Student leader	23	Female	Dan/Gio
12(n=1)	Community youth leader	65	Male	Mah
13(n=1)	Community-women leader	56	Male	Dan/Gio
14(n=1)	Civil society leader	48	Female	Mah
15(n=1)	Civil society leader	37	Male	Mah
16(n=1)	Student leader	26	Male	Mah
17(n=1)	Marketer	55	Male	Krahn
18(n=1)	Marketer	45	Male	Dan/Gio
19(n=1)	Yana boy	28	Male	Mandingo
20(n=1)	Yana boy	34	Male	Congo/Americo-Liberian
21(n=1)	Shop operator	50	Female	Congo/Americo-Liberian
22(n=1)	Store operator	51	Female	Fula
23(n=1)	Shop operator	43	Female	Fula
24(n=1)	Social club leader	32	Male	Mandingo
25(n=1)	Social worker	37	Male	Mah
26(n=1)	Nurse	45	Male	Bassa
27(n=1)	Teacher	36	Male	Kissi
28(n=1)	Medical doctor	54	Male	Mah
29(n=1)	Church youth leader	33	Female	Dan/Gio
30(n=1)	Lawyer	55	Male	Mah
31(n=1)	Land claimant	65	Male	Mandingo
32(n=1)	Land occupant	55	Male	Mandingo
33(n=1)	Land claimant	46	Male	Mandingo
34(n=1)	Land occupant	51	Male	Mandingo

35(n=1)	School administrator	58	Male	Mah
36(n=1)	Administrator	46	Male	Mandingo
37(n=1)	Plumber	38	Male	Mah
38(n=1)	Mason	36	Male	Mah
39(n=1)	Carpenter	56	Male	Mah
40(n=1)	Mechanic	44	Male	Mandingo
41(n=1)	Welder	39	Male	Kpelleh
42(n=1)	Businessman	48	Male	Dan/Gio
43(n=1)	Businessman	53	Male	Mah
44(n=1)	Businesswoman	38	Female	Mah
45(n=1)	Businesswoman	41	Female	Kru
46(n=1)	Computer analyst	34	Male	Mah
47(n=1)	Receptionist	36	Female	Dan/Gio
48(n=1)	Banker	43	Female	Dan/Gio
49(n=1)	Sales agent	31	Female	Mah
50(n=1)	Businessman	54	Male	Fula
51(n=1)	Farmer	46	Male	Gbandi
52(n=1)	School administrator	53	Male	Mah
53(n=1)	Health practitioner	36	Female	Mandingo
54(n=1)	Transport Unionist	44	Male	Mah
55(n=1)	Transport Unionist	51	Male	Dan/Gio
56(n=1)	Motorcyclist	39	Male	Mah
57(n=1)	Driver	45	Male	Mandingo
58(n=1)	Driver	52	Male	Mah
59(n=1)	Carpenter	51	Male	Mandingo
60(n=1)	Petrol station attendant	37	Female	Dan/Gio

4.6.3 Focus Group

Getting together at a location to discuss interest issues with a group of people is a natural part of human life. This practice has been markedly improved upon and made a data-gathering instrument. A focus group is described as a "discussion frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues..... [and] aims to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals" (Nyumba et al. 2018: 20). It is an important means of understanding the views of others on an issue. The use of focus groups represents a rise in participatory research and the recognition of the relevance of discussion on social or natural issues (Bennett et al. 2017: 94) to detect the problems and find remedies necessary for societal harmony and advancement. A focus group is not only a research methodology but also a data collection method. Its sources of data are the interactions of the participants. I was an active participant in the group's discussion and interaction during the research. The utilisation of focus groups as a data collection technique was useful in drawing from the experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of the participants from the Dan/Gio, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups in the city to inform the research adequately. The focus group was cardinal in discovering new information and getting different views on the topic. It allowed knowing how others influenced people and uncovered controversial issues on sensitive subjects. Hence, the focus group discussions gave me a much greater coverage of the number of opinions and views necessary and useful to better understand the issues.

In order for the focus groups to be considered good, participants were carefully recruited, hosted in a comfortable environment, and facilitations were skilfully carried out. Three focus groups ethically brought together socially homogeneous people who had both their ethnic groups' social statuses and neighbourhoods as things in common. Five other focus group discussions that separately brought together businesspeople, women, youths, elders (men only), and religious leaders were held. The details of their compositions are found below. The focus of the discussions was not for the participants to reach a consensus on an issue but to gather the participants' ideas or views on the supplied topic (Newcomer, Hatry and Wholey 2015: 510). The focus groups provided me with qualitative data and, most importantly, exposed the experiences, perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes of the research participants or co-researchers about the land conflict and relationship issues in Ganta. In the end, they provided the data needed to inform the research findings.

The following focus group discussions were held:

1. Knowledgeable persons (a youth, a woman, an elder, a businessman or businesswoman, and a religious leader) from the Dan ethnic group were engaged separately in a focus group discussion.
2. Knowledgeable persons (a youth, a woman, an elder, a businessman or businesswoman, and a religious leader) from the Mandingo ethnic group were engaged separately in a focus group discussion.
3. Knowledgeable persons (a youth, a woman, an elder, a businessman or businesswoman, and a religious leader) from the Mah ethnic group were engaged separately in a focus group discussion.
4. Knowledgeable women from all ethnic groups were brought together, and a focus group discussion was held.
5. Knowledgeable youths from all ethnic groups were brought together as a group and a focus group discussion held.
6. Knowledgeable elders from all ethnic groups were brought together as a group and a focus group discussion held.
7. Knowledgeable businesspeople from all ethnic groups were brought together as a group and a focus group discussion held.
8. Knowledgeable religious leaders from all ethnic groups were brought together as a group and a focus group discussion held.

The focus group discussions involved a group of people converging at a place and having a facilitated conversation on a particular topic to generate information useful in the knowledge industry. This data collection technique was useful in generating data collected when group members interacted on a topic and questions I supplied (Stewart 2018: 687; Sim and Waterfield 2019: 3004;). I used this approach in a group interview that has increasingly become popular in qualitative research. The supplied questions determined the direction of the discussions. The method to extract the needed information was researcher-determined to guide, direct and shape the discussions to ensure that the best information on the topic under discussion was elicited. Scholars have had agreeable views on the sameness of individual participants in a focus group (in terms of characteristics, language, social and economic standing, and sharing of a geographic space). They also have disagreements on the number of people that should create the chemistry of a focus group. There are no clearly defined numeral limits for the number of focus groups to be held for a study, howbeit, at least two focus group discussions were deemed necessary. A “minimum of three focus groups is recommended for best practice approaches” (Kabir 2016: 222). Based on the Ganta City situation, I concluded that eight different and distinct focus groups were much better. Each group was formed in accordance with the study population's chemistry.

I decided to have eight focus groups using the same focus group guide to elicit the necessary data from the participants. The decision was adequately informed by the relevant information

provided on the background of the participants and what they offered to the research. Newcomer, Hatry and Wholey (2015:511) state, “ [s]eldom would we conduct just one focus group. The rule of thumb is to hold three or four groups with each type of participant for which you want to analyse results”. The logic behind choosing the number of focus groups is driven by the understanding that little or no new information surfaces, especially after the first few focus groups are held. Newcomer, Hatry and Wholey (2015) advise that when the researcher can easily guess what participants want to say before it was said, it is not necessary to probe further as nothing new will emerge after what has already been said. Hence, the choice of the number of focus groups was made. Thankfully, my choice of focus group numbers surpassed the number categorised as inadequate and unreliable. The eight focus groups were thus adequate and provided the essential data that the study needed.

One of the things under the researcher's control in a study is the number of participants invited to a focus group. The number and size of a group are necessary for consideration in a focus group owing to the kind of data the researcher wants to generate. An emotionally charged topic requires a smaller group to give more time for participants to express their experiences and views on the supplied topic. A small group allows the researcher or facilitator to manage the discussions around emotional topics. Certainly, the land issues and strained relationships among some people of the three ethnic groups in Ganta City were emotional ones. Hence, I decided that no less than five persons and no more than ten persons would participate in each focus group. None of the eight focus group discussions held contained ten persons.

While there is no scholarly agreement on the timeframe for a focus group, the Evaluation Research Team (2018: 2) advises that "focus groups typically last about 60 to 90 minutes". Only when participants are motivated with cash or kind can the timeframe be increased. The participants and I took not more than an hour and a half for each focus group discussion. Snacks were provided to the participants as a non-cash incentive to help ensure that the necessary pieces of information were elicited. The trend and answers informed the time allocation and the time spent on each discussion.

4.6.3.1 First Focus Group

The first focus group discussion was held with select members of the Dan/Gio ethnic group knowledgeable about the issues being researched. We spent one hour and fifteen minutes on the discussion. Please refer to the table below for the demographic characteristics of the first focus group's participants:

Table 0.2: Demographic Characteristics of the First Focus Group's Participants

Number	Composition	Age group	Sex	Language
1(n=1)	Religious leader	67	Male	Dan (Gio)
2(n=1)	Youth leader	34	Male	Dan (Gio)
3(n=1)	Elder	66	Male	Dan (Gio)
4(n=1)	Businessperson	37	Male	Dan (Gio)
5(n=1)	Women leader	63	Female	Dan (Gio)

4.6.3.2 Second Focus Group

The second focus group discussion with members of the Mandingo ethnicity lasted for one hour and twenty-seven minutes. This gathering was emotional, with participants speaking their minds at length. Please refer to the table below for the demographic characteristics of the second focus group's participants:

Table 0.3: Demographic Characteristics of the Second Focus Group's Participants

Number	Composition	Age group	Sex	Language
1(n=1)	Religious leader	64	Male	Mandingo
2(n=1)	Youth leader	33	Female	Mandingo
3(n=1)	Elder	68	Male	Mandingo
4(n=1)	Businessperson	56	Male	Mandingo
5(n=1)	Women leader	44	Female	Mandingo

4.6.3.3 Third Focus Group

The third focus group discussion was held with members of the Mah ethnicity. The discussion lasted for one hour and ten minutes. Please refer to the table below for the demographic characteristics of the third focus group's participants:

Table 0.4: Demographic Characteristics of the Third Focus Group's Participants

Number	Composition	Age group	Sex	Language
1(n=1)	Religious leader	56	Male	Mah (Mah)

2(n=1)	Youth leader	31	Female	Mah (Mah)
3(n=1)	Elder	67	Male	Mah (Mah)
4(n=1)	Businessperson	54	Male	Mah (Mah)
5(n=1)	Women leader	55	Female	Mah (Mah)

4.6.3.4 Fourth Focus Group

The fourth focus group discussion was held with women from the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups. These were people knowledgeable about the people's lives before, during, and after the wars. We spent one hour and fifteen minutes together. Please refer to the table below for the demographic characteristics of the fourth focus group's participants:

Table 0.5: Demographic Characteristics of the Fourth Focus Group's Participants

Number	Composition	Age group	Sex	Language
1(n=1)	Business leader	35	Female	Mandingo
2(n=1)	Business leader	43	Female	Dan/Gio
3(n=1)	Businesswoman	38	Female	Mah
4(n=1)	Elder	59	Female	Dan/Gio
5(n=1)	Youth leader	35	Female	Mandingo
6(n=1)	Women leader	62	Female	Mah

4.6.3.5 Fifth Focus Group

The fifth focus group discussion was held with the youth of Ganta. We spent one hour and twenty-seven minutes together. Please refer to the table below for the demographic characteristics of the fifth focus group's participants:

Table 0.6: Demographic Characteristics of the Fifth Focus Group

Number	Composition	Age group	Sex	Language
1(n=1)	Student leader	27	Male	Dan
2(n=1)	Youth leader	35	Male	Mah
3(n=1)	Store Operator	33	Female	Krahn

4(n=1)	Gas seller	27	Male	Mah
5(n=1)	Youth leader	33	Male	Vai

4.6.3.6 Sixth Focus Group

The sixth focus group discussion was held with knowledgeable elders of Ganta. We spent one hour and seventeen minutes together. Please refer to the table below for the demographic characteristics of the sixth focus group's participants:

Table 0.7: Demographic Characteristics of the Sixth Focus Group

Number	Composition	Age group	Sex	Language
1(n=1)	Traditional leader	67	Male	Mah
2(n=1)	Former official	54	Male	Mah
3(n=1)	Mechanic	63	Male	Mandingo
4(n=1)	Teacher	57	Female	Mah
5(n=1)	Teacher	65	Male	Dan/Gio
6(n=1)	Restaurant and Bar operator	53	Female	Dan/Gio

4.6.3.7 Seventh Focus Group

The seventh focus group discussion was held with knowledgeable businesspeople of Ganta. We spent one hour and eight minutes together. Please refer to the table below for the demographic characteristics of the seventh focus group participants:

Table 0.8: Demographic Characteristics of the Seventh Focus Group

Number	Composition	Age group	Sex	Language
1(n=1)	Proprietor of a school	44	Male	Vai
2(n=1)	Tea seller	54	Male	Fula
3(n=1)	Hotel owner	44	Male	Mah
4(n=1)	Marketer	33	Female	Mah
5(n=1)	Money exchanger	40	Male	Lorma
6(n=1)	Money exchanger	33	Male	Krahn

4.3.6.8 Eighth Focus Group

The eighth focus group discussion was held with the religious leaders of Ganta. We spent fifty-eight minutes together. Please refer to the table below for the demographic characteristics of the eighth focus group's participants.

Table 0.9: Demographic Characteristics of the Eighth Focus Group

Number	Composition	Age group	Sex	Language
1(n=1)	Pastor	55	Male	Dan/Gio
2(n=1)	Pastor	64	Female	Mah
3(n=1)	Imam	61	Male	Mandingo
4(n=1)	Imam	56	Male	Dan/Gio
5(n=1)	Pastor	40	Male	Mah

From all indications, none of the discussions were shorter than an hour, and none exceeded an hour and a half. These focus groups were firstly organised out of the participants' enthusiasm to provide useful information for the study. The participants were carefully recruited based on their knowledge about the land disputes and relationship issues among some people of the three ethnic groups in the city. The purposive sampling technique was used to determine the research participants or those who participated in the discussions. The introductory statement containing the reasons for the study and the questions posed during the discussions allowed the participants to express themselves freely and openly. The focus groups were useful data sources that relied on interactions and discussions in those eight groups as I actively moderated or facilitated.

The first, second, and third focus groups were each ethnically homogeneous as they were exclusively made of Mandingo, Mah, and Dan, respectively. Each group was interviewed separately to ensure that other ethnic factors and homogeneity did not impact the group member's worldview on a particular issue. The principle of homogeneousness was not breached because the researcher was interested in knowing the perceptions, beliefs, views, and attitudes of each ethnic group regarding the issue under study in the city. The rest of the focus groups were ethnically heterogeneous to give me an understanding of how people from various

ethnicities interacted in a group. This allowed me to observe many things as the people interacted, since observation was one of my sources or data collection instruments.

4.7 OBSERVATION

Observation is one of the essential research methods in the social sciences as it is about giving keen attention to the social life of people, their behaviours, and their surroundings (Ciesielska, Boström and Öhlander 2018: 33). These researchers advance three types of observations (participant observation, non-participant observation, and indirect observation. Participant observation requires the researcher to get immersed in a particular culture for a while to understand the way of life in the community as a visitor or marginal member. Non-participant observation is about understanding interactions and relationships in a community from an outsider's perspective. Indirect observation deals with a researcher depending on observations from another person or persons. The best choice of observation for this research was the participant observation method. The researcher visited the communities in the city for a protracted period to understand how people from the Dan/Gio, Mandingo, and Mah ethnicities interacted and related to each other regularly.

The observation was a time-consuming data collection method. It chiefly required accurately, patiently, and skilfully watching and recording events as they occurred or what a respondent did but not necessarily what he or she said. It presented the possibility of ensuring accuracy, reliability, and validity. The utilisation of this technique by me operated on a few assumptions:

- a) That observed behaviour was most likely useful in answering specific research questions.
- b) That attitudes and values, which were intangible characteristics, were noted and worthy of documentation.
- c) That data could be recorded in more concise and precise ways.
- d) Behavioural change was not expected because an observer was visibly present.

Observation served to describe what was and produced useful and vital knowledge. It was descriptive of the situation under study. It used the five senses effectively to capture occurrences to understand the population's views of being studied. The researcher identified three cardinal uses for observation during the investigation of the situation: to detect probable issues laying beneath a specific land and relationship problem in Ganta City; it is supportive in

outlining major issues discovered using interview questionnaires about the issues in the city and is useful in gathering descriptive data provided by what was observed.

This research sought to understand social relationships and forms of interaction between the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups in Ganta City. I visited these eleven places: markets, bus stops, community centres, soccer fields, entertainment centres, intellectual centres, school campuses, etc. The visitations were purposefully intended to observe how people from the three ethnic groups behaved and communicated with each other, interacted in the human traffic, and what kind of personal spaces they allowed each other to occupy or not. It gave me an appreciation and understanding of how land disputes had impacted how the people of Ganta lived, related, and interacted. I gathered data about behaviour with minimal and reduced distortions and analysed it very objectively.

This action research required me to be the facilitator while the research participants the co-researchers. I played a facilitator role and did not influence the thoughts and views of the co-researchers. It was a conscious effort to collect data about the behaviours of people of the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo ethnic groups in Ganta City. The criticism that tends to emerge is that observation in research, in which the participants are also the co-researchers, will lack objectivity. This was given keen attention. Such criticism comes against the backdrop that the researcher is not an independent observer as the situation that is studied or observed is, in fact, the research subject. As such, the researcher will most likely bring an emotional attachment to the matter under study. It is worth mentioning that regardless of the trust-based relationship between the co-researchers and I, I proceeded with the collection, analysis, and displaying of evidence objectively. It was my way of ensuring that the results could be reproduced when the research was subjected to reliability and validity tests, especially using the same research approach and methodology with the same data collection instruments.

This was a study of the cultural and social occurrences in Ganta City between three ethnic groups within the ambit of the qualitative research method and using the action research approach. The use of a data collection technique that was not only qualitative but also derived from anthropological studies that concentrated on studying a long-established practice that had been regulating social life was very useful in giving me distinctive understandings of the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the land disputes in Ganta City. The study was conducted in the field where occurrences in said communal and traditional contexts were observed. I was also interested in studying and understanding social relationships and forms of interaction

between the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah people since the issue of this land dispute emerged after the Liberian civil wars. The utilisation of observation was very helpful, especially when members of those ethnic groups were brought together in the same room to have conversations around this critical issue in the city. I used focus groups and interviews as other data collection instruments in addition to observation to better understand and obtain the necessary information to inform the study adequately.

I started observing and taking notes from the first meeting with the Chief Imam of Ganta on September 4, 2020 to preliminarily inform him of the research, until December 2021 when we concluded the Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy. During this period, I initiated engagements with relevant actors and research participants, held meetings with the city authority, obtained authorisation to proceed with the study, and subsequently proceeded to collect the data. All the visitations made to the city during this period and my interactions with the actors relevant to the research were noted with keen interest to the study. The observation guide was used up until December 2021 for data collection purposes. However, I continued with observation during the intervention's planning and implementation and the formation of the peace cells.

4.8 DATA ANALYSIS METHODS

Data analysis was carried out within the thematic analysis framework, a "method for identifying, analysing, organizing, describing, and reporting themes found within a data set" (Braun and Clarke 2006, cited in Nowell et al. 2017: 2). First, the data gathered was condensed into concepts, which were the smallest bits of information about the land conflict and relationship issues among some people of the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups in Ganta City. The resulting concepts were then organised into categories and sub-categories according to their interrelatedness. As new concepts surfaced, additional categories got added to the data analysis by pinpointing similarities, establishing relationships, and creating patterns between the concepts. The resulting categories were developed, and this phase was repeated whenever fresh concepts surfaced.

Linkages developed as a map of the selected categories and sub-categories and showed how they were related. Put another way, the categories were integrated by identifying their organising principles, by discovering and analysing some of the common things heard or

observed, and thereby leading the research through the process of analysis. Overall, the analysis of these processes led to theorisation and the presentation of the research findings.

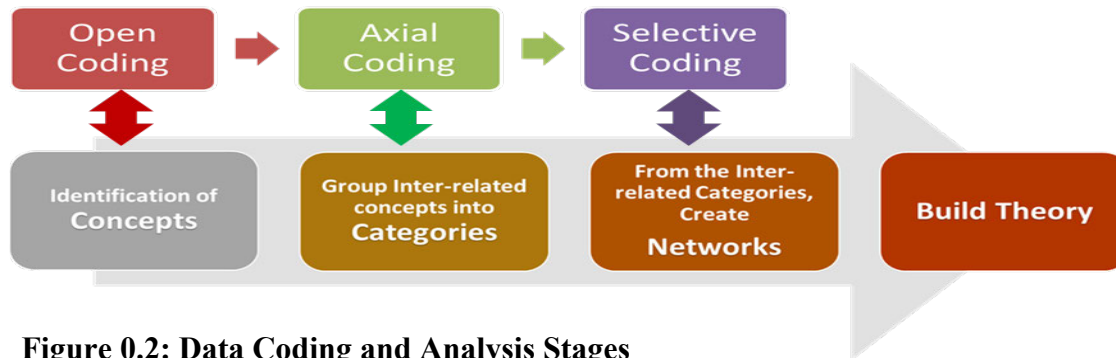


Figure 0.2: Data Coding and Analysis Stages

Source: Corbin and Strauss 1990: 423-424

4.9 FORMATION OF THE PARTICIPATORY ACTION COMMITTEE (PAC)

When conducting this study, the Ganta City Corporation named its representative and contact person, whom I worked with from the start to the end of the study. He and I had three meetings and decided on a few things to help with the research. We agreed that a Participatory Action Committee needed to be formed to help with the research, with the possibility of some members ending up being members of the local peace committee. We also agreed that the two of us would be members of the PAC and the LPC, and my role would be secretarial. We agreed that we would work with members of the PAC and, drawing from the outcomes of the data collection process, identify an intervention to promote peace and reconciliation in the city. I proposed, and he agreed, that we purposively select those who would serve on the LPC. We drew up the criteria for inclusion on the LPC (listed below), the mandate of the LPC, and members of the LPC. The final list of criteria for selection on the LPC, the mandate of the LPC, and membership went through several refinings, adjustments, alignments, and realignments throughout the process to ensure that we arrived at the best way forward.

4.10 THE MANDATE OF THE LPC

As is said, “any road takes you there if you do not know where you are going. Conversely, a “specific route takes you there if you know where you are going”. We defined the qualities of the members of the LPC and drew up a precise term of reference for the LPC. The LPC was

established in the city as a local non-political mechanism on the ground, mandated to work to achieve the following:

- i. Addressing issues of particular local relevance and promoting peace.
- ii. Providing support to the implementation of an intervention that contributes to the peacefulness of the city and repairing broken social relations at the local level.
- iii. Establishing consensus amongst all relevant stakeholders on how to create the legitimate means to avoid conflicts
- iv. Offering a platform that allowed for inclusion and representative participation of all stakeholders, including the conflicting parties, and the ethnic and religious groups in the city.
- v. Enabling communication between former central characters in the conflict, thereby dealing with potentially unhelpful rumours, fear, mistrust. And
- vi. Preventing or containing violence through a strategy of joint planning for and the monitoring of possibly violent events.

The list provided above is an analytical summary of the research participants' views on the need for a mechanism to help implement an intervention.

The LPC became very important because it involved local people or citizens with a far better understanding of the conflict because of their proximity and familiarity with the situation. The members were people with the ability to contribute meaningfully to reducing various forms of violence or violent behaviour to create very secure environments for lasting peace and sustainable development. Hence, members of the LPC were to be drawn from the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo ethnic groups.

4.11 THE CRITERIA FOR BEING RECRUITED TO THE LPC

A decision was made to constitute an LPC to design and implement an intervention effectively. A set of criteria was agreed upon to proceed with recruiting committee members. It was then decided that for anyone to qualify to serve on the LPC, such person had to be:

- a) A reputable person who was respected by both the adults, women, and youth of the city.
- b) A wise, vocal, eloquent, visionary, and focused person.
- c) A person who commanded the attention and respect of others in the city (a person who talked and others listened, based on his or her character and integrity).
- d) A person who did what was right and good for communal harmony and was not a perpetrator and initiator of confusion or conflict.

- e) An honest and effective person who was action-oriented concerning peace and community development.
- f) A person who might have been involved in previous peacebuilding activities in the city and said people were trustworthy and reliable,
- g) An excellent and strong-hearted person whose opponents did not trigger them to react easily and unnecessarily.
- h) A person who did not easily forget discussions at peace assemblies and who always gave all the information discussed in those gatherings to the city without keeping any information to himself or herself.
- i) A trustworthy and truthful person who was not a societal deviant.

I used the qualities checklist and the ToR to consult on who would qualify to serve on the LPC voluntarily. The LPC and its work are discussed in chapter six, Planning and Implementing the Intervention. The table below presents the list of members of the LPC, excluding me as the secretary:

Table 0.10: Members of the Local Peace Committee

No	Name	Ethnicity	Position
1	Mr. Bob Emmanuel Paye	Mah	Chairperson
2	Rev. Thompson Q. Nyormie	Dan	Co-Chairperson-1
3	Madam Mayanda Kromah	Mandingo	Co-Chairperson-2
4	Mr. George Saye	Mah	Member
5	Mr. Opee K. Kanneh	Mandingo	Member
6	Mr. Blama Fully	Gola	Member

The list above, excluding the researcher/secretary, constitutes those whose names featured prominently in those singled out from the community to be helpful peacemakers. It is also a product of ethnic and gender sensitivities.

4.12 VALIDITY

Reliability and validity reduce the chances for a researcher to characterise a research work with biasness and guarantee that transparency is emphasised in qualitative research (Mohajan 2017: 2). Without reliability and validity, it is challenging to establish the results of errors on

hypothetical connections that are measured. Reliability is about ensuring the "consistency of a measure" (Price 2015: para 3), while validity is about the "extent to which the scores from a measure represent the variable they are intended to" (Price 2015: para 11). Heale and Twycross (2015: 66) have averred that validity is used to establish the level at which a concept is correctly measured. At the same time, reliability ensures the accuracy of the research instruments used in research. Because this research was qualitative, I used three data collection instruments: interview, focus group, and observation, to ensure triangulation, reliability and validity. Twycross argues that reliability and validity seek to answer whether the research instruments are useful in allowing the researcher to hit achieve their target concerning the research object. I determined validity by obtaining relevant answers to a series of questions and by looking for the answers in other research works. Reliability, as a key element in my research, was about ensuring a lack of biasness to make the findings of the research stable, repeatable, and consistent, thereby making them transparent. Validity was about ensuring that the research findings were realistic and truthful (Altheide and Johnson 1994, cited in Mohajan 2017: 1, 2; Bajpai and Bajpai 2014: 114). Reliability and validity were pursued and ensured to ensure that I did not introduce personal bias that impacted the research in manners and forms that would have undermined and rendered it questionable and unrealistic.

Inter-rater reliability and test-retest reliability were two methods of reliability that were utilised in this study. Mohajan (2017:13) and Middleton (2019) provide a clearer understanding and usefulness of inter-rater reliability and test-retest reliability. They postulate that inter-rater reliability is about an agreement on the same results or arriving at the same findings between several researchers who observe or measure the same situation. It is about unchanged results attained with a data collection tool when other observers use it. For its part, test-retest reliability concerns itself with evaluating the permanency of research results when one does an identical test on the unchanged sample at times that are not the same.

Creswell (2014: 201-202) advances the seven approaches below to make sure that findings are accurate, and that qualitative research is considered valid: triangulation, member checking, utilisation of descriptions, clarity of bias, negative/discrepant information, time in the field, use of peer debriefing, and use of an external auditor.

Table 0.11: Validity Exercises and Measures Put into Place to Ensure Validity

Validity exercises	The measure put into place to ensure validity
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Triangulation	To ensure triangulation, I utilised focus groups, interviews, and observations as sources of the research data to establish that emerging themes had their convergence derived from these data sources. These sources of data were carefully examined with the intent of establishing the consistency of the themes.
Member checking	To ensure the accuracy of a key finding and the related theme, I had to take the final report and definite observations and themes to the participants for us to agree on the contents.
Utilisation of descriptions	Explanations and descriptions were made of the data collected in the field as the study went on, according to the themes identified.
Clarity of bias	No level of historical, cultural, gender, and other biases were allowed to influence and impact the collected data or its findings, and an analysis was done to make sure that biases were minimised.
Negative/discrepant information	The data analysis addressed doubts and presented verifiable proof of what had been perceived as correct or the norm.
Time in the field	The fieldwork associated with this study spanned three years (2020-2022). During this period, I paid regular and periodic visits to Ganta City to engage with the research participants, who were quite helpful during the research.
Use of peer debriefing	A person with experience in peacebuilding reviewed this work to ensure validity and value addition.
Use of an external auditor	I engaged an external person with no connection and knowledge of the researcher and research to go through the work and bring fairness to the study. They had to try and assess and connect the aims and objectives of the research, as well as the data and research questions in relation to the entire research. Aspects of this study were made known to a few peers through peer-reviewed publications.

4.13 RELIABILITY

The study relied on internal validity and external validity as two validity methods. Internal validity was utilised to ensure that the research findings reflected reality rather than the outcomes of unnecessary variables. External validity ensured that the research findings' true reflections were accurately applicable across the research participants.

Using numerous instruments to collect data when studying a situation guarantees quality results and validates the finding generated therefrom. This research used interviews, focus groups, and observation as three useful and helpful data collection instruments. Using those instruments permitted adherence to the principle of triangulation that demands the use of not less than two

data sources to establish validity and reliability. The cardinal objectives of triangulation are to guarantee the truthfulness and replicability of the research findings when similar methods, approaches, and instruments are used to research similar issues.

I found four procedures very useful for assessing whether or not this qualitative research was reliable: checking the transcripts, retention of consistency of the codes, involvement of the team, and cross-checking (Creswell 2014: 203).

Table 0.12: Reliability Exercises and Measures put into Place to Ensure Reliability

Reliability Exercises	The Measure Put into Place to Ensure Reliability
Checking the transcripts	The transcripts were checked to ascertain if any errors had occurred at the point of initial transcription.
Retention of consistency of the codes	I made it my duty to go through the collected data carefully on a few occasions to establish that the issues and themes were constant.
Involvement of the team	Every time I visited Ganta, I engaged with the research participants and shared information with them to keep them involved in the research, as action research requires.
Cross-checking	Cross-checking was used in my research work as an essential element to ensure reliability. I cross-checked data to establish correctness.

4.14 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE RESEARCH APPROACH AND DESIGN

The study pursued an action research approach and a qualitative research design. There was meaningful participation by people knowledgeable about the situations in Ganta City before, during, and after the 2003 war. There was collective commitment and involvement by the research participants and I in assessing the issues, with the intent of understanding the problem(s) better and developing helpful solutions for the benefit of the citizens. Additionally, relationships among elements of the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo ethnic groups in Ganta were studied to understand their reactions to each other and their ways of life to help explain Ganta's reality. The use of everyday life experiences to explain the causes and effects of their relationships (Crompton 2015: 5) justified why the qualitative research design was necessary.

Focus groups, interviews, and observation proved to be very helpful in collecting qualitative data in the field and ensuring adherence to the triangulation principle. The truthfulness and replicability of these research findings will re-emerge when similar research is done using purposive sampling, an action research approach, and a qualitative research design, especially when using interviews, focus groups, and observation as the data collection tools. Those research instruments were useful in establishing the causes, nature, extent, and effects of the soured relationships among some elements of the three ethnic groups studied. I triangulated the data from the focus groups, interviews, and observations so as to increase the data's reliability and credibility. The instruments were well-designed when used for the data collection process and this helped ensure the reliability and validity of the research findings. The various sources also helped enhance the reliability and validity of the data and its analysis (Zohrabi 2013: 254). The useful and constructive points of view and ideas advanced by the research participants further increased the validity of this study. The participatory nature of the research added value to the study as it raised the level of reliability and validity. The significance of the participative approach of the study was that it allowed discussions showcasing diverse points of view to be held and for consensus to be reached to inform the research findings. I restated conversations to ensure the correct capturing of answers during the focus group discussions, and the participants confirmed the correctness. This process also added to the validity of the research findings.

4.15 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study relied significantly on collecting and analysing data. As the researcher, it was essential for me to speak to the ethical issues underpinning the collection and use of the data in the study. Paul (n.d.: 45) highlighted four basic principles pertaining to ethical considerations. They are beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy, and justice, and it is essential that they be observed when conducting research. Iphofen and Tolich (2018: 38-39) also identified beneficence, non-maleficence, and autonomy as vital, but included confidentiality and integrity. They did not include the principle of justice. I deemed it necessary to include all seven principles in my study, to ensure that my research met all of the qualities and requirements necessary for it to be ethnically sound.

1. Confidentiality: I ensured that the data collected from the research participants was kept confidential and inaccessible to those other than the research participants and the study supervisor.

2. Beneficence: I ensured that the research led to the improvement and advancement of the knowledge on the subject of the study.
3. Integrity: I remained very open to my research participants/respondents and was clear on issues pertaining to the study. There were no conflicts of interest (actual or potential) between myself and the participants/respondents.
4. Justice: Most importantly, I treated all participants fairly and equally, avoided discrimination, and embraced inclusivity.
5. Non-maleficence: I did not harm others and the study did not pose risks to the participants or create discomfort for them.
6. Respect for a person: I treated all my research participants with the respect they deserved. I sought and obtained their informed consent prior to the data gathering and provided them with detailed information about the purpose or objective, techniques, and outcome of the research. They were required to sign consent forms that indicated their full understanding of the entire process.

Consultations were held with all relevant persons, and the principles guiding the works were agreed upon before the research work commenced. All of the participants influenced the research process in one way or another, and I respected the wishes of those who did not want to participate in the research. Confidentiality is an essential ethical value to be upheld at all times during research. I thus accepted and took full responsibility for maintaining confidentiality during the research and all associated processes. I was very clear about the nature of the research work from the start and provided clarity on issues of personal interest and biases. Such clarity involved considering the opportunity for all participants to direct the research and own its outcomes. I also discussed publishing any part of the work with all of the participants, so that they were aware that this was an eventuality.

Letters of information and consent forms were drafted and provided to the participants. These stated the nature of the data needed, how they would be used, and how long they would be stored for. The information also included who would see the data and where it would be used. The participants' permissions to participate in the research were sought and obtained via signed consent forms. Data collection then commenced, and the data were analysed. Finally, I worked to offer a truthful reporting of the research results and made valid conclusions. The conclusions were derived firstly from the data and secondly by comparison to the relevant literature to collect realistic evidence during this study.

I had inception meetings to allow me entry into the city and freely and fruitfully engaged and interacted with the religious and ethnic communities. In the initial meetings, the research aims, objectives, design, approach, and methodologies were explained to those involved. Their consent was sought and obtained after they had gleaned a better understanding of the entire process. All those who participated were fully and adequately informed about the research, inclusive of confidentiality issues and other ethical concerns. The City Authority of Ganta was also informed, and a meeting was held to make clear, among other things, issues of confidentiality and ethics.

4.16 SUMMARY

This chapter described how action research was applied in Ganta City. The study combined action and the participation of the research participants drawn from communities in the city to promote learning and understanding to find a remedy(ies) to Ganta's communal problems and improve existing community relationships (Dick and Greenwood 2015: para 3). It involved social actors in the city understanding the underlying causes and effects of the land disputes. I made sense of and interpreted what had happened using a design and approach that were qualitative and participative, respectively. The research approach and design went a long way in helping me work with the research participants to get a better and more in-depth understanding of the issues. I reported and presented the issues in ways that represented the realities and advanced possible remedies. The approach involved participant observation in promoting social change while methodically studying actions, activities, and programmes based on intentional reflection (Lederach and Thapa 2018: 6). Hence, I used a qualitative research method with an action research (AR) approach to study the causes, nature, extent, and effects of the land disputes and relationship problems among some members of the three biggest ethnic groups in Ganta City, namely the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah. Focus groups, interviews, and observations were the instruments used to collect data and these were discussed. Reliability and validity were ensured as they were requirements for collecting and analysing the data. Official and unofficial meetings provided me with additional useful data. The formation, mandate, and selection criteria of the members of the PAC and LPC were discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE: EXPLORATION – DATA AND ANALYSIS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter commences with a discussion of my initial experiences during the fieldwork. The characteristics of those interviewed and those who participated in the focus group discussions were presented in the preceding chapter. This chapter discusses the themes that emerged from the majority of the views expressed during the eight focus group discussions and sixty interviews conducted in Ganta City during this study. The themes that emerged from the data answer the research questions around the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the inter-ethnic conflict in Ganta City. The themes establish the link, relevance, relationship, and complementarity between peacebuilding and development in Ganta City. The themes reveal that the city's peacebuilding objectives have to be met before the city's development objectives can be met.

The architecture, nature, and causes of the land conflicts in Ganta City are discussed. The issuance of 33 squatters' rights to private properties by the Ganta City Corporation between 2003 and 2005 created conflicts between the returning refugees and internally displaced people, who returned to discover their land occupied, and the squatters who claim to have the authorisation to be there. The situation outlining the roles of the war and the issuance of the squatters' rights are detailed. Information has been presented on the issue of the Mah's refusal to buy the land they are squatting on. Light has been thrown on how the Mandingoes might have acquired land in the city centre, especially after 1979. The information is presented and analysed in the context of the aftermath of the 1980 military coup that removed the Americo-Liberian oligarchy and installed the people's Redemption Council government.

Other issues identified during the study that have fanned the embers of the conflict are also set out. The key reasons identified and discussed are legal, political, economic, and inter-ethnic/religious marital disagreements. Additionally, the issuance of eminent domain on the Ganta Market land emerged as the basis for the disgruntlement of the Mandingo land claimants and this is discussed in detail in this chapter. Firstly, the eminent domain was declared without identifying the appropriate owners of the land. Secondly, no one was compensated justly for the land in this area because the owners were not identified. The Mandingo claimants feel that the eminent domain proclamation has denied them their rights to their land.

These conflicts and soured relationships have not taken place without consequences. The conflicts have had implications for the claimants, the occupants, investment and the city's economy, employment, acquisition of land in the city by the Mandingo ethnic group, and the resultant Mandingo community's improved cohesion. Additionally, some form of tribal discrimination appears to exist in the city. While the situation has impacted social activities in the city, it has also shaped how the people of the Mandingo ethnic group participate in the local politics of their electoral district, Electoral District #1. The Mandingo vote against the interests of the original Ganta Mah people who consider them to be foreigners. The issues of some of the city youth's involvement in mob violence and being violence-ready are discussed, as the re-education and reorientation of the city's youth emerged as a pressing imperative. The idea of the formation of a local peace committee emerged as popular. An LPC was formed, and its terms of reference were drawn up. The criteria of who should form part of it were defined and agreed upon, and they are laid out in this chapter.

5.2 INITIAL EXPERIENCES IN THE FIELDWORK

Here, I outline my experiences and work in the field in Ganta City. My first task was to identify influential persons in the city's Dan, Mah, and Mandingo communities. It was these key persons with whom I collaborated to draw up a list of people who had important knowledge about the land disputes in Ganta and the issues that had given birth to the strained relationships among some people of the ethnic groups named above. I held inception meetings with these people and outlined my research aims and objectives and the collaboration I sought in order to achieve the research outcomes. The city authority gave me their stamp of approval to proceed with the study. The heads of the Muslim and Christian communities were engaged. Their cooperation was solicited to facilitate the participation in the study of key and well-informed members of their communities with knowledge of the conflict situation in Ganta City. The leadership of the Mandingo community was engaged, and they expressed their willingness to participate in the research by seconding appropriate persons who were useful to the study. The leaders of the nine zones containing the twenty-six communities in Ganta City were engaged and informed about my study. The study area covered the communities in the Ganta City centre and the areas where the issue of the land disputes was prevalent. Neighbouring communities were excluded.

My initial entry into the field required meetings with key and influential leaders. I met with the City Mayor of Ganta, the head imam in Ganta, the head of the Mandingo ethnic group in Ganta,

and some key elders and members of the city's Dan and Mah ethnic groups. The interactions centred on introducing the research and soliciting their support to help me with my research.

The city authority of Ganta, the head of the Christian and Muslim communities, and well-informed elders of the Dan, Mah, and Mandingo ethnicities were helpful in the inception meetings. They were helpful in identifying my research participants in line with my research interest of talking to well-informed people about the situation in the city.

5.3 KEY THEMES EMERGING FROM THE RESPONSES TO THE INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

Appendix A of this work is the interview guide that I used in the field during the study. It presents 14 questions in 6 sections that were used during the interviews and led to the generation of the data discussed in this chapter. Appendix B is the focus group guide that was used. Based on the interview and focus group guides, responses were generated that were grouped into the themes developed and discussed in this data analysis section. While the detailed analyses follow, this table presents a summary of the themes that emerged. A few other issues emerged from the collected data that are not captured below, but they are discussed in the analysis section. They include the nature and the categories of the land disputes, the Mandingo community's cohesion, the city's youth involvement in mob violence, etc.

Table 0.1: Key Themes Emerging from the Responses to the Interview Questions and Focus Group Discussions

No	Question	Responses and themes that emerged from them	Interviews	Focus groups
1	The causes of the land disputes and strained relationships among some of the people in Ganta, and the major players involved.	The role played by the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups in the First Civil War (1997-1998) fighting for rebel and GoL forces.	11(18%)	7(16%)

		The role of the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups in the Second Civil War (1999-2003), especially the Ganta March 2003 War waged by the Mandingo-dominated LURD rebels.	19(32%)	14(31%)
		The issuance of squatters' rights on private land by the Ganta City Corporation.	10(17%)	9(21%)
		Political and other manipulations.	2(3%)	2(5%)
		The desire by the Dan and Mah to control the businesses in the city.	13(22%)	8(18%)
		Inter-ethnic marital concerns.	5(8%)	4(9%)

	The consequences or results of the conflicts in Ganta City (non-economic).	Fear of possible conflict among the three ethnic groups.	14(23%)	7(16%)
		The feeling of state-approved dispossession of the Mandingo by the declaration of eminent domain on the Ganta Market land without identification of and just compensation to landowners.	15(25%)	8(18%)
		Fear of selling land or renting houses to the Mandingo people.	6(10%)	5(11.4%)
		The Mandingoes were considered betrayers and non-Liberians.	10(17%)	12(27.3%)
3	The effects of the land disputes and soured relationships on the	The Dan and Mah people had taken over and dominated	32(53%)	20(45%)

	economic life and growth of Ganta.	the economic life of the city.		
		The Mandingo people had little role in the economic life of the city.	18(30%)	15(35%)
		Fear of losing investments in the city led to some people not investing more in the city.	10(17%)	9(2%)
4	If tribal, religious, or social discrimination existed in Ganta, what were the most common forms observed/experienced (exclusion, stereotype, or what)?	The Mah dominated employment in the city.	16(27%)	16(36.4%)
		The Mandingoes were excluded from political appointment and employment in the Ganta City Corporation.	21(35%)	12(27.3%)
		The Mandingoes were perceived as	20(33%)	11(25%)

		Guinean and thus as foreigners.		
		No tribal, religious, or social discrimination in Ganta.	3(5%)	5(11.4%)
6	The previous existence of local structures to resolve disputes among the citizens and what were the outcomes?	Peace committees of the First and Second Presidential Commissions	36(60%)	26(59%)
		The religious groups were involved in resolving local conflict.	26(40%)	18(41%)
7	The recommendations or best ways forward to solve the identified problems to foster lasting peace and sustainable development.	Setting up a local committee to help develop strategies to help solve the problems.	27(45%)	19(43%)
		Making use of the local capacities for peace to help build peace.	13(22%)	14(32%)

		Working with the young people to help build a new generation of citizens to accept living together peacefully.	20(33%)	11(25%)
	Other Consequences		Interviews	Focus groups
		Mandingoes' opposition to traditional Ganta Mah citizens in the race for the position of Representative of District # 1	9(representing 45%) of the 20 Mandingoes interviewed.	7 (representing 87.5%) of the eight Mandingoes.
		Lack of confidence in the courts to solve the problems.	11(55%) of the 20 Mandingoes interviewed.	5(62.5%) of the eight Mandingoes.

5.4 SUMMARY OF MY OBSERVATIONS DURING THE STUDY

I observed a few things during my engagement in the field. They have been summarised and captured below. Their analysis runs through this section to reinforce the points. These observations were made during visits to the markets, entertainment centres, shops, stores, garages, community and women's meetings, school programmes, churches, mosques, tea shops, and intellectual centres.

Table 0.2: Key Observations in the Field

No.	Core observation focus of the study	What I took note of during observation	Realities observed
1	Verbal behaviour and communication	The ethnic language that was spoken during an interaction; the tone of voice as persons interacted verbally; who began the interaction; who related to whom.	<p>Mandingo</p> <p>The Mandingo people spoke their Mandingo as they interacted with each other. They only spoke English when interacting with those from the Dan and Mah ethnic groups. In a few instances, they spoke Dan or Mah to the Dan or Mah person or persons they interacted with. It showed that they applied efforts to learn and speak Dan and Mah, as opposed to their Dan and Mah compatriots who appeared to apply little or no effort to learn and speak Mandingo. They interacted with each other easily and freely.</p> <p>Dan and Mah</p> <p>They interacted freely with each other as opposed to how they interacted with their Mandingo compatriots. Interestingly, they gelled when it came to their approach toward their Mandingo compatriots. But when it came to just two of them, they appeared to see and treat each other through their tribal lenses. The Dan people spoke Dan, and the Mah spoke Mah as they interacted. In some cases, Dan and Mah spoke in each other's languages as they interacted and understood each other. Others spoke English.</p> <p>Generally</p> <p>English was spoken more when those from the three groups interacted with each other.</p>
2	Personal space	The closeness of people to each other as they stood.	<p>The Mandingoes interacted with each other freely and happily, especially by allowing each other into their close spaces as opposed to when interacting with those from the Dan and Mah ethnic groups of different religious values and beliefs. The Dan and Mah allowed each other into their spaces without conscious thought. They did not appear comfortable allowing the same space for those from the Mandingo ethnic group, who themselves did not appear to want to enter their personal spaces.</p> <p>Generally, the Mandingoes stood close to each other as they interacted. They kept a good distance as they interacted with the Dan and Mah people. The Dan and Mah kept a good space as they interacted with the Mandingo people, as opposed to when interacting with each other.</p>
3	Bodily behaviour and gestures	What one did, who did it, who interacted with whom, and who did not interact with whom.	The Mandingoes interacted with each other freely and happily as opposed to when interacting with those from the Dan and Mah ethnic groups of different religious values and beliefs.
4	Human movement	At the observation location, I paid attention to those that	The Dan and Mah people spent time interacting with each other. They did not interact with the Mandingo

		entered, left, and spent time there.	people in the same manner. The people of the Mandingo ethnic group spent more time together, mostly living in the same communities and worshipping at the same mosques.
5	Appearance or look	Age, clothing, gender, and physical appearance.	<p>Mandingo/Muslim</p> <p>They wore their traditional Muslim hats (for men) and head scarves (for women). On Fridays, their Muslim gowns, dresses, hats, and head scarves dominated their dress code as they attended worship services at the mosques. The mothers, fathers, and young girls wore those clothes, while most boys and men in shops and other places wore jeans and T-shirts. The ladies (girls and women) wore long dresses and lappas that ended far below their knees.</p> <p>Dan and Mah/Christian</p> <p>The Dan and Mah considered themselves Christians, even those who did not go to church regularly. The religious belief ascribed to them here represented what they considered themselves to be. They wore suits to attend their regular Sunday church services, offices, and businesses. They wore jeans and T-shirts more often than their Mandingo compatriots. The young boys and girls wore fashionable jeans and T-shirts more often than their Mandingo compatriots. The older women and men wore traditional and other suits.</p>

5.5 AN ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

During my study, I interviewed 40 males (representing 73% of the interviewees) and 16 females (representing 27% of the interviewees). The ages of those interviewed ranged from 20 to 70 years. While it was true that Ganta contained three major ethnic groups that had poor relationships, it was also true that other ethnic groups lived there. Hence, the interview covered people from these eleven tribes: Bassa, Congo/Americo-Liberian, Dan, Fula, Kissi, Kpelleh, Kru, Krahn, Mandingo, and Mah. The interviewees were purposively selected based on their knowledge of the situation under study. Please see below the detailed characteristics of those interviewed.

Table 0.3: Characteristics of those Interviewed

	Characteristics	Number	Percentage
Sex	Male	44	73%

	Female	16	27%
Age at interview	20-30	6	10%
	30-40	17	28%
	40-50	16	27%
	50-60	20	33%
	60-70	1	2%
Ethnicity	Dan	9	15%
	Mandingo	20	33%
	Mah	20	33%
	Krahn	1	2%
	Congo/Americo-Liberian	2	3%
	Fula	3	5%
	Bassa	1	2%
	Kissi	1	2%
	Kpelleh	1	2%
	Kru	1	2%
	Gbandi	1	2%

5.6 AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

During my study, I held eight focus groups. Twenty males (representing 60%) and 17 females (representing 40%) participated. The ages of those interviewed ranged from 20 to 75 years. While it was true that Ganta had three major ethnic groups that had a soured relationship, it was also true that other ethnic groups lived there. Hence, the focus groups covered people from these seven tribes: Dan, Fula, Krahn, Lorma Mandingo, Mah, and Via. The participants in the eight focus groups were purposively selected based on their knowledge of the situation under study. Please see below the detailed characteristics of the participants in the focus groups.

Table 0.4: Characteristics of those who Participated in the Focus Group Discussions

	Characteristics	Number	Percentage
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Sex	Male	26	60%
	Female	17	40%
Age	20-30	2	5%
	30-40	12	28%
	40-50	6	14%
	50-60	14	33%
	60-75	9	21%
Ethnicity	Dan	12	28%
	Mandingo	9	21%
	Mah	16	37%
	Krahn	2	5%
	Lorma	1	2%
	Fula	1	2%
	Vai	2	5%

5.7 THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE LAND CONFLICT IN GANTA CITY

Every conflict has several constituent characteristics: the issue(s), the actors, the ideology, the cycle, the mode, the cost, and the context. In Ganta, this research discovered that the issue that led to the strained or soured relationships among some members of the Mah and Mandingo ethnic groups had to do with a disagreement between claimants and occupants over land ownership. The key actors were mainly some members of the Mah and Mandingo ethnic groups in the city who laid claims and counterclaims on parcels of land along and in the environment of the Ganta Main Street. After the end of the Second Liberian Civil War in 2003, some members of the Dan ethnic group who were given squatters' rights to properties sided with some members of the Mah ethnic group who did not want a return of the Mandingo people. As time passed, many Dan people who realised that they could not continue to hold on to the parcels of land on which they squatted and who could not remain there under threat ended up negotiating with the proper owners. The number of Dan people involved in land disputes was thus reduced, although none who had returned the land were easily identified.

An ideology underpinned the land conflicts and drove their continuation: some Dan and Mah people of Ganta believed that the Mandingo people were not Nimbaians and Liberians (Respondent 021, Interview, Ganta, 2021). The feeling was that they should return to their "home in Guinea" and acquire land and stay there. Contrary to this belief, the Mandingo were one of Liberia's 16 ethnic groups (Konneh 2013, cited in Barcelo and Jabateh 2022: 3). That ideology led to some people of the Mah ethnic group refusing to relinquish the parcels of land they encroached upon, if not occupied entirely. Ganta City was the conflict context in which the post-conflict land disputes existed since the end of the March 2003 Ganta battle between the rebel forces of LURD and those of the Government of Liberia. Regarding the conflict cycle: the people from the three ethnic groups participated on opposing sides in the Liberian civil wars. During the process, properties were destroyed or seized, and parcels of land occupied.

Two ad hoc presidential commissions applied efforts to resolve the conflicts. Some of the disputed parcels of land remained occupied, while others were returned to their original owners after mediatory interventions by various groups. The conflict manifested in the occupation of the parcels of land, and in threats by the "owners" of the land to remove the alleged "illegal occupants". This heightened tension and disgruntlement in the city for a protracted period. The cost of the conflict had not been quantified in terms of dollars and cents and the loss of lives. Some lost or relinquished their properties to occupants due to occupancies or negotiations, while others lost their properties and had no hope of reclaiming them owing to technicalities: they could not find their titles to the land as they had been lost during the wars. Those who saw their parcels of land as being something that symbolised their identity as community members lost said identity when their land was lost to them. The city's economic development was not as it should be. Merchants and businesspeople of the Dan and Mah ethnic groups dominated the competition and commerce in the city centre. The Mandingoes operated on the periphery of the business environment.

5.8 THE GANTA MAIN STREET BEFORE THE FIRST AND SECOND WARS

It was established from the first, third, fifth, and seventh focus groups that participated that before the 14-year civil war, especially pre-1980, the commercial centre of Ganta, popularly known as Ganta Main Street, was undisputedly operated, run, and dominated by people of the Mandingo group. They operated stores, shops, gas/petrol stations, garages, warehouses, and

other commercial facilities. Respondent 003, Respondent 009, Respondent 012, Respondent 017, Respondent 021, Respondent 027, Respondent 030, Respondent 045, and Respondent 054 agreed that the parcels of land along the Ganta Main Street were previously occupied by the Mandingo merchants, or by the Congo/Americo-Liberian elites who had migrated to the central province of Liberia on government assignments. They fled Ganta, mainly after the 1980 military coup that removed President William R. Tolbert from power and sold their assets (including land) to the buyer(s) available (Respondent 003, Focus Group 3, Ganta, 2021). The dominant group in Ganta was the Mahn/Mah people: peasant farmers with meagre incomes and earnings. The minority Mandingo people controlled the mining and commercial transport sectors and other businesses. Owing to the economic status of the Mandingo people, they dominated their counterparts, the Mah people. They succeeded in purchasing most, if not all, of the properties on sale. Consequent to that, the Mandingo merchants owned and operated the main street area in Ganta for commercial or business purposes, without any of the challenges antecedent to the commencement of the First Liberian Civil War in 1989 (Blair 2019: 373; Steele 2019:1).

5.9 THE CAUSES OF THE LAND DISPUTES IN GANTA CITY

5.9.1 The Role of the First and Second Liberian Civil Wars in the Ganta Land Disputes

Eleven (representing 18%) of those interviewed and seven (representing 16%) who participated in the focus groups felt that fighting for rebel forces by the Dan and Mah elements and supporting and fighting for the GoL forces by the Mandingo elements during the First Civil War (1998-1997) played a role in souring the relationships among these ethnic groups in Ganta. Nineteen (representing 32%) of those interviewed and fourteen persons (representing 31%) who participated in the focus groups held the thought that the role of the Mandingo-dominated LURD rebel group in the Ganta War of March 2003 and the roles of the Dan and Mah in the GoL forces' recapture of the city played a significant role in the land disputes and soured relationships in the city.

The Mah and Dan/Gio people mostly ascribed to Christianity or the African tradition, while the Mandingo people were Muslims. Before the war, other ethnic groups in Ganta associated the Muslim religion with the Mandingo ethnic group. They called it the "Mandingo religion" because most, if not all, of the Muslims in Ganta were of the Mandingo ethnic group. Then came the 1989 civil crisis when the late President Doe singled the Mah and Dan ethnic groups

out as his prime targets for annihilation in pursuit of his desperate desire to cling to power. Much to the surprise of the Mah and Dan ethnic groups under threat from the political establishment, the Mandingo people, who lived and enjoyed marriage with the Mah and Dan's daughters and had excellent relationships, pledged their loyalty to the Government of President Samuel Kanyon Doe. They contend that religious beliefs and practices dictate that God destines leaders, and no man must oppose them (Respondent 004, Focus Group 2, 2021). The Dan/Gio and Mah ethnic groups construed this pledge of loyalty as an act of betrayal that was not worthy of forgiveness.

During the First Liberian Civil War (1989-1997), Weah (2019: 165) states that the Dan and Mah people were targeted and killed by former President Samuel K. Doe's soldiers, who favoured Mandingoes. The Dan and Mah people not only branded the Mandingoes as bystanders when they were being slaughtered but also declared them betrayers and enemies who supported Doe, an ethnic Krahn. Hence, the NPFL and INPFL, dominated by the Dan and Mah ethnic groups, hunted and killed Mandingoes in and out of Nimba County. The Doe regime depended on the economic power of the Mandingo people before the war, and he also looked to them for both economic and manpower support during the war (Identity and Area, 2016: 266). As the war continued, elements from all sides saw each other as targets for elimination. Then came the Second Liberian Civil War (1999-2003). The Dan and Mah people, some of whom had 'captured' and occupied Mandingo properties after the first civil war, blamed their Mandingo compatriots for Ganta City's destruction in March 2003 by the LURD rebel forces (predominantly Mandingoes). The land conflict became pronounced when the 2003 war ended, and Mayor Tensonnon distributed Mandingoes' "properties to Mah and Gio civilians and ex-combatants" (Zanker, Simons and Mehler 2015: 85).

5.10 CONTRIBUTION OF THE GANTA CITY AUTHORITY TO THE LAND DISPUTES

The claimants repeatedly raised the issue of the illegal issuance of squatter's rights to their land as the basis for the land conflicts. Ten persons (representing 17%) interviewed and nine persons (representing 21%) who participated in the focus groups thought that the issuance of the squatters' rights to private land by the former City Mayor, Madam Nohn T. Tensonnon, contributed to the land disputes. It soured the relationship between the Mandingo on the one hand, and the Dan and Mah on the other hand. Zanker, Simons and Mehler (2015: 85) confirm

the accusation against former Mayor Tensonnon: "The first mayor in post-war Ganta, appointed by the notorious General Peanut Butter who later became Senator Adolphus Dolo, allegedly exacerbated the land conflict by distributing properties to Mah and Gio civilians and ex-combatants". According to the *Report of the First Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba's Land and Properties Dispute* (Johnson 2008: 7), 26 squatters' rights were issued in 2004 by the Ganta City Authority, immediately after the 2003 war that devastated Ganta City. An additional five were issued in 2005. The issuance dates and amounts paid to and received by the city authority for the two squatters' rights remain unknown. Quite interesting, in terms of money, is that 24 of the 26 squatters' rights were issued for 13,900.00LD, which is worth less than \$100.00 US currently. Views from the interviews and focus groups indicated that the reason for the issuance of the squatters' rights was not for monetary gain. The action was intended to do away with or undermine the return of the Mandingoes, who the Dan and Mah compatriots blamed for destroying the city after the Ganta War. Please see below the details of the squatters' rights issued from 2004 to 2005 by the Ganta City Mayor, Madam Nohn T. Tensonnon, General Peanuts Butter's "operative".

Table 0.5: List of People that the Ganta City Authority gave Squatters' Rights to from 2004 to 2005

No.	Name	Amount Paid	Date Sold	Location
1	Sam Kollie	\$500.00LD	1/20/04	Main Street
2	Emmanuel Nani	500.00LD	2/4/04	Main Street
3	Henretta Mantor	500.00LD	2/4/04	Old Mkt. Street
4	Bill T. Tensonnon	500.00LD	2/5/04	Main Street
5	Marie Mesuop	500.00LD	2/5/04	Behind Okar Garage
6	Nyee N. Blegay	500.00LD	10/2/04	Saclepea road
7	Jesus Never fails Business Center	500.00LD	10/2/04	Saclepea Road
8	Amos T. Sonkarlay	500.00LD	2/10/04	Main Street
9	Peter Constant	500.00LD	3/3/04	Towel Town
10	Wilfred Gwaikolo	500.00LD	3/3/04	Sackepea Road
11	Albert T. Martin	500.00LD	4/3/04	Main Street
12	JB Original B/C	500.00LD	4/28/04	Saclepea Road
13	Henry Port	500.00LD	4/29/04	Main Street
14	Leatee Z. Troah	500.00LD	4/29/04	People Street
15	Obeto B. Saywah	500.00LD	4/29/04	People Street
16	James Watson L. Loyd	500.00LD	5/03/05	Saclepea Parking
17	De-ke-ta B/center	500.00LD	5/18/05	Main Street
18	Jacob Toe	500.00LD	5/04/05	Yini School Street

19	God Grace B/Center	500.00LD	5/6/05	Main Street
20	Wingus Business Center	150.00LD	5/07/04	Main Street
21	Oldman Paygermed. Store	150.00LD	6/3/04	Saclepea road
22	Prince S. Menah	500.00LD	6/4/04	Main Street
23	Mr. Beone Walker	500.00LD	6/12/04	Unknown
24	His Grace B/Center	150.00LD	5/12/05	Main Street
25	Mr. Suah	500.00LD	6/16/04	Yini School Street
26	Allison Zarwolo	150.00LD	6/14/04	Old Mkt. Street
27	Jeremiah Koom/Prophet Bus	1,000.00LD	6/15/04	Main Street
28	Dune	300.00LD	6/15/04	Tobacco Street
29	Arthur B/Center	200.00LD	6/15/04	Main Street
30	Borbor Nyumah B/Center	300.00LD	6/15/04	Main Street
31	JJ Brothers B/Center	500.00LD	6/15/04	Main Street
32	Samuel S. Zonie	-	-	-
33	Peter Doroyazea	-	-	-
	Total amount	13,900. LD	-	-

Source: Johnson (2008: 7)

What remains missing on the list is that the City Mayor's office did not identify whose parcels of land these squatters were given. The right to squat became problematic as some, if not most of the squatters, found themselves in the middle of the land dispute that subsequently engulfed the city. The issuance of these rights for parcels of land that did not belong to the city corporation has proven problematic and a significant contributing factor to the land dispute in the city, especially along the Ganta Main Street. Squatters' rights should have been issued for public land, not privately-owned land parcels. The city corporation made itself a significant party to the land disputes and created problems with these issuances. The role of the city authority has given the claimants the belief that the action was deliberate and well-calculated to deny them their return to the city. One of the claimants said:

When we approached the former city mayor, Nohn T. *Tensonnon*, to help solve her created problems, she expressed her willingness to help find solutions. We went to her on plenty of occasions, and she said the same thing repeatedly. Sometimes, when she used to see us going to her house, she would hide from us. Besides saying she would help, she unfortunately showed little or no real interest in getting her squatters removed from the places she had temporarily given them. That has been so frustrating. When officials are seen acting lawlessly, the citizens

follow. Thank God that some of the people on the land have now seen reasons to talk to us (Respondent 006, Interview, Ganta, 2021).

The City Corporation of Ganta, under Mayor. Tensonnon, issued the 33 squatters' rights to people to occupy private land that was predominantly the property of returning Mandingo refugees. The returning Mandingos wanted their land back but could reclaim it easily in the early stages after the war. Many of the squatters declared that they had a legal right to the land so could stay there legally as the city authority had given them the right to do so.

Most squatters initially created little or no room to discuss the matter with the claimants. What was quite disappointing was that once the claimants returned, the city corporation that had given their land away made no genuine efforts to compel or help the squatters to see reason and have discussions with the claimants. The "build there, nobody will remove you" assurances given to the squatters developed within them the mindset not to countenance any conversations with anyone calling himself/herself a claimant (Respondent 001, Focus Group 2, Ganta, 2021). The embarrassing difficulty faced by the city corporation was that it could not then return to the same squatters to retrieve the land which they had invested in and improved on. The city corporation gave "build there; nobody will remove you" assurances to the squatters who then proceeded to develop the plots of land without realising that they might subsequently be asked to leave by a private citizen (former owner/claimant). The assurances given to the squatters led some to build valuable and durable structures that they could not afford and did not want to part with.

Later, when the squatters realised that they were living and operating on the land precariously, most finally began negotiating with the claimants, since protection from the city authority was nowhere to be found. The negotiations were finalised, and leases and other agreements overcame the embarrassment. The Ganta City Mayor's office thus contributed to the land disputes in the city. Even today, the current City Mayor, Amos N. G. Suah, is one of those with whom some claimants have a historical and unresolved land dispute.

5.11 THE MAH'S REFUSAL TO BUY LAND AND THE STORY OF THE MANDINGOES' ACQUISITION OF LAND IN GANTA

Respondents 031 and 045 indicated that some of the people of the Mah ethnic group had little interest in buying the land they had been living on. Respondent 019 said that he and others had

grown up seeing their ancestors on the land. As such, they were not moved to subject themselves to the cumbersome process of buying land from the Government of Liberia after land in the country was declared public in the 1950s. Many accounts during the study provided details of the declaration of the land as public in Liberia. They indicated how Ganta's Mah and Dan citizens refused to obey this declaration and to buy their inherited land from the Government of Liberia. It was discovered that the people of Ganta had historically seen themselves as owners of their land, so were not prepared to buy the land they had inherited from their forefathers after it was declared public. Antecedent to Ganta being declared a city, most of its residents were the Mah people; the original inhabitants of the community-turned-city (Respondent 052 Interview, Ganta, 2021).

Like any other group of people across Liberia, the Mah people received the news from Monrovia that the Government of Liberia had declared all parcels of land within the parameters of Liberia public. They were informed that the government had developed specific processes or procedures to provide titles to the land they had an interest in or occupied. The news and governmental directive did not sit well with the Mah people of Ganta. In the interviews and focus group discussions it was revealed that the Mah people refused to accept that they had to buy their land from the government. For the Mah people, the pieces of land they were situated on and their farming activities were theirs by traditional inheritance, so they saw no reason to buy their own land from a government in Monrovia. For instance, Respondent 045 stated that Chief Gbatu (after whom a quarter in Ganta City, known as Gbatu Quarter, is named) had not been able to influence his people to accept the idea of buying their land from the GoL. Buying land and obtaining title deeds for it from the GoL thus never became a popular idea and was rejected by the local people.

This perception explained why some Mah people in Ganta refused to buy land that they perceived and understood to be theirs by inheritance, and they refused to submit to government declarations and regulations to buy the land. Liberian government officials, Americo-Liberians (known in the community as Congo people), were sent from Monrovia to Ganta to administer political-administrative authority. When they arrived in Ganta they allocated land to themselves and to those they favoured. Respondent 009 provided information on this:

There was a time when President William Tubman or President William Tolbert sent officials of government from Monrovia to come here and work. Those Congo people did not buy the land from the owners of the land, our fathers and forefathers, or from us, their children. The

real owners of the land in the Ganta area are the Mah people. This Bain-Garr Administrative District that Ganta is located in is in a statutory district called Sanniquellie-Mah. The 'Mah' that is at the end of the name of the statutory district represents and means Mah. So, this whole place here is for us, the Mah or Mah people. At one point or another, the presidents in Monrovia sent their people here who gave land to themselves. Some were land commissioners or county surveyors who gave themselves, their friends, and relatives land to make their farms and build their houses. They used their positions to decide on who got land. They surveyed some parcels of land; the presidents gave them the land by signing the deeds in their names. This kind of process made some Americo-Liberians or Congo people become legitimate owners of the land in Ganta here, where they do not come from. Because our Mah parents did not have that kind of connection, they refused to buy land from the Congo people they saw as strangers (Respondent 009, Interview, Ganta, 2021).

The slowdown in economic activities in the 1970s and the 1980 military coup dislodged the Americo-Liberians from power in Liberia. The coup effectively undercut their political authority nearly everywhere in Liberia. It left those in Ganta with little or no alternative but to leave the hinterland and go to Monrovia for safety. As indicated earlier, they quickly sold and smoothly transferred ownership and deeds of their land to their Mandingo economic partners. For business reasons, the Mandingo merchants maintained long-standing relationships with the Americo-Liberians in Ganta. With this arrangement and special relationship, the Mandingoes acquired strategic pieces of land in central Ganta.

5.12 SOME MAHS' REACTIONS TO MANDINGOES' OWNERSHIP OF GANTA MAIN STREET

Respondents 027, 031, 047, and 054 indicated that some Mah people refused to buy parcels of land. However, they later saw the Mandingo people replacing the Americo-Liberians or Congo elites at strategic spots in the city, which they did not take kindly to. The respondents furthered that some Mahs felt that the land was still theirs as they had not seen their forefathers sell the land to the Americo-Liberians or Congo elites. Realising that the parcels of land were no longer theirs, they were left upset and angered. They wanted to reclaim "their land", and the opportunity to do so arose during the 2003 War when the Mandingo people left Ganta altogether for fear of annihilation. The Mah returned to the land they viewed as rightfully and

traditionally theirs, and the squatters' rights issued to them by former Mayor Tensonnon gave their possession of the Mandingoes' land legitimacy.

5.13 MANDINGOES' CITIZENSHIP QUESTIONED

Even though the Mandingo people are Liberians, one of Liberia's 16 official ethnic groups, they are considered foreigners by some people in the city. Ten persons (representing 17%) interviewed, and twelve persons (representing 27.3%) who partook in the focus groups considered the Mandingoes betrayers and non-Liberians (foreigners). This was predominantly the viewpoint of the Mah people who believed that the Mandingo people had used their connections to Americo-Liberians (Congo officials) to gain possession of their land without their knowledge. The major issue confronting the Ganta Mandingoes was the belief held by some citizens of the city that they (Mandingoes) were not Liberian. Twenty of those interviewed (representing 33%) and eleven who partook in the focus groups (representing 25%) held onto the perception that the Mandingoes were Guinean and thus foreigners. As such, the Mandingoes did not have what was required to claim, occupy and own land in the city/country, namely citizenship, and the people of Ganta wanted them to leave and go back to “their homeland” of Guinea. The false belief of the non-citizenship of the Mandingo people resulted in some of the citizens and residents of Ganta feeling and thinking that the Mandingo people were thus not entitled to land in the city. This belief informed their decisions to encroach on and illegally possess the Mandingoes' land during and after the Liberian Civil Wars.

To make matters worse for the Mandingoes, Senator Prince Johnson, a prominent senator in the country whom many Dan and Mah people believed, sided with these two tribes against the Mandingoes. He constructed his political career on the rhetoric that the Mandingos were foreigners and should thus not be allowed to own land in Liberia. He also claimed that the Gios and Mahs owed their freedom to him as his forces had executed Samuel Doe (Weah 2019: 165). This was possibly why the senator did not want Mandingoes to be employed by the Ganta City Corporation (government). Twenty of those interviewed (representing 35%) and twelve focus group participants (representing 27.3%) mentioned that the Mandingoes were excluded from political appointment and employment in the Ganta City Corporation. Contrary to Senator Johnson's belief and assertion that the Mandingoes were foreigners, Weah (2019) avers that after the collapse of the Sudanese Empire, the Dan, the Mahs (land tilling agriculturists), and the Mandingoes ('economic nomads' because of their life of trade and commerce) migrated to

the place and space called Liberia today (ibid). The three ethnic groups are part of the Mande ethnolinguistic group of Liberia. The Dan and Mahs are believed to have migrated to the area in the 14th and 15th centuries. The Mandingoes are believed to have migrated to Nimba County in the 19th century to pursue trade and commercial opportunities and met their compatriots there (ibid). The Mandingoes built and maintained special relationships and alliances with power holders (Americo-Liberians or Congos) to protect their rights as citizens because the local citizens of the community questioned it.

5.14 THE POLITICAL AND OTHER REASONS BEHIND THE LAND DISPUTES AND THEIR CONTINUATION

Two persons (representing 3%) of those interviewed and two persons (representing 5%) of those who partook in the focus groups believed that political and other manipulations had played their roles in the land disputes and soured the relationships among some people of the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups in the city. Initially, the land-grabbing was thought to be the Mah people's way of expressing their disapproval of the Mandingo returning to settle with them in places that had been destroyed by the LURD forces, as these forces had been comprised predominantly of people of the Mandingo ethnic group.

According to Respondents 008, 013, and 0027, when the occupied land became profitable for the occupiers, some of them schemed with Dan and Mah judicial workers to consolidate their occupancy. They plotted and executed their plans with the support of court officials and politicians. These politicians, whose interest was in getting the support/votes of the majority (Mah and Dan/Gio) in Ganta, began secretly giving their support to the Mah and Dan land occupants for selfish political reasons. For instance, the influential Senator Prince Johnson, the most powerful political actor in Nimba County, and whose political career was anchored on the ethno-nationalism of divisive rhetoric, declared that the Mandingoes were foreigners and, therefore, should not own land (Weah 2019: 165). This encouraged some of the illegal occupants to proceed as they had been doing to ensure that the claimants could not regain access to their land. The illegal land occupants (Mah and Dan) were supported in laying claim to their occupied parcels of land, using fabricated stories that the land was not legally owned by the Mandingoes as their forefathers had not sold them the land. They claimed that their forefathers had only allowed the Mah and Dan to squat on the land, and no proper legal

acquisition procedures had taken place. They sought to undo all prior arrangements that had led to the Mandingoes owning those parcels of land.

Because of the political manipulations and the Mandingoes' frantic efforts to reclaim their land through the courts being blocked by the tribal conspiracy against them, the Mandingo people became very angry. This situation thus transformed the peace in Ganta into cold peace. Herbert (2014:13) contends that the "formal justice system is seen by some to be a tool of the political and economic elite to control the population". Additionally, Weah (2019: 154) states that over 50 per cent of the Liberian population does not trust the courts of the Republic (Supreme and Magisterial Courts), the police, the legislature, or the local government. According to Herbert (2014: 11), it is the general practice in Liberia (with Ganta as no exception) for ethnic networks to control access to local resources, financial and job opportunities, education, and justice services, to the disadvantage of the smaller ethnic and spiritual groups. The lack of trust in the judicial system, combined with the frustration that the Mandingoes experienced in the courts, led them to becoming open to other options for communal peacebuilding.

5.15 THE ECONOMIC REASONS BEHIND THE SOUR RELATIONSHIPS AND LAND POST-CONFLICTS IN GANTA

Thirteen persons (representing 22%) of those interviewed and eight (representing 18%) who partook in the focus groups believed that the Dan and Mah's desire to control the city's businesses played a role in the land disputes. The desire soured relationships among some people of the city's Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups. Thirty-two respondents to the interview questions (representing 53%) and twenty focus group participants (representing 45%) indicated that the Dan and Mah people had taken over and were dominating the commerce and economy of the city.

Ganta's status as the commercial hub in the county of Nimba gained more traction, and the city attracted more people from rural Nimba and other parts of Liberia. Commercial centres in the city, especially Ganta Main Street and Ganta Saclepea Road, thus became areas of interest for commercial purposes, and the occupants of the land in these areas did not want to leave. Most non-Mah occupants entered into long-term lease agreements with the claimants (Respondent 055, Interview, Ganta, 2021). That became the easiest way for the claimants to re-establish ownership of their land that had been given out by the city authority to the occupants for

squatting purposes. By signing leases, the occupants recognised the claimants as the legal owners of the land. Upon expiring of those leases, the land will be returned to the claimants.

The land disputes in Ganta have evolved into an economic revolution. Some of the original property owners languished in abject poverty in refugee camps elsewhere, and the occupants were accruing huge profits at the expense of keeping the original owners away from their properties. Before the conflict, those in possession of the land and properties in contention were low-income earners, if not poor people. By taking over these properties, they were able to improve their economic circumstances and did not want to return to their former circumstances as subsistence farmers or earning low wages.

The Mandingo people led, controlled, and dominated the trade and commerce of Ganta until the civil war (Respondent 058, Interview, Ganta, 2021). They did not return to the city for many years after the war ended, and their prolonged absence for security reasons paved the way for the situation that led to the Dan and Mah's dominance of the businesses in the city. When the Mandingo ethnic group dominated the trade, they promoted cross-border trade in kola nuts, coffee, cocoa beans, kerosene peanuts, beans, and transportation. Today, the situation has changed as the Dan and Mah dominate these businesses. Additionally, some Dan and Mah now own and operate most, if not all, of the hotels, motels, nightclubs, restaurants, bars, entertainment centres, general merchandise stores, and the majority of the shops that supply the schools. The change in the situation has now essentially confined the Mandingoes to a few tea shops, garages, schools, and provision shops.

Currently, many (citizens and non-citizens alike) have inordinate desires to access and maintain land on Ganta Main Street as properties like warehouses, shops, stores, and other commercial buildings generate enormous economic benefits. Hence, the economic benefits associated with owning land on the main streets of Ganta have contributed to the land disputes in another way. The fear held by a few of the Mah people of losing economic control and the benefits they have been accruing from the occupied land remains the key reason they cannot let the land go easily. The city would grow faster if everybody could participate freely in the competition in the economy. As it stands, some of the Dan and Mah ethnic group's members dominate the commerce, while the Mandingoes remain and operate on the periphery or margins of the city's commerce.

5.16 THE ROLE OF INTER-ETHNIC/RELIGIOUS MARITAL DISAGREEMENT IN THE CONFLICTS/STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS

Five (representing 8%) of those interviewed and four (representing 9%) of those who partook in the focus groups held onto the thought that inter-ethnic marital concerns had played their parts in the land disputes and soured relationships. The issue of inter-religious marriage came out as one of the issues that have contributed to some form of discontent in the relationships among the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah people of Ganta City. Some Dan and Mah contend that they allow their sisters and daughters to marry Mandingo men, while the Mandingo do not allow their women to marry men from the Dan and Mah groups. This situation is not new as it existed long before the wars, however, the Dan and Mah contend that it is an act by the Mandingo ethnic group to look down upon them. The Mandingoes contend that it is not religiously and culturally permissible for their children, especially girls, to marry people who are not of the Islamic faith. This misunderstanding represents a clash of religious interests that have become a source of conflict. It confirms Weah's (2019: 165) statement that:

Socially, Mandingo men married into Gio and Mah households. However, Gio and Mah men were not permitted to marry into Mandingo households because of a restriction posed by Islam: non-Muslims could not marry into Islamic households. Children born unto Gio and Mah women in Mandingo households would be raised primarily in the Mandingo patrilineal system, in which the Gio and Mah culture was often not acknowledged except in a few isolated cases. This has often been the cause of friction in the social interactions between these ethnic groups'

To understand the issues of inter-ethnic/religious marriage effectively, it becomes necessary to understand each aspect of inter-ethnic/religious marriage. On the one hand, inter-ethnic marriage is when two persons from two different ethnic groups cross ethnic boundaries and agree to get married. On the other hand, inter-religious marriage is when two persons from two different religions cross their religious boundaries and agree to marry (Berghe 1997: 15; Govender 2016: 36). In inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriages, the couples belong to different ethnic groups and have different religious beliefs, and affiliations. Behaviours, beliefs, ceremonies, customs, and observation of religious holidays are how people realise their diverse cultural values and practices in a given society.

Inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriage concerns emerged as one of the issues that contributed to the strained relationships among the Dan/Gio, Mandingo, and Mah people. Most of the Dan and Mah respondents' views are captured in what Respondent 003 says here in a concise way:

While change is taking place all over the whole world to do away with way back religious restrictions concerning relationships between people or intimate affairs with partners, the Mandingo people are still keeping their daughters from the marital reach of the sons of the Mah and Gio tribes because of religious reasons. This is not fair to our children and us. They take our fine, fine children, I mean daughters. But we can just see their own and our children, and we cannot be allowed to even love them or marry them. Who they think we are? (Respondent 003, Interview, Ganta, 2021)

The Mandingoes of the Islamic religion do not allow their daughters to marry into other tribes with different religions, even if their daughters wish to do so. The Mandingoes are openly disapproving of inter-ethnic/religious marriage, and the Dan and Mah are not Muslims or of the same ethnic group as the Mandingoes. The Dan and Mah contend that, unlike the Mandingoes, they allow their daughters to decide who they want to marry, regardless of the men's'/boys' religions and ethnic groups. This has strained the relationships and tensions have emerged as the Dan and Mah perceive this as the Mandingo regarding them as not being good enough for their daughters. During my interactions with the interviewees, the response below from Respondent 0010 stood out for its explanation of the issue of inter-religious marriage between the Mandingo and any other religious/ethnic group. This response indicated his personal loss of love and happiness as a result of this Mandingo standpoint (and the implied loss for other Mandingo men in the same situation):

My son, these Mandingo people are selfish. When I was very small as a gentleman, I wanted one of their daughters to be my girlfriend and later wife. I talked to Fatumata, and she agreed to be my lover. One day, her big brother saw Fatumata and me standing in the corner, talking our sweet, sweet talks. He reported the girl to her parents. Her father beat her and removed all her hair from her head. The girl explained her troubles to me in tears and said her parents asked her not to come close to me anymore because I am an unbeliever or Kafir. I tried and failed as her parents took her away from Ganta for years. That is the same way they have been acting to all the Mah boys and men in this Gompaa City. But they can come and love our children and marry some of them as their wives without trouble. This is unfair. So, I have problems with the Mandingo people; for them thinking that they are better than us, the Mah people. If their

daughters are not good for our children and us, our daughters must not be good for them and their children too (Respondent 0010, Interview, 2021).

The overriding fact is not so much the loss of a daughter to another ethnic group but the loss of a daughter to another faith, as Islam does not permit this. As the only Muslim group, their daughters are thus not allowed to marry anyone who is not a Mandingo. Marriage in the Mandingo ethnic community is underpinned by tribal and religious beliefs intended to foster and ensure ethnic and religious homogeneity and to avoid subjugation of their faith and ethnicity. As much as this issue of lack of reciprocity in inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriage among the groups is unfair, it is not important enough to override the religious and ethnic concerns involved. Inter-ethnic and inter-religious marriages should be as complimentary as possible among the different ethnic and religious groups but should only take place within the limits and parameters of their ethnicities and religions.

The Mandingo ethnic group allows non-Mandingo girls and women to marry their boys and men, as there is an expectation and understanding that these girls and women will adopt the Muslim faith of their husbands and raise their children in the faith, in line with Islamic doctrine and principles. The Mandingo tribe holds these Islamic requirements dear and will not let go of them readily.

Marriages in the Mandingo tribe are not entered into without considerable thought. They are based more on the human need to stick with what they are familiar with than on freedom of choice based on attraction. The analogy of "birds of a feather flocking together" (George et al. 2015: 127) comes to mind. Conversations leading to marriage involve discussions about attitudes, beliefs, interests, and needs that are first and foremost Islamic and ethnic, since all Mandingoes in Ganta are Muslims. In this province, physical appearance is not the most important criterion for marriage (physical attraction), while similarity in ethnic and religious values is highly important.

The Dan/Gio and Mah ethnic groups, on the other hand, give little or no consideration to ethnic and religious values and do not view the approach by the Mandingo regarding their women and daughters to be justified. Because their approaches to marriage differ, the Dan/Gio and Mah ethnic groups believe that their Mandingo compatriots see them as unimportant groups of people who are only worthy of providing girls and women for marriage. Their boys and men are not deserving of the Mandingo ethnic group (and religion). Their "I am worthy of taking

from you, but you are not worthy of taking from me” viewpoint also plays a role in how the Dan/Gio and Mah ethnic groups see, treat, and interact with their Mandingo counterparts. The situation has also impacted the conflict over land and soured the relationship between the more intolerant and inconsiderate elements of the three ethnic groups in the city.

As a result of the situation, Dan and Mah have changed their approach to letting their girl children marry the Mandingoes readily.

5.17 NATURE AND CATEGORIES OF LAND CASES IN THE CITY

The land conflict in Ganta has important features. Some of the Mandingo land and property owners who have returned to the city after the second civil war have to rent alternative homes in the city and find alternate places of business. Their properties previously used as dwelling places and income-generating sources are no longer in their possession, as they have been grabbed and occupied by some of the Dan and Mah people. Some of these Dan/Gio and Mah people on the Mandingo land acknowledge that they are not the original owners and realise that they cannot stay on the land without consequences. However, some have invested significantly by building structures on the land, so they do not want to lose their investments and livelihoods. The government is not offering them safety and security and the dispossessed Mandingoes are angry at having lost their land and property. The threat of violence simmers just below the surface. They have entered into lease agreements with the rightful landowners in instances where they have erected structures and facilities of commercial significance. This allows them to retain their sources of livelihood (Respondent 060, Interview, Ganta, 2021) and avoid violence.

The land disputes in Ganta have the following elements or characteristics. These emerged from the interviews and focus group discussions conducted during the study.

1. There are disputes over privately-owned land. The disputes involve returning Mandingoes who fled the city during the civil wars. They have returned to find their land being occupied illegally by Dan and Mah. In some instances, these Dan and Mah occupying their land have been granted squatter's rights by the city authority of Ganta. Twenty-three persons (38%) interviewed and 19 (32%) who partook in the focus group discussions mentioned this. Ten persons (17%) interviewed and nine (21%) focus group participants felt that the issuance of the squatters' rights on this private land by the Ganta City authority was one of the causes of the land conflict and soured relationships.

2. The disputes are between Mandingo claimants and Dan and Mah occupants who have taken the land because no one was around to lay claim to it. Seven persons (12%) interviewed and three (7%) focus group participants mentioned this.
3. The disputes are between Mandingo claimants and Dan and Mah occupants who claim that the land in question is rightfully and traditionally theirs as their forefathers originally owned the land before the Mandingo acquired it (before the war). These properties were not legally acquired from their forefathers by the Mandingo people, so the Mandingo are not the rightful owners, in their view. Eight persons (13%) interviewed and five (11%) who partook in the focus group discussions mentioned this.
4. Some of the disputes between the occupants and claimants involve occupants who are willing to leave the land, but they want compensation from the Government of Liberia (GoL) first. The GoL provided compensation, called "peace packages", previously in 2011 and 2012, so there is an element of expectation on the part of the occupants. Five (8%) of those interviewed and three (7%) who partook in the focus group discussions mentioned this.
5. There are disputes between some of the current occupants and the claimants, because the original occupants were willing to accept the GoL's compensation package. Unfortunately, these willing occupants have since passed away, and their families are no longer willing to honour the agreements reached with the deceased. Most of those who fall into this category are widows, but there are very few of them. Three persons (5%) interviewed and eleven (25%) who partook in the focus group discussions mentioned this.
6. There are disputes between some occupants and claimants, where the occupants state that they are willing to accept the GoL's compensation but contend that those who estimated the value of their properties on the occupied parcels of land have undervalued them. They are prepared to relinquish the parcels of the land to the claimants and leave once the proper valuations of their properties are done and they are compensated justly. These people know very well that the current Liberian Government of President George Manneh Weah is not interested in paying them compensation, and they are using this argument to stay on the occupied land. Twelve persons (20%) interviewed and three (7%) focus group participants expressed this view.

It has been revealed that the issue of "peace packages" or the payment of compensation to occupants to leave occupied parcels of land was former Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf's government's way of introducing and operationalising a win-win solution to the problem of the land occupations. Her government advanced the solution to the occupants that their structures on the claimed parcels of land would be valued, and they would be paid the cost of these structures so that they did not relocate empty handed. The government of former

President Sirleaf ended in January 2018 and was replaced with President George Manneh Weah's government. President Sirleaf and her government wanted to bring an end to the land disputes in Nimba County (including Ganta) and saw the payment of "peace packages" as the best way to achieve this. That initiative ended with former President Sirleaf and her government as the current government of President Weah seems to have no interest in this route, for reasons best known to it. With that, the issue of occupants waiting to get paid to leave the occupied parcels of land has become an issue that is fostering continuous conflict.

5.18 THOSE GIVEN "PEACE PACKAGES" TO RELOCATE AND HAVE NOT RELOCATED

To begin with, a "peace package" refers to a cash payment set aside and given to occupants and/or claimants with whom the 2nd Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba County Land and Properties' Disputes negotiated and reached a settlement. The negotiation was facilitated by the commission, and the respective parties agreed to relocate from the occupied land and to relinquish their claims to the occupied land. It was the commission's way of ensuring that no claimant (landowner) or occupant left the negotiation table empty-handed. This commission facilitated a win-win solution to the conflict among the city's residents.

The Government of Liberia carved out agreements between the occupants and the claimants and the one receiving the "peace package" was given 90 days in which to honour their agreement. Claimants had to relinquish their claims and occupants had to relocate within 90 days of receiving their cash payment. No cash was received without a signed agreement. The mutual understanding was for the receiving party (occupant) to relocate voluntarily within the timeframe. While some did, others then reneged on their deals and refused to honour the spirit and intent of their agreements. Former President Sirleaf's government took no action to enforce the honouring of these agreements.

To make matters worse, the current government of President George Manneh Weah is not interested in pursuing this agenda. The occupants who received relocation packages and then refused to relocate have created a stumbling block to the conflict resolution process as their continued occupation is still causing conflict and tension. The claimants who are waiting to reclaim their land are still not able to do so and remain frustrated and conflicted. If the government exerts its authority the occupants will relocate as they are well aware that they have no basis to be on the land, and that they have defrauded the government. This lack of

enforcement by the current regime has compounded the issue as the claimants have been left in limbo, having to reside elsewhere in and around the city until their land is returned to them.

5.19 THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE LAND DISPUTES IN GANTA CITY

Like any other conflict the world over, the post-conflict land disputes in Ganta City have consequences. They affect the claimants, the occupants, investment, employment, and land acquisition, etc.

5.20 CONSEQUENCE(S) FOR THE CLAIMANTS

Some claimants from the Mandingo ethnic group have not returned to their parcels of land so are not able to use them or benefit from them. They are not able to reclaim their land as they do not have any legal documentation to authenticate their ownership, possibly having lost the documents during the war. They have thus had to enter into long-term lease agreements with the occupants who have built costly facilities on the land. This has happened because these claimants are faced with two problems: (1) they cannot pay for the structures on the land in order to secure full access to the land; and (2) some cannot press charges against the occupants because they have lost the legal documentation with which to prove their ownership. They are unable to get the support of the courts to eject the occupants successfully without this documentation. The only way forward now is to negotiate with the occupants, even if they do not want to. The original occupants and owners of the parcels of land along the Ganta Main Street before the war are thus not the current occupants of the space.

Some of the original Mandingo owners of the land and properties on and around Ganta Main Street and Saclepea Road connecting to the Main Street, are now tenants in other parts of the city. Others, who cannot stand the humiliation of having lost access their land and who cannot afford to squat in a place they consider their home, are out of the city entirely. They hope that the problems will be resolved one day so that they can return to the place they consider home.

Eighteen interview respondents (representing 30%) and fifteen focus group participants (representing 35%) indicated that the Mandingo people play little role in the city's economic life today. Some of the claimants who rely on trade for their livelihood are now economically disadvantaged. They lack space in the commercial centre of the city. The properties they used

previously as sources of income generation via commercial activities are no longer in their possession. They thus have little or no significant roles in the city's economy and instead linger on the periphery of the trade and commerce of the city.

5.21 CONSEQUENCE(S) FOR THE OCCUPANTS

The occupants, who know that they are living on disputed parcels of land, have not developed or invested in the parcels of land they are occupying in meaningful ways, as doing so would be economically unwise. Instead they live on the land, occupy the structures on it and sell their wares from these structures, with no intention of modernising and improving the premises. Only those with long leases are seen to have invested heavily in infrastructure. Their investments are made based on their confidence in said leases, and they make the investments with the intention of recouping their money before their leases expire. These occupants invest carefully and strategically, as they know that the land and infrastructure that they are spending their money on does not belong to them.

5.22 CONSEQUENCE(S) FOR INVESTMENT AND THE ECONOMY

Fourteen of those interviewed (23%) and seven who participated in the focus group discussions (16%) reported feeling a sense of unease and insecurity in the city. There was an ever-present fear of an eruption of conflict among elements of the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups in the city. Ten interview respondents (17%) and nine focus group participants (2%) felt that fear of losing their investments in the city was making people wary of investing more in infrastructure and development. The fact that there have been occasional clashes between the claimants and the occupants of the land in the city has raised investment security concerns. As a result of these security concerns, investors are not keen to invest more in Ganta City, and its economic growth is being retarded. Potential investors are investing very cautiously and slowly out of fear that a full-blown conflict arising from the tension between the claimants and the occupants will militate against returns on their investments. There are thus only a few risk-takers willing to risk investing in the city's economy. Were this insecurity for major investments not the case in the city, the city would grow quickly as it is the second largest city in the country after Monrovia in terms of population and development.

When all of the ethnic groups (Dan, Mandingo, Mah, etc.) are able to invest and compete freely in the market space in Ganta City, they will all have something of value to be protected and the

situation will remain calm and stable. As long as some groups are excluded and denied opportunities there will be disgruntlement and insecurity. There is a constant feeling that something simple might spark violence between the groups in the city one day, and investors (Dan and Mah) will lose their investments. The statement by the Mandingo community that they are prepared to "die for their rights" is a threat to be taken seriously.

An example of this type of violence occurred on Monday 19 April, 2021, when uniformed officers of the Liberia National Police ensured the demolition of ten houses belonging to Donzo, Jabateh, Koroma, and Sando families living on two blocks of land along the conflicted stretch of road connecting Ganta Main Street to Saclepea, commonly known as Saclepea Road. The demolitions followed orders issued by the 8th Judicial Circuit Court in Sanniquellie City, Nimba County. In retaliation, some people believed to be from the Mandingo ethnic group set a warehouse ablaze. The warehouse belonged to and was used by some Dan/Gio and Mah businesspeople in the city. This situation paralysed the city. It brought business, schooling, and other activities to a halt for the greater part of the day. There was a fear that full-blown violence would erupt, and this would have resulted in looting and further destructive activities. With this kind of occurrence in the city, major economic investments are under threat as investors are extremely wary of such threats to the peace, stability, and security.

Ganta is currently being developed by some Dan/Gio and Mah people who are investing in the growth of the city, and this development is taking place on parcels of land that are not in dispute. Those development projects are being undertaken to exclude the Mandingo people, however. The Mandingo have little or no access to land and funds for development, despite their desire to engage in such development so that they can generate income as their Dan/Gio and Mah compatriots are doing.

5.23 CONSEQUENCE(S) FOR EMPLOYMENT

Twenty of those interviewed (representing 35%) and twelve focus group participants (representing 27.3%) mentioned that the Mandingoes were excluded from political appointments and employment in the Ganta City Corporation. Sixteen of those interviewed (representing 27%) and sixteen of the focus group participants (representing 36.4%) asserted that the Mah dominated the employment in the Ganta City Corporation. People of the Mandingo tribe thus play no role in the city's government and are not able to obtain employment in the government institutions. Only people of the Mah ethnic group occupy

leadership roles in the city and administrative district, and the Mandingo people are excluded altogether. Zanker, Simons and Mehler (2015: 85) attribute their exclusion to the role that they played in the destruction of Ganta in 2003 by the LURD rebels, as these rebels were predominantly Mandingo. Following LURD's destruction of Ganta, the minority Mandingoes are considered to be enemies of the majority Dan and Mah and are thus excluded from the city's government.

Whoever gets to make the political decisions gets to determine what decisions are made. In most, if not all, instances, the Nimba Legislative Caucus (made exclusively of members of the Dan and Mah ethnic groups) recommends the political appointments in the city and administrative district. By so doing, the caucus decides who occupies which role in the Bain-Garr Administrative District and in Ganta City. Resultantly, the current dominance of the ethnic Mah is being decided by the Nimba Legislative Caucus headed by Senator Prince Yormie Johnson (an ethnic Dan). Senator Johnson is a former head of the Independent National Patriotic Front of Liberia (a breakaway group from the National Patriotic Front of Liberia of Charles Taylor). "PYJ", as Senator Johnson is nicknamed, killed former President Samuel Doe on camera in defence of the two ethnic groups (Dan and Mah) (Agbude et al. 2015: 8). PYJ has historically acted in favour of the majority Dan and Mah ethnic groups of Nimba County, even in the Ganta land conflicts, as they were his source of support during his First Liberian Civil War (Agbude et al. 2015: 6). They support him politically and have elected him to the Liberian Senate twice (for a total of 18 years). This is guaranteeing his stay in power since he does not have any fundamental skills to keep him employed outside of politics. Even employment to teach at public and private schools in the city is dominated by the Mah people, followed by the Dan (Respondent 034, Interview, Ganta, 2021). The only school where the Mandingo people can be found in pedagogical roles are the Islamic schools in the city.

5.24 CONSEQUENCE FOR THE ACQUISITION OF LAND IN THE CITY BY THE MANDINGO ETHNIC GROUP

Six of those interviewed (10%) and five of the focus group participants (11.4%) indicated that people feared and avoided selling land or renting houses to the Mandingo people. Interview respondents 005, 008, 010, 015, and 020 and focus group participants 002, 004, and 013 indicated that the Mah people dominated the city authority that allocated and sold land, and the city council excluded the Mandingo people. Respondents 001 and 009 indicated that the city

mayor himself was one of the persons whom the Mandingo people repeatedly cited as having robbed them of their land in the city. Respondent 001 named Amos Suah (Mayor of Ganta), Nyan Johnny Kparkar, Fred Johnson Suah, Nathan Suah, and J.J. Brothers as the ones making it difficult for the Mandingoes to reclaim their land. Respondent 009 named the same people as Respondent 001 but included Steve Johnny Ganta and the Gawo family.

Respondents 001 and 009 indicated that the current Mayor of Ganta, Honorable Amos N. G. Suah, was locked in protracted land disputes with the Dorley, Sanoe, Kromah, Jabateh, and Donzo families. The mayor's role in the land conflict is well documented in the reports of the first and second commissions. The belief by some Mah people that the Mandingo people are non-Liberians has led to huge reluctance to sell land to the Mandingo people. As I stated earlier, he or she who makes the decisions decides on which decisions get made. The City Mayor is indisputably the biggest political appointee in the city, and he does not look favourably at providing ethnic Mandingoes with access to land, having been locked in land disputes with ethnic Mandingoes. It is thus evident that, besides being denied retrieval of their own land, the Mandingo people are being barred from acquiring other prime land in the city and its environs that comprise entirely of Mah communities. This has thus reduced the participation of the Mandingo in land acquisition, and this action amounts to a form of systemic ethnic deprivation.

5.25 CONSEQUENCE OF IMPROVED MANDINGO COMMUNITY COHESION

Nearly all of those complaining of their land being taken away are from the Mandingo ethnic group in the city. The Mandingo people have always loved living together and operating as a cohesive group. They have always shared the same prayer centres (mosques), and most of them attend Qur'anic or Arabic schools at young ages to learn Arabic before moving on to formal academic education in the English Language. Their togetherness is very noticeable because they are a much smaller community than the Dan/Gio and Mah ethnic groups in Ganta City.

While their togetherness has appeared natural before, the apparent deliberate design by some people of the Mah ethnic group to deny the Mandingo people access to their land has become a rallying point for the Mandingo community in the city. These deliberate acts have made the Mandingo community more tight-knit, to the point where they have developed a "touch one, touch all" mentality. Land ownership in Ganta and Liberia is individual rather than ethnic communal ownership. However, the Mandingo community's sense of cohesion has driven them

to the point where they band together in defence of any member of their community when his or her rights appear to be being trampled upon. The community's reaction to the demolition of the ten houses belonging to the four Mandingo families, as discussed under the section on the consequence(s) on investment and the economy, is a very good example of this banding together in support of one another. Ultimately, the land situation in the city has united the minority Mandingo ethnic group more than ever before.

5.26 CONSEQUENCE OF TRIBAL DISCRIMINATION

Discrimination has emerged as a result of the participation of the three ethnic groups in the second Liberian civil war that resulted in the land disputes in Ganta. The Mandingo people are discriminated against for being of that ethnic group and are finding it difficult, if not impossible, to get employment in the public sector in the city, as this employment appears to be the exclusive preserve of the Mah people. A number of the interviewees (27%) and the focus group participants (36.4%) asserted that the Mah dominate employment in the Ganta City Corporation. Land acquisition in strategic locations and other communities has also become very difficult for the Mandingo people. A number of the interviewees (10%) and the focus group participants (11.4%) expressed that there are people in the city who refuse to rent their houses to members of the Mandingo ethnic group and others that will not sell them their land. Those who sell their land caution Dan/Gio and Mah buyers not to front for the Mandingo people. In some instances, would-be tenants are also discriminated against when looking to rent rooms in houses. The first question that house owners ask is whether the prospective tenant is Mandingo or not, and they are also warned not to be looking for rentals on behalf of a Mandingo (Respondent 018, Interview, Ganta, 2021).

5.27 MANDINGOES' LACK OF CONFIDENCE IN THE COURTS (MAGISTERIAL AND CIRCUIT)

During the interviews and focus groups, especially those involving the Mandingoes, they expressed their lack of confidence in the courts in the city and county to handle issues of land in which they were complainants fairly. Eleven (representing 55%) of the twenty Mandingoes interviewed and five (representing 62.5%) of the eight Mandingoes who participated in the focus group discussions expressed their lack of confidence in the courts to solve the problems. The lack of confidence was blamed on what Respondent 002, Respondent 003, Respondent

011, Respondent 016, and Respondent 019 called a lack of fairness on the part of the magisterial court in the city and the 8th Circuit Court in Sanniquellie as they side with Dan and Mah people whenever they go to court with their cases. They accordingly expressed their interest in using local and other traditional means to resolve the conflict instead of going to the courts. There was no particular question posed about the courts. Fifteen of the twenty-eight Mandingoes who participated in the interviews and focus groups expressed a lack of confidence in the courts.

5.28 CONSEQUENCE FOR THE MANDINGO ETHNIC GROUP'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL POLITICS

Participation in politics involves decision-making on issues that affect the life of a community, in this case, Ganta City. It encapsulates the holistic participation of a people or group to reach decisions on the issues concerning their community. The Mandingo people participate minimally in most decisions made in the city, however, every qualified citizen partakes in one sphere of decision-making in the city, whether others like it or not. That participation comes with their citizenship rights in the Republic of Liberia, namely their registration and participation in electoral processes by canvassing and voting for political candidates of their choice.

Mayoral elections have not been held in the city since the days of former President Charles G. Taylor. Mayors have always been appointed by the President of Liberia and have been from the Mah ethnic group. The city's citizens have only been participating in representative and senatorial elections during general and presidential elections, special or mid-term senatorial elections, and by-elections. The elections that particularly concerned the city were those for the position of representative of the Electoral District #1 (during the 2011 and 2017 representative and presidential elections). During the 2005 general and presidential elections the district was named the Electoral District # 2.

Nine of the twenty Mandingoes interviewed (representing 45%) indicated that owing to how their Mah compatriots treated them, they preferred supporting non-traditional Ganta Mah and those that the traditional Ganta Mahs referred to as strangers in Ganta. Seven (representing 87.5%) of the eight Mandingoes who participated in the focus group discussions preferred supporting those that the Ganta Mah considered strangers as opposed to their traditional Ganta Mah compatriots. Since the 2005 elections the Mandingo ethnic group in Ganta has seen no reason to canvass and vote for Mah candidates from the city and its environs that participate in

the representative elections. They have been doing so for two fundamental reasons, namely: Firstly, they are only interested in electing someone that will help them to reclaim their properties, and so voting for a non-Mah person in any election presents the best chance to elect someone who will advocate for them and not participate in denying their claims). Secondly, voting for a Mah of Ganta and Bain-Garr origin to be representative would re-establish Mah dominance in all spheres of decision-making in the city since they control the city council of Ganta and occupy the mayoral position as well.

Consequently, the Mandingo people supported a non-Mah candidate in the last two representative elections of 2011 and 2017, leading to the election of Jeremiah Kpan Koung twice. Jeremiah Kpan Koung's parents are not original inhabitants and citizens of Ganta City or the Bain Chiefdom in which Ganta is located. His father is from the south-eastern region of Liberia, while Nimba County, where Ganta is located, is in the north of Liberia. His mother is from the Dan ethnic group, not the Bain Chiefdom and Ganta City. The metropolitan and commercial nature of the city has resulted in those that the Mah people consider as strangers outnumbering the city and district's original Mah people. The increased growth of communities to form a city brings with it many opportunities that draw people to the city. The people attracted to Ganta City because of the opportunities there have been branded as "strangers". Those "strangers" have banded together against the Mah people in the city and its environs (electoral District #1), and they vote against them. Against this backdrop, the Bain/Ganta Mah people have found it difficult to win the representative seat in the electoral district. With this trend, one can easily conclude that if/when mayoral elections are introduced in the city, the Bain/Ganta Mah people will lose them as the other ethnic groups will continue to vote against them.

5.29 THE CLAIMANTS' FEELINGS OF STATE-APPROVED DISPOSSESSION: DECLARATION OF EMINENT DOMAIN ON THE GANTA MARKET

Fifteen of those interviewed (representing 25%) and eight of those who participated in the focus group (representing 18%) believed that the declaration of eminent domain on the Ganta Market land by former President Sirleaf represented a form of government approved dispossession without just benefit. During this study, the eminent domain declared by President Sirleaf in 2010 on the Ganta central market land emerged as an issue fostering dispossession. It became

an issue because eminent domain's true spirit and intent was not actualized. No serious efforts were made to establish the ownership of the parcels of land on which the market along Ganta Main Street was located before the declaration of the eminent domain. Nothing substantive has been done since to do the necessary, namely to identify the owners and compensate them justly. As a result, those whose parcels of land were lost and subsequently occupied by others are still disgruntled.

Eminent domain is the state's right to obtain private property for public use and they are supposed to provide just compensation for doing so (Kitchens and Roomets 2015: 1). Article 24 of the Liberian Constitution (Republic of Liberia 1986: 12) clarifies that no private property should be expropriated without "prompt payment of just compensation". The Liberian Constitution makes known the government's right to expropriate private property for the safety, health, and good of the public and public use. It comes with the proviso that the government has to provide the owner(s) with prompt and just compensation for having their land taken from them. Such a transaction is done with the understanding that if and when the government chooses not to use the land any longer, the former owners are given the right to reacquire their property before anyone else (Republic of Liberia 1986: 9).

Eminent domain grants the state, through the government, the legal authority to take private property for public use through a lawful process referred to as expropriation (Peña 2021: 1). Under the eminent domain doctrine, private property ownership cannot stand in the way of public projects. Private properties can thus be taken away from private individuals, but these individuals must receive compensation for this. The compensation also has to be in line with the fair market value of the expropriated property. The transaction occurs between an individual and the state. It considers finding the middle ground between the needs of the individual and the state. Eminent domain is usually declared on private land, which prompts an explanation of just what private land is. Private property is any property that an individual has total, exclusive and long-lasting legal ownership rights over. They are entitled to do anything they want to with it, without any interference or intimidation (Colombatto and Tavormina 2017: 3). The owner manages and controls said property to exclude other people and society. He or she can decide what to do with it, when to do it, why to do it, and how to do it without necessarily being answerable to anyone. Blackstone (2017: 1) considers private ownership to mean "that sole and despotic dominion which one man claims and exercises over

the external things of the world, in total exclusion of the right of any other individual in the universe".

In the field, I discovered that declaring eminent domain on the Ganta Market remained a serious problem. It has been deemed an effort by the Government of Liberia to ignore the concerns and interests of those who own or at least claim the parcel of land. During the 2010 July 26 (Liberia's Independence Day) celebration held in Sanniquellie City, Nimba County, President Sirleaf called on the citizens of Nimba to take the lead in promoting diversity owing to the number of ethnic groups that are found in the county (Sirleaf 2010). President Sirleaf used the occasion to inform the county and Liberia that her Special Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba Land and Properties Dispute had submitted its report on June 30, 2010 (Sirleaf 2010). She indicated that the land disputes in Nimba County had dragged on for too long and created constraints for some of the things that her government intended to do. The former Liberian leader made it known that her government could only facilitate the peace process, as peace could not be legislated or commanded. She furthered that peace had to come from the individual and their willingness to accept things, mediate, collaborate, reconcile, and compromise. She then called on all Nimbaians to see the report as the beginning of a great step forward in reconciling the county's people. She eventually evoked Eminent Domain on the controversial Ganta Market area when no compromise could be reached, declaring the Government of Liberia's transferring of the land to public property for the construction of public facilities for the citizens.

The decision by former President Sirleaf to declare eminent domain on the Ganta Market land appeared reasonable for two reasons: (1) the public was already using the place as a market ground; and (2) it would end the controversy between the claimants and the occupants. There was no information on the legitimate owners of the land on which the market was located. This declaration remains the singular mistake in the entire process of trying to settle the land disputes. For any eminent domain or expropriation to take place and be palatable to those affected, the private property owners have to be paid a fair price for their land. In this instance the ownership was not established so the land was taken away from the owners and they received no compensation whatsoever. The original owners have still not been recognised as the rightful owners and they have still not been paid for their land.

While evoking the eminent domain appeared to be the best decision at the time for the government in this controversial case, this decision has come to be regarded by some of the

claimants as structural violence. One thing is clear: the group that went on to occupy the space has remained there and is still conducting business there. The situation is displeasing to the original owners who have returned to the area and want what they see as rightfully theirs. Nothing has been done in their favour (the claimants) by the Government of Liberia. The situation has made the claimants feel a sense of government-endorsed dispossession and denial of their entitlements: namely land and just compensation to help them relocate.



Figure 0.1: Pictures of the Ganta Market Land Claimed by some Mandingo people

Source: Author (2021)

Looking at the pictures above, it is clear that the market facilities have been built on the foundations of broken structures. Respondents 009 and 021 claim that the market stalls and structures were destroyed during the Liberian civil war(s). The pictures were taken on a Sunday (March 14, 2021), a quiet day in the marketplace, to discover why others claim that this place belongs to them. Had the pictures been taken on a regular market day, the market would have been crowded and the area would have been difficult to observe.

The area is still being used by the Dan and Mah, despite the fact that the Sirleaf Market Women Project, a project set up by former President Sirleaf, built a new market and expected the marketeers to relocate to it voluntarily. The former president thought that the people would relocate once the new market was completed. Sadly, her tenure expired in January 2018 and a new leader has emerged on the scene. The new leader unfortunately only sees the new market as a development project and not as a mechanism initiated as an exercise to build peace.



Figure 0.2: The New Ganta Market

Source: Author (2021)

The new market pictured above has since been constructed, dedicated, and put into use, but the problem it was established to solve still exists. Those who have laid claim the old market land have not regained their land and have yet to be compensated in accordance with the declaration of eminent domain. The claimants have expressed disappointment and frustration with the fact that the second presidential commission has not compensated them yet some 12 years later so that they can relocate and has instead only focused on others. The result is that today the land claimants have no access to their land. The idea behind the building of this new market building in the city was to relocate the Old Market and use the old market's space to build a public facility or facilities for the use of everyone. Contrary to the idea, the New Ganta Market has been built and is in use by some people, while the Old Ganta Market remains in use (primarily by the Dan and Mah) as a market ground.

5.30 THE ISSUE OF THE CITY YOUTH'S INVOLVEMENT IN MOB VIOLENCE

During the research, one of the issues that popped up as a major concern in the city and a source of worry is that some young people have been at the centre of the tension and mob violence. In 2019, a mob attack by a group of young people (predominantly motorcyclists) led to the death of two suspected ritualistic killers (Ritual Killing in Africa, 2015; Ishmael, 2019: Para 2). On September 30, 2015, another group of young people (predominantly motorcyclists and community youths) attacked and set fire to the Alvino Hotel. This hotel belonged to a local businessman, Prince Howard, and the attack was based on suspicion of his involvement in

ritualistic killings (Ritual Killing in Africa, 2015; Ishmael, 2019: Para 2). The story is detailed below:

One morning, one motorbike man's dead body was on the Ganta United Methodist Football Field. The information we got is that one of the people who they say was involved in the killing was arrested. When they were beating him, he said one Howard asked them to bring him one beer bottle of human blood. By the time the man called the Howard's name, most of the angry crowd did not even ask him, 'who is the Howard you are talking about?' That is how some of the angry people bought gas and lighters and ran straight to Alvino Hotel and put fire on that fine building because it belongs to a popular man in Ganta City by the name of Prince Howard. The angry crowd did not care whether the 'Howard' name the person called was Prince's Howard or not. They burned that hotel down and threatened that anybody who tried to put the fire off, they would burn the person too! The act of killing the motorbike boy was bad! That one is true! But, the decision to burn Prince Howard's place because the suspected killer called one Howard's name was also bad! Most of the people who did the burning were all young people. Our youth people in the city need to be educated to help us make this city peaceful because they have the strength and energy to do good or bad things quickly. We need to make them to make good use of their youthful energies (Respondent 022, Interview, Ganta, 2021).

Most mob violence issues involving young people result from inadequate engagement and transferring of knowledge. Additionally, there are no sustained media campaigns against despicable acts to dissuade the city's youthful population from becoming involved in conflict and confrontation with the law (PARTICIPANT IDENTIFIER, Interview, Ganta, 2021). The recent burning of a warehouse in reaction to a demolition exercise due to a court order, and the resultant tension in the city paralysed many things. During that time, most of the youths from the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups mobilised themselves and prepared for battle.

Engagement with all spheres of the population to build peace featured when searching for solutions to the city's problems. However, increased importance/emphasis was placed repeatedly on the need for engagement with the city's young people, to make them actors in building and sustaining peace in the city.

The people who lead the young people in the city might not have the leadership skills to best manage and direct their followers. The way they present issues and how they pursue their goals needs refinement to help better the community and the city at large. There is a fear that if these

young people's leaders do not acquire better leadership skills, there is a high probability that they will continue to experience leadership problems in their various organisations. These bad leadership qualities will then spread into the bigger cities, counties, and national positions and negatively impact progress at those levels. The young people represent the hope and foundation of the city. How these youths are shaped will form the basis of what they contribute to the city and how the future of the city looks.

5.31 RE-EDUCATION AND RE-ORIENTATION OF THE YOUTH: THE PRESSING IMPERATIVE AND NECESSITY

When discussing recommendations for the best ways to solve the identified problems to foster lasting peace and sustainable development, prioritisation of the youth was highlighted as a significant area needing attention. Twenty interviewees (33%) and eleven persons (25%) from the focus groups highlighted the need to work with young people to help build a new generation of citizens to embrace living together peacefully in the midst of their ethnic and religious differences.

The youth of Liberia constitute "an estimated 60% of Liberia's population" and are the population segment that has constricted access to Liberian society's economic and political powers (Herbert 2014: 10). Ganta's youthful population has been identified as having huge potential and value in maintaining peace, transforming the existing communal conflicts, and improving peace in the city. It was recognised that some have been used as instruments to facilitate and perpetuate violence. They unfortunately lack the appropriate guidance, knowledge and support to recognise and stop this manipulation. The issues of intolerance, violence, and mob violence that involve some youths can be attributed to inadequate engagement of the youth. The youth and youth leaders should be given training on the concepts of unity in diversity, peaceful coexistence, a culture of tolerance, and how a lack of these adversely affects the youth and society as a whole. They can then internalise and operationalise the knowledge and subsequently transfer it to their colleagues and followers (Respondent 012, Interview, Ganta, 2021). Proper re-orientation and re-education of the city's young people will allow them to make more meaningful contributions to the betterment of their city, as they represent the future of the city and its people.

The citizens of Ganta appear fully aware of the negative effects of the tension and disputes in the city on its economy, development, and future. The culture of living together peacefully that

existed before the Liberian civil wars, and the Ganta War in particular, will be regenerated once re-orientation and re-education of the city's youth is achieved.

5.32 PEACE WORK BY PEACE COMMITTEES IN THE CITY

During the study, respondents indicated that there were previous efforts by committees to build peace. Twenty interviewees (40%) and eighteen focus group participants (41%) indicated that some religious groups had been involved in resolving local conflicts in the city. Thirty-six interviewees (60%) and twenty-six focus group participants (59%) indicated that the first and second ad hoc presidential commissions set up to resolve the land disputes mandated the formation of peace committees. The first commission worked from 2006 to 2008, and the second commission worked from 2009 to 2010. The peace committees stopped working once they had submitted their reports to President Sirleaf, even though the reports recommended the continuation of peacebuilding efforts and initiatives.

5.33 THE NEED FOR LOCAL MECHANISMS FOR PEACE IN GANTA CITY

Relationships between the Mandingo and the Dan and Mah ethnic groups have been tense and strained. There is thus a need to restore the broken relationships and to generate peaceful coexistence in the city. The participants expressed serious interest in an effective local mechanism for peace that will help to avoid tension in the city and resolve the relationship issues between these groups.

Recommendations were sought for the best ways to solve the identified problems to foster lasting peace and sustainable development. The following represent the views and information obtained from the research participants. Twenty-seven of those interviewed (45%) and nineteen focus group participants (43%) expressed the need to set up a local peace committee to help develop strategies and solve the problems. Thirteen interviewees (22%) and fourteen focus group participants (32%) expressed the need to use the local capacities for peace in the city to help build peace. According to them, when peace initiatives come from within the city and involve the citizens, the peace will last longer than it would with initiatives involving outsiders who do not know much about the situation.

According to these participants, such a mechanism is needed to establish a foundation of acceptability of each other as one people and to impact meaningfully on how people see and treat each other to promote peace and sustainable development. Other mechanisms have been put in place, worked for a while, and then petered out, leaving behind some unresolved issues. A local and non-biased peace committee will help evolve sustainable peace, having repaired the broken relationships between the different groups using cultural means based on truth-saying and the spirit of oneness and togetherness. It requires the involvement of peace-loving members of the city, drawn from all tribes, and with a history of non-participation in the conflict.

The research participants believe that local peacebuilding via dialogues can help solve most of the broken relationships between the ethnic groups, even after legal redress leaves the legally defeated party or parties disgruntled. Mediation and negotiation using alternative dispute resolution is the best alternative for the interventions needed. Hence, the idea of community-based peacebuilding that uses local capacities for peace has been deemed important for a sustainable peace that fosters sustainable development in this ever-growing city.

5.34 CONCLUSION

The March 2003 Ganta war happened. The Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD) rebel group, predominantly of the Mandingo ethnic group, moved into Ganta in an apparent effort to 'liberate' their properties that were “captured” during the first civil war. LURD was beaten back and out of Ganta and its environs by Taylor's government forces, under the command and control of Saye-Taayor Adolphus Dolo, popularly known then as “General Peanut Butter”. The Ganta war further soured the relationships among the three main ethnic groups (Dan, Mandingo, and Mah) of Ganta. After Ganta's liberation, “General Peanut Butter” influenced the appointment of Madam Nohn T. Tensonnon as head of the Ganta City Corporation. Mayor Tensonnon, an ethnic Mah, issued 33 squatters' rights on private properties of Mandingoes who had fled the city/country. After the Second Liberian Civil war from 1999 to 2003 ended, refugees and internally displaced people – Mandingoes – returned to find their land occupied by those who claimed to have the authorisation to proceed as such. It marked the re-emergence of land and property disputes at the city's highest level.

This situation led to the newly elected government of President Sirleaf (Liberia and Africa's first democratically elected female president) constituting two ad hoc presidential commissions

to intervene and resolve the land disputes. The commissions worked and resolved some land disputes in the city. Musa Hassan Bility recommended the declaration of eminent domain on the Ganta Market along Ganta Main Street, and former President Sirleaf proceeded and declared said eminent domain on the Ganta Market land. The eminent domain fell short of meeting the basic elements of eminent domain, however, as the rightful Mandingo owners of the land were not identified and compensated for their lost property. These Mandingo owners have been left feeling disgruntled and that their dispossession is government-approved.

After the 1980 military coup that removed the Americo-Liberian oligarchy and installed the people's Redemption Council Government of Liberia, many Americo-Liberians and Congo people fled the rural parts of Liberia. In the process, some sold their properties and land to willing buyers, and their financially stable Mandingo business partners were eager to acquire their strategic spots along Ganta Main Street. The acquisition of the parcels of land in this part of the city was commercially prudent. While the Mandingoes pursued this route, their Dan and Mah compatriots had little or no business interest in acquiring any of this land and property. Hence, before the wars, the Ganta Main Street was dominated by Mandingo-operated petrol stations, shops, and stores. Since the war, the Dan and Mah merchants and traders have dominated the main street - a form of economic revolution that has left the Mandingo on the periphery of the city.

Legal and political manipulations have played their parts in the conflict. There is also an apparent disagreement on the issue of inter-ethnic/religious marriages, and it has influenced how the people regard each other. The Mandingo men are allowed to marry Dan and Mah women, but the Islamic doctrine prohibits the Dan and Mah men from marrying the Mandingo women. This strict adherence to Islamic doctrine on the part of the Mandingo ethnic group borders on religious intolerance. It is not welcomed by their Dan and Mah compatriots and fans the embers of inter-ethnic misunderstanding.

There is low participation by Mandingoes in the economy and employment of the city. Their citizenship has also been called into question by some people. Reclamation of some of their parcels of land has been slow. Their acceptance as citizens of the city remains challenged by some who still refer to them as "strangers". The situations have shaped how the people of the Mandingo ethnic group participate in the local politics of their electoral district where Ganta is located. They have banded together in support of one another and against the political interests of the original Ganta Mah people in the elections for the representative post in the city.

The violence-readiness of some of the youth of the city and their participation in mob violence are issues of concern. The Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy (GYSLA) idea was born against this backdrop. It emerged out of the desire of the local peace committee to guarantee a better future for the city, with more meaningful participation of the youth. Terms of reference were drawn up for the LPC to have worked and succeeded adequately. Additionally, the PAC defined and agreed upon the criteria for selecting people to serve on the LPC. The LPC was established and implemented in the Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy (GYSLA), and this is discussed in more detail in chapter six of this study.

CHAPTER SIX: PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTING THE INTERVENTION

7.1. INTRODUCTION

During this study, establishing a local peace committee (LPC) emerged as necessary. The idea of paying special attention to the youth of the city in terms of preparing them to help the city enjoy lasting peace and its dividends emerged. As indicated earlier, 27 of those interviewed (45%) and 19 focus group participants (43%) expressed the need to set up a local peace committee to help develop strategies and solve the problems. Furthermore, 13 interviewees (22%) and 14 focus group participants (32%) expressed the need to use the local capacities for peace in the city to help build peace. Additionally, 20 interviewees (33%) and 11 persons (25%) from the focus groups highlighted the need to work with the young people to help build a new generation of citizens; accepting of living together peacefully in the midst of their ethnic and religious differences.

As a result, the LPC formed as a product of this action research planned to initiate the change by implementing the envisaged change. Great care was taken during this process (Action Research n.d.: para 11). The Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy (GYSLA) was set up to build capacity in the city's youth. The LPC observed the implementation and consequences of establishment of the GYSLA. During the implementation and observation processes, reflection on changes and re-planning for further action became necessary. In the end, the LPC analysed and concluded that the city's young people represent the city's future. It endorsed the conclusion that the youth and student leaders of Ganta need re-education, enlightenment, and building of consciousness. Their capacities must be built in peaceful coexistence, responsible leadership, peace, reconciliation, human rights, and good citizenship.

It is important to note that the topics presented during the workshop were those derived from the deliberations and agreed upon by the PAC and the LPC as being necessary for preparing a generation of peace lovers and peace builders at the city's various levels. In the estimation of the LPC, the trainees or participants will be a generation of Ganta citizens who espouse the spirit of unity in diversity and exercise ethnic and religious tolerance. They will work to become useful, good, and productive citizens of Ganta to enhance sustainable development. This

chapter discusses the actions of the LPC and the planning and execution processes of the GYSLA. It presents summaries of the key presentations, recommendations, and the immediate post-workshop evaluation.

Reports on the training workshop's implementation, the formation of the peace cells, the establishment of the early warning and response system, and the work of the LPC and PCs after the training are presented and discussed in chapter seven.

7.2. THE FORMATION OF THE LOCAL PEACE COMMITTEE (LPC)

As this was an informal committee, efforts were made to identify and work with the persons who met the criteria suggested during the interviews and focus group discussions. Using the set of criteria that qualified a person for participation and inclusion on the committee, the following persons were approached and asked to serve on the committee. They agreed to serve on a voluntary basis.

Table 0.1: Those Initially Approached to Serve on the LPC

No	Name	Ethnicity	Position
1	Mr. Bob Emmanuel Paye	Mah	Chairperson
2	Rev. Thompson Q. Nyormie	Dan	Co-Chairperson-1
3	Madam Mayanda Kromah	Mandingo	Co-Chairperson-2
4	Mr. George Saye	Mah	Member
5	Mr. Opee K. Kanneh	Mandingo	Member
6	Mr. Blama Fully	Gola	Member

These people were approached based on testimonies of their willingness and history of supporting peacebuilding activities and initiatives in the city. Their fairness in dealing with issues to promote win-win solutions became their outstanding assets. While there were more than ten persons whose names came up during the study, those named above represent those who were named by more than five persons as the search for those to be included on the LPC was being carried out. Besides this, ethnic sensitivity underpinned their selection.

7.3. FIRST MEETING OF THE LPC

The first meeting of the LPC was convened on Saturday July 31 2021, at the Office of the Gompa City Corporation, Gompa City. The meeting took place from 4:30 pm - 5:10 pm (40 minutes), with the following persons making meaningful contributions:

- J. Mentor Gborlay, youth trainer and representative of the professional community.
- Rev. Thompson Q. Nyormie, representative of the Christian community.
- Mr. Bob Emmanuel Paye, Office of the City Mayor.
- Mr. George Saye, member of the civil society.
- Mayanda Kromah, Ganta Central Mosque Speaker.

Mr. Gborlay read the meeting's agenda, and the attendees adopted it. Rev. Thompson Q. Nyormie offered the opening prayer. The meeting was presided over by Mr. J. Mentor Gborlay, who then gave an overview of the meeting relative to the establishment of the PAC. He highlighted the need for and importance of the brainstorming session on what the committee needed to do to move ahead well. Among other things, the following points were agreed upon after deliberations:

- That the mandate and criteria of the LPC, as carved out before the formation of the LPC, were endorsed without amendments and would guide the work of the LPC.
- That youth violence and lack of proper direction was a risk to the cold peace in the city and that an intervention proposed by the research participants made sense and should be implemented to help the city's youth become responsible citizens.
- The presence of those from the Mandingo ethnicity, as the minority tribe in the city, was necessary at every meeting, so as to help find the best inclusive approach and intervention for the situation in the city.
- That the LPC would work to lay the foundation to repair broken relationships in the city, especially among people willing to let go of the past and work towards the city's advancement.
- That the LPC would start working immediately to develop a directory of youth and student leaders who should participate in the training.
- That debates be held among high school and other students to gather public perceptions about mitigating land disputes between the Gio/Mah and the Mandingo people in Ganta City.
- The Inter Visionary Artists (IVA), a local artist group based in Ganta City, with coverage in Nimba, would be asked to perform a drama portraying land conflict mitigation in Ganta City.

The drama was intended to provide education on minimising land disputes in the city by promoting unity in diversity, tolerance, and mutual co-existence.

- That an action plan be drafted and brought up in the next meeting for discussion and adoption.

The meeting was then adjourned after a closing prayer was offered by Rev. Thompson Nyormie.

7.4. THE SECOND MEETING OF THE LPC

The second meeting of the LPC was convened on Friday August 6 2021 at the Office of the Ganta City Corporation. The meeting took place from 5:30 pm - 6:45 pm (1hr 15minutes) and was presided over by Mr. J. Mentor Gborlay. The following persons were in attendance:

- J. Mentor Gborlay
- Rev. Thompson Q. Nyormie
- Mr. Bob Emmanuel Paye
- Paul Z. Wehyee
- Opee K. Kanneh
- Blamah Fully
- Mayanda A. Kromah

After the welcome remarks and overview of the meeting, Mr. J. Mentor Gborlay presented these agenda items to the attendees: the distribution of the terms of reference of the LPC and the need to draft a concept note on the Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy. The following were agreed upon after deliberations on all agenda items:

- That meetings would be held on a rolling basis to update the team on the progress made towards planning.
- That the LPC would work to identify people who needed to be engaged to train the youth.
- The LPC tasked itself to work to ensure the availability of the full listing of youth and student leaders from the various communities, churches, mosques, schools, and youth groups in the city.
- I, as the LPC secretary, would develop a draft concept note for the Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy and share it with members of the LPC. It was to be shared with the members of the LPC, who would provide their input at the next meeting to enable the finalisation of the concept note during the next meeting.

- That the selection of and conclusion on training participants be made jointly by LPC members to ensure unity and coordination in the process.
- That Mr. J. Mentor Gborlay and I, as the researcher, would follow up with all LPC members to provide support where necessary to get things done on time.

During the meeting, the leadership structure of the LPC was discussed and agreed upon:

Table 0.2: Leadership and Members of the LPC

No	Name	Position
1	Mr. Bob Emmanuel Paye	Chairperson
2	Rev. Thompson Q. Nyormie	Co-Chairperson-1
3	Madam Mayanda Kromah	Co-Chairperson-2
4	Mr. Teeko T. Yorlay	Secretary and Researcher
5	Mr. George Saye	Member
6	Mr. Opee K. Kanneh	Member
7	Mr. Blama Fully	Member

After research by Chairman Paye, it was realised that the IVA wanted to be paid for creating and performing the peace drama wanted by the LPC. The LPC initially considered the idea of performing a drama to provide education on minimising land disputes in the city and promoting unity in diversity, tolerance, and mutual coexistence as necessary. However, the LPC did not have the finances to undertake such an initiative, and the idea was dropped.

7.5. THE CONCERNS AND INTERESTS OF THE LPC MEMBERS

All other members of the LPC, besides myself, raised the need for the LPC to be made permanent and not just used for research purposes. Chairperson Bob Emmanuel Paye stated that "as people live, conflicts live with them, and so when the research ends, the future problems of the community will not end. So, while the research continues, let us think about what to do to continue this great imitative after the research ends" (Paye Ganta, 2021). I appreciated the chairperson's concern and indicated that the idea of continuing the LPC and its activities after the research was laudable. I undertook to work with them to plant the foundation for the

sustainability of the efforts during their engagements. All other members of the LPC agreed with Chairman Paye and I.

7.6. PICTURES OF LPC MEMBERS DURING THE SECOND MEETING



Figure 0.1: L-R: Bob Emmanuel Paye, Chairperson; Mayanda Kromah, Co-Chair -2, and Blamah Fully, Member

Source: Author (2021)



Figure 0.2: L-R: Opee K. Kanneh, member and Rev. Thompson Q. Nyormie, Co-Chairperson-1

Source: Author (2021)

7.7. THIRD LPC MEETING

The third meeting of the PAC was convened on Saturday October 9 2021 at the Office of the Ganta City Corporation. The meeting took place from 5:00 pm - 7:55 pm (2hr 15minutes) and

was presided over by Chairperson Bob Emmanuel Paye. The following persons were in attendance:

- J. Mentor Gborlay
- Rev. Thompson Q. Nyormie
- Mr. Bob Emmanuel Paye
- Paul Z. Wehyee, Lecturer at Cuttington University interested in peace in the city
- George Saye
- Mayanda A. Kromah

The concept note had been developed and was shared with all LPC members. It was decided that the primary issue of interest was to discuss it thoroughly and to conclude on the draft concept note. As the PAC discussed the youth's involvement in violence, the need emerged to develop remedies to the situation. A decision was made to take deliberate and conscious steps to prepare them intellectually to become productive citizens and to protect society from their violent actions. They had to be educated and prepared so that they could contribute meaningfully to the city's political, social, and economic life. The PAC considered that in post-conflict environments like Ganta City, young people presented threats to peace and stability if they were not adequately prepared to participate effectively in their community's economic, political, and social life. Over 70 per cent of the Liberian population is under the age of 35, and 44 per cent of the young people are under the age of 14 years and lack the basic training necessary to contribute meaningfully to the wellness of the country's political, social, and economic life (Search for Common Grounds 2012: 5; Quaynor 2015: 16).

The PAC also unearthed through research that 70 per cent of the Liberian combatants in the civil wars were young, with 15 per cent under 18 years of age (UNESCO 2006, cited in Petruzzi et al. 2018: 1827). The information reinforced the research participants' recommendation that the city's youth be given special attention to help build and maintain peace. The concept of the GYSLA was conceived during the first meeting and agreed upon after lengthy discussions. All committee members deemed the GYSLA to be necessary.

During the meeting, it was agreed that the main activity was to "build and reinforce the capacities of the youth and student leaders in Ganta City". The efforts were geared towards:

- a. Reducing mob violence and conflicts through meaningful involvement of the young people.
- b. Transforming the young people into good, responsible citizens.

- c. Promoting tolerance and peaceful co-existence.
- d. Becoming good, transparent, and accountable leaders. And
- e. Contributing to the consolidation of peace, stability, and development in the city and cultivating the culture of unity in diversity.

The global objective of the GYSLA, as agreed, was to contribute to the enhancement of the capacities/skills of the youth and student leaders for their effective and meaningful participation in all efforts to maintain, consolidate and promote peace, tranquillity, stability, and security in Ganta City, Nimba County."

7.8. DETERMINATION AND DESCRIPTION OF THE PROBLEM

The LPC decided that the GYSLA should be implemented in Ganta City, Nimba County, as a two-day training workshop for influential leaders of youth and student groups, heads of motorcyclist unions, community youth leaders, and leaders of churches' and mosques' youth departments. As agreed in the meeting, the purpose of the GYSLA was to engage these groups in promoting peaceful co-existence between and among the ethnic groups in the city; help them to grasp the idea and tenets of good leadership; help them to develop respect for the rule of law; and promote peaceful co-existence, unity in diversity, and tolerance. The specific target groups were motorcyclist unions, student council leaderships, leaders of community youth organisations, and youth leaders of churches and mosques. The LPC realised that destructive youth-led violence had taken place in the city and recognised some youth's preparedness to participate in violence in the name of the rights of their ethnic groups. The GYSLA thus trained youth and student leaders who were expected to be very useful in mitigating unruly and violent situations.

7.9. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The PAC established that Ganta's youthful population was very influential in maintaining peace in the city. Transformation of the existing communal conflicts and improvement of the peace in the city were urgent. Some young people were (still) being used, misused, and abused as instruments to facilitate and perpetuate violence because of their lack of appropriate guidance, knowledge, and support to do otherwise. The city had moved on from the destruction of the March 2003 Ganta War, however, concerted efforts needed to be applied consistently to maintain and consolidate the peace as tensions simmered just below the surface.

Some young people were at the centre of mob violence in the city due to ethnic manipulation. These young people had little or no training in peacebuilding and maintaining a peaceful coexistence, including those that assumed leadership roles. If not transformed, they tended to transfer their intolerance and bad leadership into more influential roles in the city, the county and even the rest of the country. Some of these young people broke the law when they failed to exercise the basic elements of peaceful co-existence, good leadership and stewardship. Two notable incidents were discussed. In 2019, there was a mob attack by a group of young people in Ganta City. They were predominantly motorcyclists, and they attacked and killed two people suspected of committing ritual killings (Global News Network Liberia 2019). Another group of young people, also predominantly motorcyclists, attacked and set fire to a local businessman's property (Alvino Hotel) when he was accused of being responsible for ritual killing (Ritual Killing in Africa 2015).

Not surprisingly, there was a growing sense of uneasiness amongst the populace. The uneasiness was being fuelled by continuous assertions that the youth were being used as tools by unscrupulous puppeteers, whose sole intent was to create unease, unhealthy distractions and mischief in the city. An apparent manifestation of this uneasiness was seen in the unfortunate pervasiveness of the youth's actions in the recent protests, riots, and threats of civil disobedience. Such actions attributed to the city's youth underscored the need for robust and proactive intervention grounded in sound leadership, peacebuilding, and good citizenship training. The LPC held that well-executed training would help, engage, and empower the youth by giving them the requisite skills needed for making more responsible, decisive and independent choices going forward.

The LPC realised that the city's responses to the abovementioned challenges tended to be more reactive than proactive. They tended to marginalise and punish the perceived perpetrators and ringleaders without advancing practical suggestions to develop more robust and proactive solutions to the problems. In their hasty response, the citizens tended to view young people more as problems that needed solving than as potential to be tapped. Consequently, rather than seeking to tap and harness the potential of the mobilised youth and their leadership, the city created new barriers to peaceful co-existence. This was done by imposing harsh restrictions and measures to control them instead of understanding and working with them. The LPC discovered that most of the issues of intolerance, poor leadership, lack of accountability, and mob violence involving young people resulted from the fact that nothing was done to mitigate

them (no interventions). The interventions required include adequate engagement, knowledge-transfer training, and sustained media campaigns to promote peace, stability, responsible leadership and citizenship, self-management, tolerance, peaceful co-existence, and unity in diversity. These interventions will enable the leaders of the youth groups and organisations to internalise, operationalise and subsequently transfer to their colleagues and/or followers the ideals of peace, stability, responsible leadership and citizenship, self-management, tolerance, peaceful co-existence and unity in diversity.

7.10. THE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED BY THE LPC

The LPC believes that for the gains made in the city to be sustained, there is a need to invest in more proactive youth and student engagement and empowerment programmes. Such investment objectives can be achieved by recognising and tapping into the potential presented by an organised youth and student leadership. This will allow the community to control for better outcomes and ultimately less violent communities in the future. This decision was reached after a review of the key research findings.

The LPC researched and discovered that elections have been held every year since the resumption of regular schooling and normalcy in communities across the city. These elections have been held for students and community youths to elect a corps of leaders from among their peers. In schools the elections are held once a year. The elections in the communities are held every one to three years. During this period, it is expected that the leadership will organise programmes and activities and make presentations to schools, churches, mosques, or communities' authorities and/or other parties on behalf of their constituents. Students, churches, mosques, and communities' youth leaders are also expected to provide model leadership to create a better society.

Despite these responsibilities and expectations, the schools, churches, mosques, and the various communities in the city have not provided the training in tolerance and leadership required before or after any of these elections/selections. No training has been designed and delivered to help these young leaders adjust to the demanding and often stressful transformation from being popular students and youths to being responsible, tolerant, and accountable leaders of their peers. When thrust into the limelight of leadership, they are suddenly entrusted with the thankless responsibility of steering the affairs of their colleagues and communities while bearing the weight of their own academic and personal burdens.

7.11. CONTRIBUTION OF THE GYSLA

The GYSLA contributed to the necessary development of the sense of tolerance, peaceful coexistence, good leadership, good citizenship, and the rule of law among the young people in Ganta City, Nimba County. The attendees were educated on the dangers and dynamics of interethnic conflicts. Most importantly, it contributed to the consciousness needed to support the city's consolidation of warm peace, stability, and sustainable development. The GYSLA enlightened its participants and positioned them to help make their city a comfortable home for all its residents and inhabitants, de-emphasizing ethnicity (ethnic divides) and placing increased relevance on equality. Local capacities for peace at the various levels of the city were identified and reinforced with conflict analysis, conflict management, conflict resolution, mediation, and peacebuilding skills that were not available to the participants before the training workshop.

7.12. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE GYSLA

The LPC concluded that the two-day Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy (GYSLA) provided an invaluable opportunity for youth and student leaders from different communities, churches, mosques, and schools to network while sharing common concerns about their city and ideas for addressing them. Its importance to the land disputes and strained relationships in the city was reflected in the awareness of the pre-war and post-war lives of the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah people. The two situations were presented briefly during the overview of the workshop. What had worked well and held the community together before the war (notably unity in diversity, ethnic and religious tolerance, and peaceful co-existence) was identified. What had not worked well during and after the war (notably intolerance and ethnic bigotry) was also identified. The participants appreciated what had worked well and declared them worthy of emulation, while what had not worked well was declared worthy of avoidance.

The GYSLA presented a golden opportunity to create a space, encouraging attendees to embody and internalise peacebuilding norms and values. It ultimately changed the attendees' worldviews and behaviours toward each other's ethnic groups. They committed to being good citizens and responsible leaders of their communities. The GYSLA groomed the current youth, student, community, mosque, and church leaders in the city into inspiring, focused, independent, decisive, responsible, and accountable leaders of tomorrow. The GYSLA drew participants from various backgrounds and viewpoints in the city together to share their life

experiences. They shared a strong and common commitment to making the city a better place for the future.

7.13. THE REPORT OF THE TWO-DAY GYSLA (DECEMBER 10-11, 2021)

6.13.1. Introduction

As part of the requirements for completing a PhD. in Public Administration - Peace Studies at the Durban University of Technology in South Africa, my co-researcher and I decided on the implementation of the GYSLA. Sincere and concerted efforts were made to ensure that I gained a practical understanding of a conflict environment and its dynamics. This report is the outcome of the two-day training workshop for youth, religious, and community leaders held in Ganta City, Nimba County, from December 10-11 2021, from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm daily.

6.13.2. Organisation

The training started with me presenting the aims, objectives, and an overview of the GYSLA.



Figure 0.3: Researcher Presenting the Aims, Objectives, and Overview of the GYSLA

Source: Author (2021)

The workshop was organised for the youth and student leaders from the communities, churches, and mosques in Ganta. They play crucial roles in leading their peers and will be useful in handling conflict in their communities, schools, churches, and mosques. Several persons with training in specific areas related to conflict and peacebuilding did PowerPoint presentations at the workshop. Local officials from the city, including the City Mayor, business leaders, youths, and Muslim and Christian leaders were invited to make opening remarks. They all expressed

their interest in the workshop and hoped this approach to peacebuilding could contribute meaningfully to bringing lasting peace to Ganta City.

The workshop was interactive, with participants and facilitators making their views heard freely. Planned for two days, the workshop brought 68 participants and 6 facilitators from different backgrounds together. The facilitators were individuals with vast knowledge in their presentation areas. They came with both theoretical and practical knowledge in the areas of interest. The participants appreciated the facilitators and urged the organisers to continue such training opportunities. They also expressed gratitude to the organisers for the successful and meaningful training.

At the end of the workshop all of the participants were awarded certificates of participation. The workshop ended with a photo session where the participants brandished their certificates as smiles radiated on their faces.



Figure 0.4: Group Picture of the Trainers and Trainees

Source: Author (2021)

6.13.3 Presentations

Eleven PowerPoint presentations were delivered to the participants during the two days of the workshop. Day one focused on leadership, citizenship, and human rights, while day two focused on peace, violence, and peacebuilding. Each presentation lasted for under an hour. The facilitators did their best to simplify their presentations for understanding by the participants and used local examples to explain their points. The daily presentation topics were as follows:

Table 0.3: Topics and Presenters Present at the Training

Day One: Leadership, Citizenship, and Human Rights		
No.	Topic	Presenter
1.	Defining and Discussing Leadership Types and Straits	Mentor Gborlay
2.	Negotiations and Advocacy Skills	Rev. Thompson Nyormie
3.	Introduction to Human Rights for Peaceful Co-existence	Jasco Davis
4.	Causes and Effects of Disunity on the Development of any Community and Ganta City	Elder George Saye
5.	Good Citizenship	Teeko T. Yorlay
Day Two: Peace, Violence, and Peacebuilding		
6.	Peace and Violence: Types or Kinds, as well as Peacebuilding	Teeko T. Yorlay
7.	Conflict Sensitivity	McDonald S. Kerl Sr.
8.	Introduction to ADR	Elder George Saye
9.	Early Warning	Paul Z. Wehyee
10.	Communications for Peace	McDonald S. Kerl Sr.
11.	Benefits of Local Peacebuilding Relying on Local Capacities for Peace	Teeko T. Yorlay

6.13.4 Keys Summaries of the Presentations to the Participants

6.13.4.1 Presentation on Early Warning and Response by Paul Z. Wehyee

During the GYSLA, Paul Wehyee presented on the topic of an early warning and response system. He indicated that an early warning and response system was required for any

community conflict to be arrested, dealt with, and solved effectively. The trainees were made to know that an early warning system was necessary to alert actors of the need for intervention. A timely response was necessary to prevent violence before it commenced and escalated. The early warning system had to induce people to act preventively, not simply warn that a bad situation was worsening. It was built on three interlinked principles: human security, transparency, and collaboration between peacebuilders. He furthered that social conflicts did not erupt overnight; they were the result of a slow build-up of tension and antagonism. An early warning and response system was an effective preventive strategy that helped understand the timing of the processes needed to assist, avoid, handle and mitigate conflict to protect society and facilitate sustainable peace. He indicated that one of the most disastrous illustrations of the failure (or lack thereof) of an early warning and response system on the African Continent was the case of Rwanda, where visible warnings of escalating conflict existed. The appropriate actors did nothing until the country was plunged into violence that escalated into genocide and resulted in forced displacement. It was made known that an early warning and response system was only effective when the analysis of a potential conflict was connected to strategic options for preventive action.

6.13.4.2. Communications for Peace by McDonald Socrates Kerl Sr.

McDonald Socrates Kerl Sr. presented the importance of communication to the peacebuilding process and the qualities of a good peace communicator. McDonald reported Smedley as stating that "understanding comes through communication, and through communication, we find the way to peace". Therefore, at the local level in Ganta, the trainees were encouraged to use communication as a medium of peacebuilding. He indicated that since communication can be used to create and exchange meaning in all its forms, it must be used in the city to achieve peace through peace talks and negotiations. He, however, made the attendees know that the media is a double-edged sword that can be a deadly weapon of violence when it propagates messages of intolerance or misinformation that manipulate public sentiments. He cited the reporting by Radio Kigali that plunged Rwanda into genocide, the reporting that led to the 2003 religious violence in Monrovia, and Kenya's post-election violence as examples of how the media, when not properly used, can undercut and undermine the peace and stability of societies.

McDonald, however, said that the media can also be an instrument of conflict resolution when the information it presents is reliable, respectful of human rights, and represents diverse views. The media and those who provide information through it need to present information that

enables a society to make well-informed choices. He encouraged participants to attend media talk shows about inclusiveness, unity, and tolerance issues. Doing so would help serve as a useful tool in conflict resolution and help in reducing conflict and fostering human security in Ganta City. The trainees were informed that the media community's religious, ethnic, and political composition is instrumental in defining its orientation and possible vulnerability to bias. Without diversity, there is a risk that the media will fail to reflect the needs of others. He encouraged the trainees to be good peace communicators that should always seek to possess these qualities: honesty, proactivity, concision, ask good questions, a good listening ability, and reliability.

6.13.4.3. Benefits of Local Peacebuilding and Relying on Local Capacities for Peace by Teeko Tozay Yorlay

I presented the key benefits of local peacebuilding and the need to rely on local capacities for peace. These local capacities for peace can work through local structures that are either formal or informal. The formal LPCs are formally recognised by the state and sometimes established by national peace agreements derived from the establishment and formal recognition by state authorities. On the other hand, informal LPCs are community-driven peacebuilding mechanisms. They do not necessarily have the state's recognition and authorisation to proceed with their establishment and operations. The trainees were made to know that the names of LPCs may change from place-to-place. However, their key functions of helping resolve conflicts and maintaining communal peace do not change. For instance, the names in the Democratic Republic of Congo, especially in North Kivu and Ituri, are peace cells, local committees for peace, or local peace initiatives. They are called peace committees in Burundi, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda. They are called local peace committees in Kenya, Zimbabwe, and Nepal. They are called peace shura and peace zones in Afghanistan and Indonesia, respectively. They were trained to know that LPCs serve to promote community harmony. They create the means for conflicting parties to engage constructively in solving their problems through dialogues that involve the parties and peacebuilders. They promote a common understanding of the problem(s) and find a practical and amicable resolution to avoid the violent eruption of conflicts. I encouraged them to own, appreciate and operate their LPC and other local structures so that they work to add needed value to the community, and the community does appreciate its values.

6.13.4.4. Presentation on Conflict Sensitivity by McDonald Socrates Kerl

McDonald used the Oxford Dictionary and Merriam-Webster definitions of sensitivity as "a person's feelings which might be easily offended or hurt" and "being delicately aware of the attitudes and feelings of others" respectively. He then defined conflict sensitivity as: 'the practice of understanding how aid interacts with conflict in a particular context, to mitigate unintended negative effects, and to influence conflict positively wherever possible, through humanitarian, development and/or peacebuilding interventions' (CDA Collaborative. n.d.: para 5). He highlighted the need to use local capacities for peace, an important tool of conflict sensitivity that ensures the "do no harm" (DNH) approach to community engagement. He said his presentation intended to inform participants that they were being trained to help with peacebuilding work in Ganta. They needed to be mindful to recognise and address the unintended consequences of their peacebuilding initiatives so that they do not cause more conflicts or harm to the city's situation. He encouraged them to do a conflict analysis that would help them understand their context better. They need to recognise how those with whom they are expected to work engage with each other. They were asked to avoid the negative impacts of their peacebuilding and conflict resolution initiatives but to help maximise positive impacts. The trainees were encouraged that peacebuilders should always possess and portray these attributes: accountability, fairness, respect, and transparency.

6.13.4.5. Presentation on Good Citizenship by Teeko Tozay Yorlay

I informed the trainees that according to the Greeks, there are three types of people in any society: idiots, tribesmen, and citizens. I made them know that idiots are private, selfish, self-centred, and only interested in their own gains and interests, at the expense or detriment of others. They put their own interests far above the community, society, or country's interests. For those idiots, life is all about personal treasures and pleasures. They contribute nothing towards the wholesome functioning and flourishing of the community, society, or country. The idiots worship the religion of money and power and heartlessly enjoy milking their country dry for their own benefit. I informed them that the second type of people in any society are the tribesmen. They were made to know that even though everybody belongs to a tribe, bringing a tribal and tribalistic mentality into anything and everything one does is wrong. Tribespeople worship the religion of tribalism and their tribes are gods. I told them that the third type of people in any society are the citizens. I was not referring to the citizenship acquired by birth or naturalization. Being a citizen, in this context, requires having the knowledge and skills to live a public life of civility and to strive for the common good of the community, society, nation,

or country. Citizens are respecters and protectors of the rights and responsibilities of everybody. Citizens are those who settle their differences with respect, knowing that society means friendship and friendliness. They see good in an individual and rally around that individual to succeed, irrespective of the ethnic group that said person belongs to. They live their lives in the people's interests and have the courage/inner strength/fortitude to resist doing wrong and compromising the people's interests.

6.13.4.6. Participation

The different sessions were very participatory, with participants expressing their commitment to promoting peace in their communities and working to stop violence when they returned to their communities. Participants suggested the establishment of local peace cells as an excellent way to handle peace at the schools, churches, mosques, and community levels. The participants appreciated the efforts of the GYSLA in organising the training and promised to use the knowledge acquired to promote peaceful co-existence in their communities and beyond. The participants were drawn from different age groups, genders, and all parts of Ganta City.



Figure 6.5: Ganta City Mayor, Amos N. G. Suah, Making the Opening and Welcome Remarks at the GYSLA

Source: Author (2021)



Figure 6.6: Training in Session (1)

Source: Author (2021)



Figure 6.7: Training in Session (2)

Source: Author (2021)



Figure 6.8: Trainer Mentor Gborlay Presenting with Trainers Paul. Z Wehyee and McDonald Socrates Kerl Sr. on his left

Source: Author (2021)

6.13.5. Recommendations Emerging out of the GYSLA

The following constitute the key recommendations that came out of the training workshop:

- That the researcher works with the attendees, with the LPC taking the lead, to establish peace cells in the communities, schools, mosques, and churches.
- That the peace cells become the first line of intervention in community-level conflicts and they should keep the LPC engaged and informed for intervention, if need be.
- That an early warning and response mechanism be developed, defining what roles the LPC and PCs should play in ensuring warnings and responses to avert full-blown conflict and violence in the city.
- That the LPC appears on radio stations and educates the population about the values of peace, peaceful co-existence, good citizenship, unity in diversity, and tolerance, and that its work promotes peace and prevents violence in the city.

6.13.6. Immediate Post-workshop Evaluation and Action

Evaluation forms were shared with the participants. They completed and returned them to me, and I served as the note-taker during the workshop. The LPC met to look at the evaluation forms to learn of the contents and recommendations advanced. After reviewing the evaluation forms, the LPC realised that the participants were unanimous in their reporting of the usefulness and meaningfulness of the presentations at the workshops. The participants had not been

exposed the knowledge provided at the workshop prior to this event. Many of them highlighted that they did not know that the word “citizen” had another meaning. They were exposed to the reality that one could be a citizen of a community by birth or naturalization, but that being a citizen also brought with it an obligation to act in the best interests of the greater community. They expressed the need for regular refresher training, replication of the LPC in their various communities and organisational levels, and the establishment of peace cells.

The establishment of peace cells in the communities, mosques, churches, and schools was recommended across the floor and endorsed at the conclusion of the GYSLA. The intent of the peace cells, as advanced by the originators of the idea, was to help preach messages of peace, reconciliation, tolerance, unity in diversity, and good citizenship at the level at which they were established and to intervene to arrest, prevent and resolve conflict where necessary. A committee was constituted, comprising of the LPC members and each member of the communities, churches, and schools that attended the GYSLA, and this committee met on Sunday December 12 2022 to finalise the terms of reference (ToR) of the peace cells. The essential work of the peace cells was defined on the last day of the workshop. I was tasked to piece everything together and present it during the meeting on Sunday. The ToR of the peace cells was drafted, discussed, improved and agreed upon, finalised, and shared with each attendee. The LPC and the trainees agreed to work together to ensure that the recommendation of the GYSLA relative to the formation of the community-level peace structures came to fruition. The LPC was mandated to work with all the participants and help create the peace cells in their areas. The work of the LPC in this direction is discussed in chapter seven.

6.13.7. The Terms of Reference of the Peace Cells

The GYSLA was carried out, and attendees were trained. A unanimous decision was reached to create peace cells in the various communities, schools, mosques, and churches to operationalise the concepts and ideas acquired to help build peace and maintain stability in these institutions in the city. They were conceived as a great means for their members to turn commitment to the tenets of peace and reconciliation into practical, results-based actions. The terms of reference (ToR) for the peace cells were finalised on Sunday December 12 2022. They are the direct roles of any peace cell in whichever area it finds itself in (schools, churches, mosques, and communities). They are:

1. To serve as a locally based instrument in its environment to identify conflict issues and help resolve them by way of mediation.

2. To work to promote the tenets of ethnic and religious tolerance, peace, unity in diversity, and good citizenship.
3. To provide locally tailored solutions to emerging or existing conflicts by settling disputes peacefully and restoring broken social relationships.
4. To address issues of local relevance to conflict resolution and promote peacebuilding.
5. To identify the best means to mitigate tension and lay the foundation for peace, stability, and development in schools, churches, mosques, and communities.
6. To establish the means in the schools, churches, mosques, and communities to create legitimate means to avoid and avert conflicts.
7. To enable communication and improve relationships with those who were once in conflict, thereby dealing with potentially unhelpful rumours, fear, and mistrust.
8. To prevent or contain violence through a strategy of joint planning, implementation monitoring, and evaluation of interventions.
9. To support the LPC in preaching peace and unity messages on local radio stations. And
10. To create a network that will facilitate and promote knowledge and experience sharing and obtaining skills in managing and resolving conflicts.

6.13.8. Radio Appearance to Inform the Ganta Population about the LPC and the Peace Cells

A decision was reached during the workshop, after the presentations from the breakout sessions, that the LPC's work and the results of the GYSLA needed to be aired on radio. The intention was to inform and educate the city and its people about what had been started. The LPC decided that I was better placed to appear on the city's local stations to announce the LPC's existence and the plan to establish peace cells in the city's communities, churches, mosques, and schools. I was asked and authorised to announce the outcome, introduce the LPC to the city and discuss the next steps: the peace cells and their functions. I was also asked to solicit the public's buy-in for the work of the LPC and the peace cells. I appeared on Radio Kergheamahn FM 94.5 for an hour on the evening of Sunday December 12 2021. I also appeared on Hot FM Ganta on Monday December 13 2021. I discussed the LPC and the idea of the creation of the peace cells. Calls of commendation during my two radio appearances indicated that the ideas and initiatives of the LPC and peace cells were necessary to promote changes in the citizens' minds and attitudes. None of the 28 callers (17 on Hot FM and 11 on RK FM) on both shows condemned the efforts. They all embraced the idea and announced their willingness to support the initiatives to promote peace and unity in their communities.

6.13.9. Immediate Outcomes of the Training

While at the end of the training one could not have established the long-term outcomes as it was too early to arrive at such a conclusion, the following constitute the immediate outcomes of the training:

- a) The trainees' capacities were built and reinforced. They were provided with skills in peaceful co-existence, good and responsible leadership and citizenship, conflict sensitivity, conflict resolution, peacebuilding, conflict analysis, early warning tools, and communication for peace.
- b) The trainees got to know that in every society, there are three kinds of people: idiots, tribespeople, and citizens, and they pledge to return to their schools, churches, mosques, and communities and lead lives as citizens who seek the well-being of their communities and their people. They then pledged to return to their communities as citizens and peacebuilders committed to the peacefulness and stability of their communities and the city at large.
- c) The trainees and the LPC agreed on establishing peace cells in their various areas. The terms of reference were developed for the peace cells.
- d) The LPC was mandated to ensure the establishment and operationalisation of the peace cells and the establishment of an early warning system and network.
- e) The participants' leadership and peacebuilding philosophies and potentials were identified, and they were encouraged to utilise them for the good of the city.
- f) The participants committed to cultivating a culture of peace, non-violence, and patriotism.
- g) An active and strong pool of diverse future leaders has been established for the city, county, and country.
- h) Youth and student leadership networks have been established to strengthen and promote peace, tolerance, peaceful co-existence, and unity in diversity.

The post-training outcomes that occurred months later are discussed in chapter seven, which follows this chapter.

6.14. Conclusion

The GYSLA was generally successful as it met the expectations of both participants and facilitators. It facilitated a change in the worldview of the attendees, who have begun to take a more tolerant approach to issues. Most participants spoke freely about their conflict experiences in their communities, schools, churches, mosques, homes, marketplaces, etc. They also acknowledged that the training workshop had opened their eyes to many things they did not know. They suggested ways to mitigate conflict and the best coping mechanisms for their conflict environment. The participants vowed to use the knowledge acquired from the workshop to transform their communities into havens of peace, unity in diversity, and tolerance. They all recognised that Ganta could be developed and grow if they continuously promoted peaceful co-existence and tolerance. Efforts made to actualise the recommendations are discussed in chapter seven.

CHAPTER SEVEN: EVALUATION OF SHORT-TERM OUTCOMES

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter looks at the implementation of the Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy's recommendations, the formation of the peace cells, and the achievements of the LPC and the peace cells. The LPC and the peace cells have made 65 interventions using the alternative dispute resolution approach, succeeded in resolving 59, and recommended 2 for further interventions beyond their control. The LPC established 15 peace cells in the city. The LPC and the peace cells have established an early warning and early response system that is currently operational in the city.

7.2 FORMATION OF PEACE CELLS

Following a successful GYSLA and carving out of the ToR of the peace cells, I worked with the various representatives of the communities and the LPC and established 15 peace cells in total: 9 in communities and 6 in schools. The schools and communities were identified as needing attention and were necessary for us to pilot the idea. Appendix I shows that there were peace cells made of and spearheaded by a group of young community peacebuilding enthusiasts in Ganta City who had begun work.

Those who formed part of the peace cells at six schools and in the nine communities were selected based on their leadership roles at the schools and in the communities. Before conducting the Ganta Youth and Student Academy (GYSLA), the LPC made it her duty to visit the communities, schools, churches, and mosques in the city. The leaders of the young people, who directed and managed their affairs, were officially written to, engaged, and invited to participate in the workshop. They were pursued and encouraged to participate. At the end of the day, all nine community youth leaders and all six student leaders availed themselves and participated in the GYSLA. They advanced the idea of establishing peace cells at the end of the training and the peace cells were subsequently formed at their schools and in their communities. All of the peace cells were given the same terms of reference to arrest and intervene in conflicts in ways that promoted peaceful co-existence and tolerance.

Generally, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) was the approach used to resolve the conflicts in the six schools and nine communities. While the conflicts at the schools were resolved between and amongst the classmates and/or schoolmates, the disputes in the communities were those between neighbours or at least those who lived in similar communities. While conducting the focus groups and interviews, data emerged on themes around the nature, causes, and effects of the post-war conflicts between the Dans and Mahs on the one hand, and the Mandingoes on the other hand. The peace cells were established with the general purpose of resolving community conflicts, but with a specific focus on inter-ethnic conflicts that had the probability and possibility of plunging the city into violence. In addition to the inter-religious and land conflicts, there were other themes or sources of conflict that also emerged, where the peace cells had intervened to have them resolved. They included: family fights resulting from children's fights, assaults, abandonment (child support issues), water pollution, political misunderstanding, child abuse, fights over men by women (loved ones), spewing of invectives, fights over seats at schools, misunderstandings between families, terroristic threats, insincerity in financial transactions, disorderly conduct, extra-marital affairs, and thefts of property.

The peace cells (PCs) and the LPC discussed the ways to arrest and address potential conflicts and violence, and decided on an early warning and early response system, as seen below:

Table 0.1: Early Warning and Response System

Early Warning and Response System established	
Sources of alerts and threats (outsiders).	Any member of the community or civilian who knows of any potential threat(s) to the peace and stability of the city.
First receiver and responders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PC members receive alerts, threats, and early warnings. - Carefully and quickly assesses the reliability of the source and credibility of the alert. - Share alerts and threats with the LPC while intervening.
Second receiver and responders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The LPC chairman and members receive the alert(s) and intervene to support the PC to respond rapidly to the triangulated threat. - The LPC Chairman and members supervise the LPC's intervention when necessary and have an overall obligation to co-ordinate responses and interventions to solve the problem(s).

7.3 SUMMARY OF KEY OUTCOMES OF THE GYSLA

The following constitutes the outcomes of the GYSLA that stood out:

1. The citizens now had and were using the 15 peace cells established (with useful local capacities for peace) to resolve their differences, promote win-win solutions to problems, and promote peaceful co-existence in their schools, mosques, churches, and communities.
2. Community-level peacebuilding mechanisms were taking root in the city, leading to reduced tension and social conflicts.

The LPC identified the planning and execution of the GYSLA as the starting point of its work. After a successful GYSLA, the LPC established 15 peace cells in the city at the school and community levels. These peace cells were preaching the message of peaceful co-existence and helping to resolve problems in their areas, with the intent of diffusing tension and promoting calm and social cohesion. After the training, there was an impressive shift in the thoughts of those engaged and in the general population. I appeared on two radio stations (Radio Kergheamahn FM 94.5 and Hot FM Ganta) for at least one hour each to discuss the LPC and its work and the peace cells. I received calls of commendation and notification of the change in the mindsets and attitudes that the presence of the LPC and peace cells had engendered in the city. None of the 36 persons who called in to either of the shows condemned the efforts, as all embraced the idea and expressed their willingness to support the efforts. The peace cells and the LPC met monthly to review their work. The overall objective of the LPC and the peace cells in Ganta was to identify and solve conflicts, and to help repair broken relations to actualise Ganta as a harmonious, tranquil, and secure city. The LPC and peace cells worked to establish an early warning and response system. Some potentially explosive disputes were arrested successfully, and appropriate steps were taken to avoid and solve tensions and conflicts.

The communities and citizens of Ganta warmly received and welcomed the ideas and work of the LPC and the peace cells. The most outstanding aspect was the enthusiasm of the members of the peace cells and the LPC to work for peace in their city. Their motivation was driven by their desire for peace and harmony. However, as these were informal structures without financial support, the good work started might not be continued when fatigue sets in and the enthusiasm fades away.

7.4 KEY RESULTS OF THE LPC AND PEACE CELLS' INTERVENTIONS IN DISPUTES/CONFLICTS

The LPC and peace cells were ways of operationalising the indigenous African conflict reconciliation strategies (IACRS) that focused on reconciliation and facilitated the re-

establishment of strained relationships. This led to forgiveness and healing of individuals and groups (Okeke-Ogbuafor, Ani and Gray 2019: 3). The LPC and the peace cells worked and put transparent means of reconciling conflicting parties and rebuilding strained relationships at the disposal of the communities and schools. Using deliberative means, the community-based reconcilers ensured that the conflicting parties expressed themselves and discussed their issues freely, reasoned together, forgave each other, and became reconciled. This created conditions conducive for development and peace in the city. The LPC and its peace cells intervened in community conflicts resulting from:

1. Theft of property.
2. Extra-marital affairs.
3. Disorderly conduct.
4. Poor community leadership.
5. Insincerity in financial transactions (not repaying debt on time).
6. Terroristic threats.
7. Sexual assaults.
8. Misunderstandings between facilities.
9. Insults.
10. Religious misunderstandings.
11. Tribal misunderstandings.
12. Fighting over seats.
13. Fights between women over men.
14. Fight resulting from misunderstandings that involved and started with children.
15. Fighting over the control of water sources.
16. Trespassing.
17. Land conflicts.
18. Political misunderstanding.

The peace cells intervened in 65 cases, with the support of the LPC, from December 2021 to July 31 2022. They succeeded in resolving 59 cases. Two of the six unresolved cases were land disputes that could not be settled immediately, as the boundaries of the plots had to be established. They were forwarded for land surveyance, and the parties agreed not to fight. They committed to peaceful settlement of their dispute by establishing the formal boundaries of their parcels of land. They were encouraged to meet the Nimba County Land Commissioner based in Sanniquellie City (the provincial capital of Nimba County) to request that the commissioner issue a survey order and assign surveyors to conduct the survey. The LPC and the peace cell in

the Deahikemi community committed to remaining engaged with the parties until a final settlement was reached. The terroristic threat and the sexual assault cases remained unresolved as the accused escaped from the community. One of the land dispute cases was referred to the Ganta City Authority, who intervened and resolved the problem.

The objectives of the establishment of these peace cells were being met. If continued, the work done at their levels would help keep the city and its communities peaceful and promote the idea and culture of unity in diversity.

Table 0.2: Ganta Peace Plan

No	Threats	Locality	Targets	Purpose of the Action	Preventive Actions and/or Responses to the Threats Identified	Responsibilities of the Communities	Responsibilities of the Other Actors	Timeline	Implementation Strategies
1	Land conflicts between the Mandingo and the Dan and Mah people occupying claimed land in the city.	Ganta Main Street, Gbatu Quarter, Ganta Market area, and other parts.	The civilian population (especially youths, women, and men).	To arrest any conflicts to ensure that they were addressed and solved to promote lasting peace.	The LPC and PCs to launch a campaign to inform the civilian population and land disputants of the local mechanism available to help resolve misunderstandings to avoid future full-blown inter-ethnic land-related conflicts.	Present information to the PCs about land conflicts and strained relationships in the communities.	The city's leadership to support the LPC and PC idea.	Continuous	Start with the resolution of the most significant conflicts.
2	Illegal sales of land .	Ganta City.	Land buyers and sellers.	To avoid land disputes.	The community alert network to alert the LPC and PC on their sales of land and the potential for conflict associated therewith.	Educate the youth not to initiate and participate in violence.	LPC and PCs to ensure sustained awareness among the population and intervene when needed.	Continuous	Use community forums and meetings, community radio stations, intellectual centres, and tea shops to sensitise the citizens
3	Inter-marital issues.	Ganta City .	The Dan, Mandingo, and Mah populations of Ganta.	To reinforce mutual co-existence tolerance of people's values and principles concerning marriage.	Proper and adequate sensitisation on the ethnic and religious values underpinning marital decisions that must be respected and understood.	Support respect for each other's religious and ethnic values.	LPC and PCs to sensitise the community and its people to facilitate tolerance and unity in diversity.	Continuous	Identify and use the most influential stakeholders whose voices matter to educate the population properly.

4	The perception that Mandingo people are not Liberians.	Ganta.	The youth, women, and elders of Ganta.	Solving the problems of refusal to accept the Mandingoes as citizens.	Awareness of citizenship campaign to educate the communities of the city	Build the consciousness of the population to accept each other as they are without discrimination	LPC and PC advocate for everyone to accept each other and live peacefully.	Continuous	Unceasing awareness campaign.
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7.5 CONCLUSION

The peace cells' formation and the early warning and response system have helped communities arrest and resolve conflict and guarantee peace. The intervention and resolution of conflicts in the nine pilot communities and six pilot schools remain a good sign for maintaining peace and stability in the city. The peace plan represents a compass that directs the focus and intervention of the LPC and peace cells. While the LPC and PCs, as well as their works, have become welcome ideas and efforts, respectively, the fear is when the research efforts end and the enthusiasm dissipates, the efforts might not continue.

The LPC and peace cells are made of respectable community members who have used the alternative dispute resolution approach to help restore peaceful relationships between conflicting parties in their various localities. While inadequacy of resources, lack of legitimacy, poor definition of mandates, and dishonesty have presented themselves as reasons undermining the successfulness of the ADR approach, those who adopt and use traditional dispute-resolution practices and prevailing societal norms and values have succeeded in settling conflicts (Home 2020: 81). The LPC and the peace cells have used indigenous African conflict reconciliatory strategies (IACRS), resolved conflicts, reconciled conflicting parties and re-established relationship that were once strained, resulting in healing and forgiveness (Okeke-Ogbuafor, Ani and Gray 2019: 3).

CHAPTER EIGHT:

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 INTRODUCTION OF THE CONCLUSION

The Second Liberian Civil War ended on August 18 2003, with the signing of the CPA in Accra, Ghana (Abraham, Persson and Themnér 2019: 6). It left behind strained relationships and land disputes among some elements of the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups in Ganta City. Returning refugees and internally displaced people found it difficult to access their properties easily, as they had either been “captured” or handed over by the Ganta City Authority to squatters/occupants. These occupants felt insecure on their claimed land, and the peace in the city was negative as the people lived in fear of ethnic violence.

The action research has identified the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the inter-ethnic conflict in Ganta City. It has established the links between, relevance of, and complementary aspects between peacebuilding and development. A peacebuilding intervention (the Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy-GYSLA - and its product [the peace cells]) has been initiated to promote peaceful co-existence and development in Ganta City. The research has reinforced and rebuilt relationships and promoted social cohesion. Steps have been taken to work with the city’s residents to establish a local peace committee and peace cells that promote peace to enhance the city's development. The principal threat to the peace and stability in post-conflict Ganta has been identified as the unenlightened youth of the city who are prepared to participate in and promote inter-ethnic violence and tension in the city. The GYSLA has built the capacities and consciousness of their leaderships so that they are able to contribute to addressing this situation. The capacities and consciousness are in peacebuilding, tolerance, unity in diversity, good citizenship, etc., so as to lay a firmer and better foundation for lasting peace and development of the city.

The local peace committee has established 15 peace cells that have subsequently intervened in 57 disputes. Fifty-two cases (91%) have been resolved, and five cases (9%) have not been resolved. The LPC and the peace cells have established an early warning and early response system that is currently operational in the city.

The conclusion of this study has been structured to address the relevant issues of the study.

8.1.1 Conclusion on the Nature of the Land Disputes in Ganta City

After the end of the Second Liberia Civil War in 2003, returning Mandingo refugees and internally displaced people have found their plots of land to be occupied by people of the Mah and Dan ethnic groups. Some of those occupants wrongly believe that people of the Mandingo ethnic group are not true Nimbaians or Liberians. Although limited, there are continuous land disputes in the city, and the people live in fear of another eruption of ethnic violence. A few of the land occupants are not covered by the Government of Liberia's (GoL) compensation scheme but they want compensation before they will give the land (and the structures on it) back, and some of the returned claimants cannot/will not provide this compensation. A stalemate thus exists between the occupants who cannot afford to leave without compensation, and the claimants who will not or cannot afford to pay the compensation asked for, so the disputes persist. Some of the occupants who were willing to negotiate their exit from the land have passed away, and the new lead negotiators are unwilling to abide by the spirit and intent of the previous arrangements. Some have accepted the GoL's compensation and then refused to relocate in the requisite 90 days, in accordance with the GoL's settlement agreement. Unfortunately, the GoL has made little or no effort to compel compliance in these cases. Some occupants have expressed willingness to leave the occupied land and relinquish it to the appropriate owners. However, they contend that the estimated values of their properties (as estimated by the Bility Commission) are too low and thus unacceptable. As a result, a few land disputes still exist in the city.

8.1.2 Conclusion on the Architecture of the Land Conflict in Ganta City

The Ganta Mandingoes lost their properties during the First Liberian Civil War and had still not fully recovered their properties encroached upon or taken over during the first war by the time that the second war took place in Ganta in 2003. It was one of the reasons for the second war. The fight between the LURD and the Government of Liberia's (GoL) Armed Forces of Liberia (AFL) to control Ganta City in March 2003 resulted in massive destruction of the city. The main roads leading to the cities of Sanniquellie and Saclepea were the centres of fierce battles. The LURD forces were defeated decisively, and the GoL forces took complete control of the city. The Mandingoes in the city fled in fear and sought refuge in refugee and displaced persons' camps. The Ganta battle further exacerbated the land situation because their deserted properties were taken over illegally by people of the Mah and Dan ethnic groups. The situation

has sparked further land and property disputes in the city upon the return of the Mandingoes, leading to further strained relationships among elements of the three ethnic groups.

Some Dan and Mah people are stuck in the false ideology that Mandingoes are not Liberians and should not be entitled to land anywhere in Liberia. This mentality underpins the land conflicts and strained relationships in the city. Ganta City is the conflict context. The conflict cycle has been the participation of some people of the three ethnic groups on opposing sides in the Liberian civil wars, which has led to the destruction and/or seizure of properties and the occupancies of land. The mode of conflict has been the occupation of parcels of land and threats to remove the illegal occupants by the "owners" of the land. It has led to disgruntlement and a sense of insecurity in the city for a protracted period. The cost of the conflict has not been quantified in monetary terms. There is no established account of the number of lives lost owing to the conflict. The loss or relinquishing of properties to occupants due to their refusal to leave or to negotiate and the strained relationships might represent the cost of the conflict. As ownership of land symbolises community identity, those who have lost their parcels of land have accordingly lost such identity.

8.1.3 Conclusion on the Role of the 2003 Civil War in the Conflict

The civil wars kept many (if not the majority) members of the Mandingo ethnic group out of Ganta City for many years. That absence was exploited by some members of the Dan and Mah ethnic groups who either occupied plots of land by themselves or with permission by way of the squatter's rights issued to them by the Ganta City Corporation. Before December 24 1989, when the First Liberian Civil War kicked off (Meabe and Woodfork 2018: 6), Ganta Main Street was dominated or replete with stores, shops, gas/petrol stations, garages, warehouses, and other commercial facilities operated or run by some members of the Mandingo ethnic group. They fled during the war and left vacant places when the wars kicked in. As the saying goes, nature dislikes vacuums. So, some members of the Dan and Mah ethnic groups moved to occupy the vacant plots of land. They erected structures in which commercial activities have been taking place. Most of those controlling the commerce on the city's main streets are now not the Mandingo people but rather the Dan and Mah people. Hence, the war helped flip the occupancy and control of the commercial activities in the city from the Mandingo people to the Dan and Mah people.

8.1.4 Conclusion on the Contribution of the Ganta City Authority to the Land Disputes

The city government has been the originator or instigator of some of the land disputes in the city since 2004. From 2004 to 2005, the Office of the Ganta City Mayor issued 33 squatter's rights on private properties that mostly belonged to members of the Mandingo ethnic group. This problematic transfer has since made the City Authority a major contributor to the land conflict in the city. The City Authority also paved the way for other illegal land grabbing and occupancies by ordinary citizens. The City Authority of Ganta had no legal or moral basis or authority to issue the squatter's rights on this private land. The squatters have since been caught up in the threats of ejection and demolition. Their continued occupancy and investments face threats, and while some have resisted the call to leave, others have negotiated their stay.

8.1.5 Conclusion on the Political Reasons behind the Land Disputes

The Mandingoes are certainly in the minority in Ganta City and Nimba County. Politicians who seek to obtain the political support of the majority Dan and Mah in Ganta during elections have found no political benefit in pushing for the telling of a truth that favours the minority Mandingoes in reclaiming their plots of land. Using political reasons to dispossess or deny people their land is problematic and a recipe for conflict. Based on political manipulations, some Mandingoes' frantic efforts to reclaim their parcels of land have been frustrated. This situation has made the nature of the peace that exists in Ganta currently a cold peace, at best.

8.1.6 Conclusion on the Economic Reasons behind the Land Conflicts

Initially, the land occupancy or grabbing was thought to be the Dan and Mah occupants' or grabbers' way of expressing their disapproval of the return of the Mandingoes to a place that had already been destroyed by LURD forces predominantly comprised of people from the Mandingo ethnic group. Later, it turned out that the commercial nature of Ganta City has made land in the city, especially along Ganta Main Street, a valuable economic commodity. The city's land has gained increased economic value as Ganta is the most profitable city in Nimba County from a business perspective. The acquisition and retention of plots of land which generate enormous profits for the occupants have thus become obsessions for many businesspeople. The Dan and Mah occupants have taken centre stage as the controllers of the economy and commerce of the city. They have become more hesitant to surrender their occupied spots to the Mandingo claimants or owners, as the latter might then re-emerge on the trading scene and once again dominate the business industry. Some occupants have negotiated

their stay via lease agreements, while a few areas remain shrouded in unsettled disputes that require mediation and/or litigation.

8.1.7 Conclusion on Inter-ethnic and Inter-religious Marriages

The Mandingo ethnic group, whose members are predominantly of the Islamic religion, cannot give the hands of their daughters in marriages to any non-Mandingo and non-Muslim Dan and Mah person. They contend that males have and exert dominance in African society and could easily prevail on their wives (their daughters when married) to abandon their cherished Islamic faith and become members of whatever religion their husbands belong to. They thus remain hesitant and unwilling to allow their daughters to marry outside their Islamic religion. However, they find happiness in proposing marriages to girls and ladies from the Dan, Mah, and other tribes. They do so, hoping to convert the ladies and their offspring to the Muslim faith. They therefore pursue inter-ethnic marriages to their advantage, firstly by getting wives, and secondly, by winning souls for the Islamic religion. This is the very situation they wish to not befall their daughters.

Before the wars, the Dan and Mah people readily allowed their daughters to marry the Mandingo people when their daughters wished to do so. They did so without any preconditions. They attached no religious significance to marriage as they felt people should be free to marry whomever made them happy. However, since the war, and based on the Mandingoes' approach to marriage, the Dans and Mahs have adjusted their approach toward allowing their daughters into marriages with Mandingo males.

8.1.8 Conclusion on the Nature and Categories of Land Cases in the City

All of the city's land disputes fall into the following categories: (a) disputes over parcels of land involving returning refugees or internally displaced Mandingo people who had come back to find their land occupied illegally by those to whom the City Authority of Ganta had given squatter's rights; (b) disputes between claimants and those occupants who just took the land because no one was around to lay claim to them; (c) disputes between claimants and those occupants claiming that their forefathers had originally owned those places and they had not been properly acquired by the Mandingo people who occupied them before the war; (d) disputes between some occupants and claimants in which the occupants were willing to leave the land but were yet to be given compensation like others to whom the Government of Liberia had given compensation (peace packages) to leave in 2011 and 2012; (e) disputes between

some occupants and claimants where the initial occupants had been willing to accept the Government of Liberia's compensation to leave. The initial, willing occupants had since met their demise, and their families were no longer willing to live by the spirit and intent of the agreements reached by their deceased relatives; and (f) disputes between some occupants and claimants in which the occupants argued that they were willing to accept the Government of Liberia's compensation but contended that those who had evaluated and valued their properties on the occupied parcels of land had undervalued them so the compensation offered was not sufficient/fair.

8.1.9 Conclusion on the "Peace Package" Recipients yet to Relocate

Through its Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Government of Liberia provided cash (peace packages) to land occupants to vacate the occupied land in 90 days and to relinquish it to the claimants. The "peace packages" served as a win-win solution for the land disputants. The occupants were to vacate within three months, and the claimants could then reclaim their land. In this situation, the occupants who might have invested on the land left with handsome compensation that would enable them to restart their lives. At the same time, the claimants would happily gain access their property and land. With no regard for the sensitivity and good intentions of this approach, some occupants took the packages and then still refused to leave the land. Most of those who received this compensation relinquished their claims to the land and left. The GoL has made no effort to compel the agreement's violators to act in compliance. So, some occupants who received compensation from the GoL have not yet left the land, while the claimants languish unattended. The situation has culminated in the disgruntlement of the claimants. They have accused the GoL of insensitivity and conspiracy to rob them of their entitlements - land.

8.1.10 Conclusion on the Declaration of Eminent Domain on the Ganta Market Land

On July 26 2010, the Government of Liberia declared eminent domain on the Ganta Market land by and through President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. The declaration of eminent domain on the Ganta Market land on the main street of Ganta City was ill-advised and problematic. The GoL erred by not initially identifying and providing just compensation to those on whose land the eminent domain was declared. Hence, the claimants are frustrated disgruntled, and languishing in and outside the city. They are in search of help anywhere they can find it. Such a serious error by the GoL has left the market land occupied by the marketeers, and the claimants ignored and abandoned.

8.1.11 Conclusion on the Consequences of the Land Disputes on the Claimants

Claimants who have not yet regained ownership their land have returned and cannot develop their land as they wish. Some of the claimants who cannot locate their land documents are operating at the mercy of the occupant(s). As such, claimants who cannot move on their land because of occupancies have entered into long-term lease agreements with occupants who have built costly facilities. They have had to negotiate and agree to such terms because they cannot afford to pay for the structures erected on their land to enable the occupants to relinquish the land and the structures.

8.1.12 Conclusion on the Consequence of the Land Disputes on the Occupants

Occupants on the disputed land have elected to proceed gingerly in terms of developing and thus investing on the land they are occupying, to avoid being placed in economically unwise and precarious situations. They are thus living and operating on the land without any intentions of developing it further. Only those with long leases have made substantial infrastructural investments and developments, with the intention of recovering their investments before their leases expire. Such occupants are investing carefully and strategically, knowing full well that the land they are spending their money on does not belong to them.

8.1.13 Conclusion on Investment and the Economy

An economic revolution in the city favours the Dan and Mah merchants who are dominating the Ganta Main Streets over the Mandingo merchants operating on the periphery of the city's commercial centres. There have been occasional riots in the city. There have also been some threats of an inter-ethnic fight between claimants and occupants in the city. These situations have raised investment security concerns that have impacted the city's economic growth. Notwithstanding the fear of investment insecurity, Ganta has seen infrastructural investments by a few Dan/Gio and Mah people, plus others from different ethnic groups. The Mandingo people have little or no access to prime and strategic plots of land. Hence, they are not partaking in other development projects that would earn them the same economic benefits as their Dan/Gio and Mah compatriots.

8.1.14 Conclusion on Employment

The Mah ethnic group dominates the Ganta City Corporation and the leadership of the Bain-Garr Administrative District, to the exclusion of the Mandingo people. Politics is about authoritatively deciding "who get[s] what, when and how" (Lasswell, 1936 cited in Ibrahim

2021: 252; Kitamura, n.d:70). In such a process, the group in power has the power to influence decisions and to make decisions on which group gets what, when they will get it, and how it will be given to them. Those who make the decision regarding who is appointed as the City and District Commissioner of the Bain-Garr Administrative District are from the Dan and Mah ethnic groups, as the Nimba Legislative Caucus is comprised exclusively of members from these two ethnic groups. These decision-makers have affected the dominance of the ethnic Mah community in the Nimba Legislative Caucus, and they use their dominance/power to ensure that the Mandingoes are totally excluded from the political posts in the city.

8.1.15 Conclusion on the Mandingo Community's Cohesion

The Mandingoes have lived and operated as a cohesive group for a long time. However, the land situation in Ganta has made them evolve means and strategies to maintain their unity and to help find solutions to their problems. Nearly all share their prayer centres (mosques) in the city, and a good number of the young ones meet in Quranic or Arabic schools. The Mandingoes' togetherness is conspicuous in social, political, and economic terms compared to that of the Dan/Gio and the Mah ethnic groups in Nimba County. They have developed and continue to maintain their "touch one, touch all" mentality and spirit that reinforces their relationship and supports their unity, and the togetherness or cohesion of the Mandingoes is being reinforced by their current situation. Their spirit of "what affects one affects all" ignites spontaneous reactions when one of them is affected by anything, and the land conflict in the city is providing the minority Mandingo ethnic group with a reason to be more united than ever before. While land ownership in Ganta (like in any other city in Nimba County and Liberia) is not communal, the Mandingoes of Ganta treat it as such.

8.1.16 Conclusion on the Mandingoes' Participation in Local Politics

The Mandingoes have supported the non-Ganta Mah people for the last three elections. They have joined those the Ganta Mahs have branded as "strangers" and supported two of these "strangers". Honorable Jeremiah K. Koung, with paternal lineage from south-eastern Liberia, was supported in the 2011 and 2017 general and presidential elections. Honorable Samuel Brown from Buu-Yao, Nimba County, was supported in the 2021 representative by-election. The Mandingo people participate minimally in most decisions made in the city. However, they participate in electoral processes by canvassing and voting for the candidate of their choice. The Mandingoes in Ganta have not supported any Mah candidates from the city and its environs in any of the representative elections since the 2005 elections. The Bain/Ganta's Mah people

have thus found it difficult to win the representative seat in District #1, Nimba County. Given this trend, and if nothing changes and improves, it can be concluded that when mayoral elections are introduced in the city, the Bain/Ganta Mah people will become victims as the “strangers” will gang up against them and defeat them.

8.1.17 Conclusion on the Involvement of the Youth in Mob Violence

On two separate occasions in 2016 and 2019, the city's youth were involved in violence that led to the deaths of two suspected ritual killers and the burning of the Alvino Hotel, respectively. The youth of the city who stood ready to defend their respective ethnic groups had not been adequately engaged and trained in good citizenship, peaceful co-existence, unity in diversity, and tolerance. In response to the recent court-ordered demolition of properties claimed by some Mandingos, Mandingo youths reportedly burned a warehouse used by Dan and Mah merchants. The situation resulted in tension in the city and paralysed normal economic and social activities. The youth from the various ethnic groups began to mobilise and armed themselves to defend their people. Mob violence driven by the youth is thus still a threat to peace in the city.

8.1.18 Conclusion on the Local Mechanisms for Peace in Ganta City

Restoring peace, stability, and reconciliation in the city emerged as a compelling necessity. Relationships between the Mandingo and Mah ethnic group members have been strained but appear calm on the surface for now. Some mechanisms have been used to resolve the local conflicts in this city, but most of them have been formal mechanisms supported by the Government of Liberia, with no regard for the local capacities for peace and indigenous knowledge in the community. The local capacities for peace and the indigenous knowledge present in the community have a significant role to play in helping to build and maintain peace.

Against that backdrop, an informal LPC was constituted during this study in the city. The committee analysed the situation in the city and identified the youth as the most important group to work with to lay the foundation for peaceful co-existence. The older generations of the Dan, Mandingo, and Mah ethnic groups relied on the youth to foster their divisive agenda. The LPC concluded that developing the youth's consciousness so that they learned to embrace and accept each other would better the future of the city. They would not be willing to be misused and abused as instruments of violence and tension anymore. The backbone of tension and division would then be broken, with no room for the sustainability of unnecessary tension

and strained relationships. The LPC organised a two-day workshop in December 2021 - the GYSLA -that ensured: (1) the provision of training that helped selected students and youths to frame and develop their leadership and peacebuilding philosophies and potential; (2) the creation of an opportunity for the cultivation of a culture of peace, non-violence, and patriotism among young people; (3) the building of an active, strong, and conscious pool of diverse future leaders for the city, county, and country who emphasise qualification, competence, and consciousness over ethnicity; and (4) the strengthening of youth and student networks in the city to promote good citizenship, peaceful co-existence, tolerance, and unity in diversity.

The 68 trained participants (youth and student leaders), the researcher, and the LPC have worked together and set up peace cells in communities and schools in the city. These peace cells have preached messages of peaceful co-existence and helped resolve problems in their areas. They have diffused tension and promoted calm and togetherness. After the training and the work of the LPC and the peace cells, there has been an impressive shift in the thoughts of those engaged, as well as in the general population.

8.1.19 Conclusion on the Best Approaches to Handling the Problems of Strained Relationships Resulting from Land Disputes

The conflict in Ganta requires some elements of the following approaches: prevention, resolution, transformation, and peacebuilding. There is a need to prevent further strife by, among other things, addressing the long-term causes of the conflict (Cliffe and Steven, 2017: 2). Appropriate preventive steps and actions must be taken to deal with the situation creatively to avoid escalating the situation into full-blown violence. The root causes and immediate triggers of conflict deserve attention and must be addressed to keep the city peaceful (Cliffe and Steven, 2017:7). At this stage, attention does not need to be paid exclusively to the conditions that gave birth to the conflict in the city and the ultimate changes required to remove it. Attention must rather include creating the conditions necessary for an atmosphere that is conducive to supportive relationships.

While the situation in Ganta does not have an open conflict that needs to be brought to an end, it does have incompatibility issues that need to be harmonised to ensure peaceful co-existence in the city (Fusch and Fusch 2015: 23; Wallenstein 2018: 10-11). The adversarial approach derived from courts in the form of legally binding decisions has not addressed the strained relationships among the parties. Hence, the non-adversarial system, encompassing practices like conciliation, arbitration, negotiation, and mediation, must be used to resolve the relational

issues (Manning 2015: 3). These non-adversarial practices facilitate and support a win-win solution and are known as alternate dispute resolution (ADR). The LPC and peace cells have used the ADR approach in the city to involve a range of collaborative, informal, non-binding, and participative initiatives to improve the relationships among the different ethnic groups.

Efforts have been applied to help the conflicting parties and those with strained relationships in the city to understand the root causes of their issues, work together to change their minds and attitudes, and to see the conflict as an opportunity to promote win-win solutions that benefit all (Kopecek, Hoch and Baar 2016: 445). Issues and experiences that have caused conflict and relational problems have been identified in the process. Reconciliation has been initiated, and forgiveness sought. Creative solutions that meet conflicting parties' needs have been jointly developed, and all those involved in the situations have been encouraged to find solutions to and transform their conflicts. Finding an amicable settlement to the significant issues and the parties' fears and needs in Ganta is no easy task. Initial efforts have been applied to change harmful attitudes and beliefs, to lay the foundation for increased co-operation and harmonious communication.

8.1.20 Conclusion on the Inseparability of Peacebuilding and Development

It has been established that development and peacebuilding are reciprocal processes (David, 1999: 27). For the city to move ahead, both processes need to operate alongside each other to achieve peace and stability and improve the people's quality of life. For the city to be further developed, it must be harmonious. The city needs to nurture lasting peace by encouraging and supporting the peaceful resolution of conflicts (Chetail and Jütersonke 2015).

8.1.21 Conclusion on the Usefulness of Community-based Peacebuilding via Local Peace Committees using IK

For peace to be durable and sustainable, it needs to be built at community levels anchored on the use of creative means of social interaction that reduce violence (Mika 2008, cited in Khairi and Mior Jamaluddin 2017: 156; Serafin 2008, cited in Khairi and Mior Jamaluddin 2017: 156). Intervention in conflicts at community or grassroots levels lays the foundation for sustainable communal harmony and development (Ramnarain 2015: 2). Effective building of peace at the grassroots level requires using the community's worldviews, beliefs, values, culture, traditions, and common knowledge (Ademowo and Nuhu 2017: 37; Magni 2017: 439). The traditional, distinctive, and local knowledge within a specific geographic space's

parameters significantly increases a people's cultural self-importance. It gives trustworthiness and acceptability by the local people as the source of encouragement to resolve home-grown conflictual situations by indigenous means. Such local and environment-specific knowledge is acquired by oral transmission or via demonstration or imitation and is in the interlinkages of the facets of people's lives (Mistry and Berardi 2016: 1).

The use of a community-based peacebuilding approach using indigenous knowledge and local capacities for peace has been manifested in the successful works of local peace committees in Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. LPCs, whether formal or informal, have served as essential structures to enhance and promote peace at local levels. Driven from within and recognising and using local capacities for peace in communities, LPCs have succeeded as valuable instruments in fostering and ensuring communal harmony. Essentially, the work of an LPC is a community-based peacebuilding approach that uses innovative local means of social interaction that contribute to reducing violence and resolving conflicts to guarantee a desirous future (Serafin 2008, cited in Khairi and Mior Jamaluddin 2017: 156). LPCs rely on the utilisation of local skills and knowledge for peacebuilding. LPCs work to guarantee durable and sustainable solutions that build peace and promote peaceful co-existence at community levels (Mika 2008, cited in Khairi and Mior Jamaluddin, 2017:156).

8.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

8.2.1 Recommendations on City Authority Issuance of Squatter's Rights

It was established that the issuance of squatter's rights on private land in Ganta by the city's government ignited communal conflicts. Land, especially in a city like Ganta, is seen by inhabitants and citizens as an instrument of communal identity. Depriving them of their identity has not been taken kindly and has laid the foundation for conflict. Even though Mayor Nohn Tensonnoh, who issued the 33 squatter's rights on private land, is no longer in the city's leadership, the City Corporation needs to facilitate negotiated settlements for the disputes created by the institution. The City Corporation should never again issue squatter's rights on private properties, as it has no authority to do so. The City Corporation must ensure that any properties on which squatters' rights are issued belong to the city government or the Government of Liberia. When the land that squatters are interested in does not belong to the

city or to the national government, the City Authority must not proceed with any transactions concerning it. It must instead link the parties to the rightful owners of the land.

8.2.2 Recommendation on the Political Reasons Underpinning the Land Disputes

While the Mandingoes remain in the minority in Ganta City, politicians need not emphasise their political interests at the expense of the city's peace, calm, and stability by promoting half-truths that benefit them politically. The interest that political actors need to pursue is to bring the disputants to the table to help resolve the issues using traditional and other means available to help their people enjoy the peace and stability they deserve. With no political manipulations and support for either side and instead placing increased relevance on the correct thing to do based on facts, genuine steps would be taken to help restore full stability, peace, and security to the city.

8.2.3 Recommendation on Free Participation in the Economy of the City

Ganta City stands a chance to grow faster and experience an economic boom if its inhabitants feel safe and their investments are secure and free from threats of destruction. The economic revolution in the city has confined the former forerunners in the commercial activities of Ganta to the backbenches. The Mandingoes who want to re-emerge as important parties in the commercial activities of the city need to be encouraged to do so. They need to be allowed to compete in this sector of the city without hindrance(s). No reasons should be used to dispossess people of their land, regardless of its location and economic value. When every ethnic group (Dan, Mandingo, Mah, etc.) is able to invest and compete freely in the city's commercial sector, they will all act to protect and contribute to the city's commerce and safety. Nobody will relish anything bad thing happening in the city to regain access to their entitlements: land.

8.2.4 Recommendation on Inter-ethnic Marriages/Religious Concerns

It is only fair for marriages to be pursued based on desires that can be informed by many things, including religious concerns. The best way to foster religious and ethnic harmony is to respect each other's views and beliefs on such issues as marriage and what necessitates them. Accepting and respecting such values leaves little room for the community to have problems. If a man or woman refuses to enter into a relationship for personal reasons, religion being one, such a decision must be respected. The Mandingoes have reasons for refusing to allow their daughters to marry non-Islamic men. That is their choice and way of life, and thus needs to be respected. Likewise, the Dan and Mah people should be allowed to marry whomever they

please, as that is their choice and way of life. No pressure, marginalisation, and deprivation should be visited upon any group of people to compel them to do what does not please them or what is not permissible in their religion. Nothing should make any group surrender to another group's wishes, against their religious and ethnic values and beliefs. It is unacceptable and a basis for conflict. Such a situation must be avoided entirely for the peace, and stability of Ganta City. For the city to remain peaceful, there must be respect and tolerance for the ethnic and religious beliefs and values that inform marriage decisions.

8.2.5 Recommendation on "Peace Package" Recipients yet to Relocate

The GoL's Ministry of Internal Affairs needs to enforce the spirit and intent of the "peace packages", as it is that Ministry that made the payments and it needs to follow through on its course of action. Those who received the compensation more than five years ago and have still refused to vacate the land need to be removed from it, and the land needs to be taken and turned over to the proper owners. The Ministry should possibly even consider making these negligent/dishonest occupants pay the money back into the coffers of the GoL and then make them leave the land. They signed their agreements of their own free will, thus no duress was involved, and they have already received the money. The 90-day period given to the recipients to relocate upon receiving their "peace packages" has long since elapsed, and the spirit and intent of the agreements must be honoured.

8.2.6 Recommendation on the Declaration of Eminent Domain on the Ganta Market Land

It has become difficult, if not impossible, to remove the number of persons occupying the Old Market land and doing business there. The legitimate owners of that land, who have been seeing their properties being used by the public, are convinced that they will not be able to reclaim their land for fear of public outcry, as they are working to reintegrate into the Ganta society. However, it is not justifiable to continue treating the claimants as though they do not have legitimate concerns. It is therefore recommended that the GoL use all customary and lawful means possible to establish ownership of the land at the Old Ganta Market in a just manner. When the ownerships are established, the government needs to provide just compensation to the landowners so that they are able to rebuild their lives in ways desirous to them. The Ganta populace then needs to be consulted on whether they want the market to continue to operate there, or whether they would prefer it to be moved elsewhere.

8.2.7 Recommendation on the Consequences of the Land Disputes on the Claimants

The best way for the claimants who have not been able to reclaim and use their land to move forward is for them to negotiate lease periods with the occupants, even if they did not originally want to do so. By doing so, the occupants and claimants will be able to establish documented agreements (leases) that recognise and state that the land belongs to the claimants, and that they have entered into clearly defined occupancy/lease periods. The claimants and their heirs can then have the assurance of reclaiming their land in the future, upon expiration of the leases. The proceeds from such agreements can help the claimants invest in meaningful ventures in the interim.

8.2.8 Recommendation on the Consequence of the Land Disputes on the Occupants

The land disputes in the city need to be settled. All those conducting businesses, especially the occupants, need to have the fear and insecurity hanging over their heads removed once and for all. Land ownership needs to be determined and defined so that the lessors and lessees can operate without fear, knowing that their concerns have been acknowledged and settled. When the occupants of the disputed land receive conclusive knowledge of who the appropriate/rightful owners are and the issue is settled, they can enter into agreements with the rightful owners. These agreements will then either ensure that they leave the land or allow them to remain on their occupied land knowing that they can invest further with the assurance that their investments will be safe.

8.2.9 Recommendation on Investment and the Economy

The current economic situation where the Dan and Mah merchants are at the centre of the commercial activity and the Mandingoes are on the periphery needs to be realigned. The realignment needs to accommodate and permit the Mandingoes to compete freely and fairly without any hindrance or exclusion based on their ethnicity and fear that they will once again dominate the commercial sector as they did in the pre-war days. It will allow the city to grow and develop as peace will characterise the transactions and interactions. Competition maximises consumers' satisfaction and puts better options at their disposal. The infrastructure development that is visibly dominated by the Dan and Mah ethnic groups will see competition from their Mandingo compatriots, and the city will be given a much-needed facelift. With the balloon of fear deflated, the air of competition will saturate the commercial activity in the city, and the city and its inhabitants will accrue maximum economic and developmental dividends.

8.3 Recommendation on the Employment of the Most Competent Nimbaians

The recruitment and appointment process for the positions of the District Commissioner of the Bain-Garr Administrative District and the Mayor of the Ganta City Corporation must emphasise inclusivity and ethnic sensitivity while not compromising qualifications, competence, and public consciousness. Qualifications deals with the academic ability of the incumbents to lead and to deliver results. Competence deals with being up to the task by doing what is required to deliver results timeously. Consciousness is the most important of all in the context of the history of ethnic tension in the area. It requires and permits one to think and act in the interests of and for all. One becomes blind to ethnic and other irrelevances, but sensitive to the advancement of the people and their children collectively and holistically. Anyone who meets these criteria, whether Mah, Dan, or Mandingo, should be appointed to these leadership roles. This will significantly diminish the role of ethnicity in the appointment process and place more focus on the substantive issues. Anyone who aspires to these leadership roles must meet the required criteria to be eligible for appointment.

8.4 Recommendation on the Best Approaches to Handling the Problems of Strained Relationships Resulting from Land Disputes

Further conflict prevention, resolution, transformation, and peacebuilding initiatives must be undertaken in the city. Any harmful attitudes and beliefs among the three major ethnic groups in the city need to be worked on to create an environment for increased co-operation and harmonious relationships. Whether interpersonal or intrapersonal, conflict lives within people as they go about their lives and interact with others daily. Hence, efforts must be applied to reduce belligerent behaviours as much as possible, so as to turn the cold peace in the city into warm and lasting peace. Those efforts must be directed purposefully at enhancing economic, political, and social structures that do not sanction and perpetuate supremacy, dependence, and unequal power in Ganta City. With that, steps must be taken to reduce and remove the norms and fundamental behaviours that accept political and economic repressions and exploitation as natural and normal. With this in place, the negative/cold peace in Ganta will assuredly be transformed into positive/warm peace that is direct, cultural, and structural in nature.

8.5 Recommendations on the Simultaneity of Peacebuilding and Development

All peacebuilding efforts need to address development objectives to be sustainable. Equally, development efforts need to address peacebuilding objectives to be sustainable. Hence, in Ganta, peacebuilding objectives must seek to lay the foundation for sustainable development, while development objectives must also seek to lay the foundation for sustainable peace. With that, the city will be assured of sustainable peace and development.

8.6 Recommendation on the Usefulness of Community-Based Peacebuilding Using IK

Community peacebuilding interventions must embrace and utilise all of the people and their cultures, traditions, and knowledge to succeed. An intervention in a community's problem that is not embraced and supported by the community will head nowhere. No community will readily accept a group of people who treat it with disdain and consider it empty of people with valuable ideas and contributions. Against this backdrop, if any intervention is to succeed, whether it be peacebuilding or otherwise, one must first identify and subsequently make maximum use of the existing local capacities to undertake such intervention. In Ganta City the strained relationships need to be improved. To achieve peacebuilding objectives in a place afflicted with conflicts, there is a need to utilise community-based peacebuilding and asset-based community development approaches. These approaches call for reliance on indigenous knowledge (cultures, traditions, values, customs, etc.) to address the community's conflicts or problems properly. While they may not be the only ways available to address community issues, they have proven to be some of the surest and best ways to achieve communal harmony and tranquillity. They recognise and respect local capacities for peace and request their use to address issues that the community values and that add value to the community. That is why the LPC and peace cells have been useful in contributing to the peace in Ganta.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview guide

Section 1. Social Demographic Information

Name (Optional):

Age: (Optional, but an idea of the range is necessary)

Marital status:

Occupation/profession:

Section 2: Land and properties disputes in Ganta City

1. How are the issues of land and other property disputes in Ganta currently?
2. What could be the causes of the land disputes among some of the people in Ganta, and who are the major players in terms of persons and tribes?
3. To what extent would you say the land disputes are now?
4. What are the consequences or results of these conflicts?

Section 3: Land Dispute and the Economy of Ganta City

5. To what extent would you say that land disputes have affected the economic life and growth of Ganta?
6. If there is economic deprivation associated with land disputes, in what form does it occur, which are the most common forms?
7. Briefly explain what economic reasons are behind the continuation of land disputes.

Section 4: Tribal, religious and social discrimination in Ganta City

8. To what extent would you say tribal, religious, or social discrimination exists in Ganta?
9. If there is tribal, religious, or social discrimination in Ganta, what are the most common forms here (exclusion, stereotype, or what)?
10. Please briefly explain, tell me how tribal, religious, or social discrimination has contributed to and undermine the resolution of the land disputes.

Section 5: Local mechanism (s) for peace in Ganta City

11. Has there been any local peacemaking arrangements in the city here to resolve disputes among the citizens, and what are the outcomes?

Section 6: Possible solutions to the land disputes in Ganta City

12. What do you think are the best ways to solve these land disputes?
13. How do you think you can personally contribute to the process that will lead to the Dan, Mandingo, and Mano people peacefully living together in Ganta?
14. What is your view about using local dialogues here to solve this conflict?

15.

Appendix B: Focus Group Guide

Section 1. Social Demographic Information

Name (Optional):

Age (Optional, but an idea of the range is necessary):

Marital status:

Occupation/profession:

Section 2: Causes and Consequences of the Land Dispute

1. What could be the causes of the land disputes among some of the people in Ganta, and who are the major players in terms of persons and tribes?

1. What are the consequences or results of these conflicts?

Section 3: Land Dispute and the Economy of Ganta City

2. To what extent would you say that land disputes have affected the economic life and growth of Ganta?

Section 4: Tribal, religious and social discrimination in Ganta City

3. If there is tribal, religious, or social discrimination in Ganta, what are the most common forms here (exclusion, stereotype, or what)?
4. How has such discrimination contributed to and undermined the resolution of the land disputes?

Section 5: Local mechanism (s) for peace in Ganta City

5. Has there been any local peacemaking arrangements in the city here to resolve disputes among the citizens, and what are the outcomes?

Section 6: Possible solutions to the land disputes in Ganta City

6. What do you think are the best ways to solve these land disputes?
7. What is your view about using local dialogues here to solve this conflict?

Appendix C: Observation guide

Topic: “Post-war Peacebuilding for Development in Ganta City, Liberia”.

Biographical data of co-researchers/participants

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: Male/Female
3. Marital status: married, divorced, single
5. Ethnicity: Dan, Mandingo and Mano
6. Religion: Christianity / Islam

No.	Core observation focus	What to take note of during observation	Obtaining realities
1	Verbal behaviour and communication	The ethnic language that is spoken during an interaction; the tone of voice as person verbally interact; the one who kicks off interaction; the person who relates to whom	
2	Personal space	The closeness of people to each other as they stand	
3	Bodily behaviour and gestures	What one does, who does it, who interacts with whom and who does not interact with whom	
4	Human movement	At the observation location, pay attention to those that enter, leave and spend time there	
5	Appearance or look	Age, clothing, gender, and physical appearance	

Appendix D: Procedures followed before the commencement of the focus group and interview sessions:

- 1) Self-introduction to the participants (my co-researchers) and clarification of the purpose of the interview or focus group session
- 2) Welcome remarks and appreciation of the presence of respondents/participants
- 3) A brief but synthesised outline of ethical considerations given, emphasising confidentiality and anonymity.
- 4) Discussion on the issue of recording or videotaping the session, sharing with them the reasons for such an exercise.
- 5) Provision of assurances to the participants on the safekeeping of the collected data and the disposal process.

Appendix E: Letter of Information



LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study: " The imperative of Post-war Peacebuilding for development in Multi-Ethnic Ganta City in Liberia."

Principal Investigator/ researchers: Teeko T. Yorlay, BA, PGD, and MA

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Sylvia Blanche Kaye, PhD.

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study: This study is going to be conducted to look into the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the post-conflict land and properties disputes in Ganta City. When the issues are identified, efforts will be applied with community actors to resolve conflicts and repair broken relationships and tense. With this, peace, calm and development can exist in the city.

Outline of the Procedures: I will use focus groups, interviews, and observation to collect my data. I will have at least four focus group discussions with the intent of unearthing the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the land disputes. I have decided to conduct no less than 25 and not more than 50 interviews with the city authority, religious leader, leaders of women's groups, leaders of youth groups, elder from the ethnic groups, leaders and key members from the business community, opinion leaders, leaders and key members of the motorcyclists union, leaders and member of other ethnic groups that are resident in the city, student leaders, community leaders, marketers(leaders and key members), traditional leaders, etc. with the purpose of knowing the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the land disputes. I will

visit markets, but stops, community centres, soccer fields, entertainment centres, intellectual centres, school campuses to observe how people from the three ethnic groups verbally and bodily behave and communicate with each other, interact in the human traffic, and what kind of personal spaces they allow each other to occupy or not. I will then have an appreciation of how the land disputes have impacted the way the citizens of Ganta live, relate, and interact with each other.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: There is going to be no discomfort to participants

Benefits: By the repairing of broken relationships, the restoration and maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the community and putting into place structures and mechanisms to promote development, the participants will benefit directly or indirectly.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: Any participant may withdraw because of illness and other reasons without any negative consequences because of your withdrawal.

Remuneration: participants will not receive any pay or compensation for their participation in this research.

Costs of the Study: If there is any cost associated with this study, it is I the researcher who will bear it with no burden on the participants.

Confidentiality: Your participation in the research will be kept anonymous and confidential as you will not be named at any stage, and a code will be used to represent participants.

Research-related Injury There are no significant risks involved in this research, but you will be made aware of practical issues concerning the venue the event will be held.

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

1. My supervisor, Dr. Sylvia Blanche Kaye, on 0027720703603 and sylviak@dut.ac.za.
2. Please contact me, the researcher, Teeko T. Yorlay, on +231777221169/+231886412216 or ttyorlay@yahoo.com.
3. The Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on +2731 373 2375.
4. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate Support, Dr. L. Linganisio, on 031 373 2326 or researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

1. 373 2326 or researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

Appendix F: Consent Form



Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

I, hereby, confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, **Teeko T. Yorlay**, about the nature, conduct, benefits, and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance

Number: IREC 098/21,

- ☐ I have also received, read and understood the above-written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- ☐ I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials, and diagnosis, will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- ☐ In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- ☐ I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- ☐ I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- ☐ I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research, which may relate to my participation, will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant

Date

Time

Signature/Right

Thumbprint

I, _____ (**Teeko T. Yorlay**) herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully

informed about the nature, conduct, and risks of the above study.

Full Name of Researcher Date Signature _____

Full Name of Witness (If applicable) Date Signature _____

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable) Date Signature _____

Appendix G: Letter of Information to Conduct Research



June 28, 2021

Honourable Amos Suah
CITY MAYOR
Ganta City, Nimba County
Republic of Liberia

Letter of Information to Conduct Research

Dear Honorable Suah:

I present my compliments and write to have you informed that I am a Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) student at the Durban University of Technology. I have chosen to do my Doctoral thesis is on the topic: **“Post-war Peacebuilding for Development in Ganta City, Liberia”**.

It is against this backdrop that I have elected to use this medium to inform you about my research in your city officially. My research is a work in the field of peace studies. I intend to look deeper into the nature, extent, causes, and consequences of the post-conflict land and properties disputes in your city that have been hot topical issues for a while and have the propensity to retard progress, undermine peace and tranquillity, fracture relationships, pit elements of some ethnic groups against one and other, inhibit genuine reconciliation and threaten the security and development of a once peaceful and happy people of your city.

Eventually, the product of this research will be a body of knowledge that does not only lay bare the issues of land conflict in Ganta City, but also evolves strategies and means of handling post-

conflict tension and promoting social cohesion in this multi-ethnic environment of yours via structures that build lasting peace and promote sustainable development. It is predicated upon the mentioned above, Honourable Mayor, and because my research will be done in the city limits that I have elected to have you officially informed via this conduit.

I have attached hereto a copy of my proposal which includes copies of the data collection tools, consent form, and letter of information to be used in the research process, as well as a copy of the approval letter which I have received from the Institutional Research Ethics Committee (IREC).

If you require any further information, Honourable Mayor, please do not hesitate to contact me +231777221169/+231886412216 or ttyorlay@yahoo.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Teeko T. Yorlay
Ph.D. STUDENT
Public Administration-Peace Studies
Durban University of Technology

Appendix H: List of communities, zones, and community leaders in Ganta City

No.	Name of Zonal Heads	Zone # and Community
1.	Zone # 1	Leader: Charles Cooper
		1. Blagay Pa (Town) 2. Gbatu Quarter Community 3. Public Works Yard
2.	Zone #2	Leader: Saye Tensonnon
		4. Gbalagbein 5. Palm Farm 6. Deakehmein 7. Christian Community 8. Catholic Community
3.	Zone # 3	Leader: Anthony Baar
		9. Guinea Road Community
		10. Toweh Yard Community
4.	Zone # 4	Leader: Lincoln Paye
		11. Bassa Community
		12. Glenyiluu Community
		13. Congo Community
		14. Nyan Korma Quarter
		15. Old Car Garage Community
5.	Zone # 5	Leader: Anthony Vah
		16. GWR Community
6.	Zone # 6	Leader: G. Milton Dolo
		17. LPRC Community

		18. LPMC Community
		19. Valley Community
7.	Zone # 7	Leader: Albany Q. Gonquoi
		20. Boe Community
		21. Hope Village Community
8.	Zone # 8	Leader: Mr. Nuogon
		22. Gbloryee Community
		23. Jacob Town Community
		24. Peace Community
9.	Zone # 9	Leader: Anthony Paye
		25. Pearson Community
		26. Small Community

Appendix I: Communities, Schools, and PC members

<u>1.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: LPMC Bye Pass		
No.	Name	Position
1	Promise Gongbaye	Chairperson
2	Vera Tomah	Co-Chairperson
3	Irene Dolo	Secretary
4	Ketoria Jackson	Member
5	Nelly Bargue	Member
<u>2.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: Muslims School		
No.	Name	Position
1	Ayouba Kenneh	Chairperson
2	Ansu M. Dolley	Co-Chairperson
3	Ansu M. Jabateh	Secretary
4	Dauda Keita	Member
5	Mohammed Kamara	Member
<u>3.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: YMCA High School		
No.	Name	Position
1	James S. Dahn	Chairperson
2	Carius P. Dolo	Co-chairperson
3	Franklin Domah	Secretary
4	Samuel Zawolo	Member
5	C. Mandela Gaylah	Member
<u>4.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: Ganta United Methodist		
No.	Name	Position
1	Aaron D. Duogbah	Chairperson

2	G. Aaron Saye	Co-chairperson
3	Winifred Y. Waylaun	Secretary
4	Princeston Gborlay	Member
5	Precious Saye	Member
<u>5.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: Deakehmein Community		
No.	Name	Position
1	Josephine Kardamie	Chairman Person
2	Patience Walker	Co-Chairperson
3	Cecelia Toweh	Secretary
4	Marion Tozay	Member
5	Lorroter Flomo	Member
<u>6.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: Valley Community		
No.	Name	Position
1	Alvina Menkor	Chairperson
2	Harriet Gannie	Co-chairperson
3	Uriah Y. Queewon	Secretary
4	Diana Nouhn	Member
5	Joe Nekaryee Teah Jr.	Member
<u>7.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: Messiah Christian Academy		
No.	Name	Position
1	Jonathan P. Dennis Jr.	Chairperson
2	Marshall M. Gbeanquoi	Co-chairperson
3	Georgeline Garziah	Secretary
4	Irene N. Biago	Member
5	Deapeh P. Behn	Member
<u>8.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: Hope Village Community		

No.	Name	Position
1	Edward Lekpah	Chairperson
2	Benquiman Cheaqee	Co-chairperson
3	Ruth Nyah	Secretary
4	Ruth Forkpah	Member
5	Felecia Martor	Member
<u>9.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: Harriet E. Parkinson		
No.	Name	Position
1	Emmanuel P. Boandolo	Chairperson
2	Maxin Z. Senneh	Co-chairperson
<u>10.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: St Lawrence Catholic High School		
No.	Name	Position
1	Ituna Cole	Chairperson
2	Teewon Carson	Co-Chairperson
<u>11.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: LPMC Community		
No.	Name	Position
	Princeton Kollie	Chairperson
<u>12.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: City View Community		
No.	Name	Position
1	Junior Yarkpah	Chairperson
2	Kou P. Guanah	Co-Chairperson
3	Robert Lomah	Secretary
4	Joseph Bono	Member
5	Helena Dunnah	Member
<u>13.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: LPRC Zone 3		
No.	Name	Position

1	Francis N Sien	Chairperson
2	Samuel Zuu	Co-Chairperson
3	Erasmus Kporkpor	Secretary
4	Yei L. Selwon	Member
5	Catherine Domah	Member
<u>14.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: Christian Community		
No.	Name	Position Contact Number
1	Hezekiah Jackson	Chairperson
2	Yah Kokeh	Co-Chairperson
3	Joannah Cooper	Secretary
4	Amelia K. Jackson	Member
5	Kou Cooper	Member
<u>15.</u> Name of Peace Cell/ Community: Royal Community		
No.	Name	Position
1	David Korson	Chairperson
2	Peter Y. Yormie	Co-Chairperson
3	Justin Nuah	Secretary
4	Jenkins Beaglar	Member
5	Lawrence Wortuah	Member

8.7

Appendix J: Names of Claimants against Occupants in Ganta City as registered by the First Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba Land and Properties Disputes in 2006

1. ALIEU M. KAMARA- CLAIMANT

1. Roland Tokpa
2. Mohammed Barrie
3. Aaron Gboko
4. Jacob Kollie
5. Angeline Korto
6. Theresa Nelson
7. Johnson W. Dolo
8. Mama Paye
9. Linda Paye
10. Wiston Joe

2. SEKOU M. TOURE- CLAIMANT

11. Henry Porte/Princess Porte
12. Paul Kollie
13. Kou Saye
14. George Gonpue
15. Betty Gonpue
16. John Fayiah
17. George
18. Esther Dahngbye/ David
19. Junior Gono
20. Mike Sunkarlay

3. SAMAKA JABATEH -CLAIMANT

21. Alphonso Wahyee
22. Daniel Tarkpor
23. Moses Gono

4. KALILU KONNEH/AMADOU KONNEH- CLAIMANT

- 24. Oretha Zaweeh
- 25. Patricia Makakey

5. FOREBOREE KOMARAH-CLAIMER

- 26. Mada Yei Quiqui

6. MASALA SHERIFF/LAYEE SHERIFF- CLAIMANT

- 27. Mr. Linda Baryogar
- 28. Mamie Sonkalay
- 29. Mr. Whiteman
- 30. Kema Yeanay/Nyan Yeanay
- 31. Junior Lorwee/Amelia Teah
- 32. Mr. Vohn
- 33. Harris Teah

7. ABULAYEE DUKULY/SAMUKA DUKULY- CLAIMANT

- 34. Erison Larkpo/Kula Larkpo
- 35. Ellen Karlah

8. FASU KROMAH – CLAIMANT

- 36. Jeff Mapue
- 37. Staven Johnny
- 38. Harris Teah/Patricia Teah
- 39. G. Quelay Brooks
- 40. Koko Dawoyea/Paye Taryor
- 41. Mayoress Nohn Tensonnon
- 42. A. Lasegon
- 43. Jeff Loryee
- 44. Jefferson Martor
- 45. Hills Mavis
- 46. Patrick Meinkeleh
- 47. Peter Conteh
- 48. Joseph Duo
- 49. Victoria Dahn

- 50. Nya Tokpa
- 51. Koloko Johnson
- 52. Steve David
- 53. Alex David/Mamie David
- 54. Allison/Stave David
- 55. Nya Suah
- 56. Irene Teah/Emmanuel Dolopir
- 57. Musu Kadamea/Joseph Flomo

9. MOHAMED KROMAH/SEDIKI KROMAH- CLAIMANT

- 58. Foday H. Freeman

10. AMARA KROMAH/BRAHIMA KROMAH- CLAIMANT

- 59. Ma Bee Gbala
- 60. Ophelia Dahn
- 61. Theresa Dorr Cooper

11. MAMADOU DORLEY- CLAIMANT

- 62. Mohammed Bada
- 63. Prince Cooper
- 64. Abraham Barrie
- 65. Varlee Kieta
- 66. Charles Wondor
- 67. Prince Yormie
- 68. Gboi Dolo
- 69. Peter Wonyamon
- 70. Edwin Lalon
- 71. James Sayekau
- 72. Emmah/ Prince Vahnmanuel Reeves/Rebecca Reeves
- 73. Moses Gbicarn
- 74. Rose Gortor

12. ANSUMAN JABREH/MAMADEE JABATEH- CLAIMANT

- 75. John Kermah / Prince Vahn
- 76. Charles Lincoln
- 77. Vajama Johnson (Lappa Special)

- 78. Baby Girl Kaolon
- 79. Wonitta Koso/ George Yeanglee

13. KALIA DONZO- CLAIMANT

- 80. Ma Love
- 81. Nathaniel Dennis
- 82. Rita Paye

14. ABU DONZA- CLAIMANT

- 83. Gonda
- 84. NelsonKorguor
- 85. Steve S. Doloson
- 86. Gary McCintoch
- 87. Gi rl Girl Parsuah
- 88. Watson Lloyd
- 89. Tokpa Gayflor or Zore
- 90. Naomi James/ Alfred Suah
- 91. Saye Lougon
- 92. Gonda Wahyee

15. LASANA KEITA- CLAIMANT

- 93. Cyrus Beah
- 94. Yei Gonglo/ Junior

16. LASANA KEITA- CLAIMANT

- 95. Patience Mentee
- 96. Martin Leo/ Abigial Leo
- 97. Mohammed Kaifala/ Joseph Kaifala
- 98. Obediah Memakeh

17. ABU DONZO- CLAIMANT

- 99. Samuel Gbozeh
- 100. John Kuwon

18. MAMADEE KEITA- CLAIMANT

- 101.Tenneh Dolo/ Naomi Durate
19. BANGALEE DORLEY/ LUSENE DOLLEY- CLAIMANT
- 102.Alice Wongaa
- 103.Mr. Saye S, Paye
- 104.Helena Zoegar
- 105.Othello Fayiah
- 106.Fayiah Fartomh/ Edwina Roberts
20. ADAMA PERRY- CLAIMANT
- 107.George Tugbeh
21. MORRIS KROMAH- CLAIMANT
- 108.Benjamin Vah/Oretha Vah
- 109.Amelia Wehee/Samuel Wehyee
- 110.Comfort Paye/Dee Luogon
- 111.Oldman Moses Payegar
- 112.Joanna Suah
- 113.Alice Gbalea
- 114.Rebecca Kollie/ Emmamuel Kollie
- 115.Mrs. Nohn Tensonnon
22. BENDU KROMAH- CLAIMANT
- 116.Church
23. SAMUEL BYWARL- CLAIMANT
- 117.Ma Bee Glah
- 118.Winifred Dahnzukeh
- 119.Sam Luogon
- 120.Sahn Luogon
24. SEKU KROMAH- CLAIMANT
- 121.Annie Farmah/ Joseph Farmah
- 122.Shirley Brown
- 123.Georgia Gonwuokay
25. FALIKU DONZO/BETTYDONZO- CLAIMANT
- 124.Marie Tokpa/Peter Tokpa
26. MAMADEE SANOE- CLAIMANT
- 125.Yei Konkah
- 126.Nohn Kona
27. ALEU KROMAH- CLAIMANT

127. Marie Kruah
28. MOLUGBEH KAMARA- CLAIMANT
128. Amos Martin/Doris Freeman
129. Annie Wonpoe/ Martin Wonpoe
29. LASANA KANNEH- CLAIMANT
130. Peter Dahn
131. Joseph G. Dorleyan
30. MAMADEE A. SANOE- CLAIMANT
132. Marpue Gardur/ Nathaniel Garduar
133. Nyanquoi Gumpa
31. FALIKU DOLLEY/ LUSENE DOLLEY- CLAIMANT
134. Eith Youhn/Dahn Teaton
135. Oretha Taye/Emmanuel Taye
32. BALL N. LAPOE/PETER QUOI- CLAIMANT
136. Marth Meainay
137. Victoria Gblee
33. MAMADEE KAMARA- CLAIMANT
138. Tamba Cooper
139. Musu Gbarzeh/Rufus Sayweah
140. Nathaniel Gwegolo/Maron Oaval
34. MAMADEE KONNEH CLAIMANT
141. Janet Fayiah
35. SAMUKAI SANOE – CLAIMANT
142. Mulbah Smith
36. VAMUYEH DOLLEY- CLAIMANT
143. Josiah Gono
37. A M. KAMARA- CLAIMANT
144. Obeto Saywah-----Squarтер Right Beneficiary (#5)
38. MOLIBAH TALAWALEY – CLAIMANT
145. Orano Sytee/Hellen Cole
39. BANGALEE TALAWALEY – CLAIMANT
146. Eva Kande
40. DONZO- CLAIMANT
147. Cocher/Musu Kromah
41. VAMUYAN DONZO- CLAIMANT
148. Oretha Messah

- 149.Cyrus
42. VACHEMON V. JABATEH- CLAIMANT
- 150.Cllr. Samuel Belleh
43. MACHEN KEITA- CLAIMANT
- 151.Cecelai Freeman
- 152.Mary Zueleh
- 153.Thomas
44. MAMDEE DOLLEY – CLAIMANT
- 154.Morris
45. HAWA DONZO- CLAIMANT
- 155.Yellamon
- 156.Mary Zarweeh
- 157.Emmanuel
46. VARMOYAN KONNEH- CLAIMANT
- 158.Isaac Weatio
47. MA SIKEN KROMAH- CLAIMANT
- 159.Comfort Miah
48. D. KONNEH – CLAIMANT
- 160.Prince Dorlim
49. KESSELY TAMA- CLAIMANT
- 161.Wuo Dorlim
50. ANDREW PANY – CLAIMANT
- 162.Jerry Klee
51. SIAKA KIETA- CLAIMANT
- 163.Fredrick Bueh
- 164.Wuo Jacob
- 165.Achie Mahn
- 166.Nyen Blegay
- 167.Moses Vayepea
52. MAMADEE KROMAH – CLAIMANT
- 168.Edwin Porgor/Nya Porgor
53. FUMBA KROMAH- CLAIMANT

169.Jenneh Emmanuel

54. ALIEU KROMAH- CLAIMANT

170.David Nyegbah

171.Levi

56. ALHAJI SEKOU SANOE- CLAIMANT

172.Bob Gumpa

56. ALIEU SANNAH- CLAIMANT

173.Sis. Lydia

174.Richard Zeamo

175.Miller Tokpa

176.Grace Dahn/Moses Gweh

177.Mike Gaye

178.Ruth Yeanay/Sampson Seebo

57. LUSINI DORLEY – CLAIMANT

179.Peter farlea

180.Jinkin Kpantee

181.Nohn Bonadien/Joseph Bonadien

182.Evelyn /Linda Nuah

183.Joseph G.Zegar

184.Arthur Davis

185.Felix Aroayinbo

186.Amos Suah

187.Abraham Tokpah

58. DAWUA KROMAH CLAIMANT

188.Lawrence Goanue

189.Margret Gontorwon

190.Abraham Tokpah

191.Decee cooper

192.John Kwanon

193.Stephen Payezehn

- 194.Uncle Joe
- 195.Noma Sanjor
- 196.Emmanuel Kofi

59. MAMADEE DORLEY- CLAIMANT

- 197.Omie Jallah
- 198.Mamie L. Kollie
- 199.Junior Flomo/Cynthia Kermue
- 200.Alvin
- 201.Jinkins Cooper/Lydia Tokpah
- 202.Rose Bedell
- 203.Amos N.G.Suah
- 204.Saturday Zoegar
- 205.Bomah Kwaibiah
- 206.Konah Siahway

60. MAMADEE DORLEY – CLAIMANT

- 207.Helena Flomo
- 208.Ma Boun/Johnny Yeanay
- 209.Musu Kamara/ Sampson
- 210.Sokpason Wilson
- 211.j.j. Brothers
- 212.ma Kou Gboble
- 213.marketing Association

61. MAMADEE DONZO – CLAIMANT

- 214.Tarkpor
- 215.Paye Gonda
- 216.Marketing Association
- 217.Othello Beh/Vivian Beh

62. MUSU KROMAH – CLAIMANT

- 218.Amos Suah
- 219.Wonlea Wayloun
- 220.Oliver Kuah
- 221.Mrs.MarieN.Suawah

- 222.J.jonathan Deinsee
- 223.Marketing Association
- 224.Sainee Yekehson
- 225.Nyanmento Youhn
- 226.Edward Gayepea

63. MUSA JABATEH- CLAIMANT

- 227.Marketing Assaciation

64. SAMOKA DONZO- CLAIMANT

- 228.Wuo Flomo/ Yalama Nelebay
- 229.Moses Kollie
- 230.Saye Gono
- 231.Isaac Zuo/Hellen Zuo

65. LUSINI KROMAH- CLAIMANT

- 232.Nathan Flomo/Jonathan Flom
- 233.Chief Nya Poryor
- 234.Andrew Bleimie
- 235.Nya Tensonnon

66. BANGALEE JABATEH- CLAIMANT

- 236.Africano Tarr/Trokon Barbon
- 237.Hawa Jabateh
- 238.Lincoln Quoi
- 239.Levi Yeanpanor
- 240.Alphonso Zeakhan
- 241.Prince Tokpa
- 242.Jallo Ahmed
- 243.Mamadou Alphonso
- 244.Hector Yeiah/Stephen James
- 245.Pauline Yeanah
- 246.Moses Kerkula/Bellin Saye
- 247.Jacob Toe/Mary Toe
- 248.Mark Vaye
- 249.Yei Rambo/Doloimie Paye

250. Victoria Y. Gbalazeh

251. Annita Quoi

252. George Gorsee

253. Dorr Cooper

67. BANGALEE JABATEH-CLAIMANT

254. Yei Dekah/Amos Yowah

255. Steve

Appendix K: Properties Estimated Value for Ganta City

By the Second Ad Hoc Presidential Commission on Nimba Land and Properties Disputes in 2010

#	Claimant	Respondent	Property Description	Estimated Value in L\$	Distribution	
					Claimant	Respondent
1	Betty faliku	Cecelia Gono	Residential/Storage	75,000.00	75,000.00	
2	Vakemo Jabateh	Jacob Toe	Residential/Storage	150,000.00		150,000.00
3	Vakemo Jabateh	George Tokpah	Residential	75,000.00		30,000.00
4	Yousuf Keita	Saah Johnson	Residential	30,000.00		30,000.00
5	“	Joseph F. Quimole	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
6	“	Paye Garpeh	“	40,000.00		40,000.00
7	Mamadée K Sanoe	Judith Yeapeh	Resid./Shop/Storage	125,000.00		125,000.00
8	“	Harry Rancy	“50,000.00			50,000.00
9	“	Mary Zarwea	Residential	100,000.00		100,000.00
10	“	Mrs. Kpakla	“	60,000.00		60,000.00
11	“	Helen Zuo	Residential/shop	25,000.00		25,000.00
12	“	Yei Kollie	“	35,000.00		35,000.00
13	Mamadée Y. Sanoe	Nathaniel Garluo	Resid./Church	70,000.00		70,000.00
14	Lasana Keita	Kou Biago	Resid./Shop	150,000.00		150,000.00

15	Vakemu Keita	Emmanuel Larpor	“	50,000.00	50,000.00	
16	“	Yei Ramoh	Residential	30,000.00		50,000.00
17	Lasana Keita	Mark Suah	Warehouse	150,000.00		150,000.00
18	Mohammed F.	Joseph Duo	Residential	50,000.00		50,000.00
19	Vakemu Jabateh	Angie Freeman	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
20	Mamadee A. Sanoe	Benedict T. Sirleaf	Shop/Resid.	80,000.00		80,000.00
21	Mamadee A .Kromah	Anthony B. Clinton	“”	250,000.00		250,000.00
22	Betty Faliku	Zakpah Lombaye	Residential	21,000.00		21,000.00
23	Mamadee A Sanoe	Mark Paye	“	80,000.00		80,000.00
24	Vamala Jabateh	Mark Vaye	“	42,000.00		42,000.00
25	Lasana Keita	Fedrick Bueah	“	140,000.00		140,000.00
26	Mamadee A. Sanoe	Samuel Harte	Shop/Resid.	120,000.00		120,000.00
27	Manadobah Queateh	George Kruah	“	180,000.00		180,00
28	Varlee Kamara	George Kolleh	“	140,000.00		140,000.00
29	“	Aaron Gboka	“	130,000.00		130,000.00
30	Lasana Keita	Nya Blegaye	Shop/resid.	200,000.00		200,000.00
31	Chemu Kromah	Yei Poyor	Residential	60,000.00	60,000.00	
32	“	Jedidiah Gbala	Shop/resid.	200,000.00	200,000.00	
33	“	Janathan Flomo	Residential	60,000.00	60,000.00	

34	“	Moses Flomo	Shop/Resid.	70,000.00	70,000.00	
35	“	Saye Gbala	“	75,000.00	75,000.00	
36	“	Paye Yarzue	“	110,000.00	110,000.00	
37	“	Andrew Blemie	Residential	60,000.00	60,000.00	
38	“	Morris Suah	“	60,000.00	60,000.00	
39	Lasana Keita	Aloycious Wehyee	Residential	170,000.00		170,000.00
40	Musa Kromah	Wilson Sokpah	Guest House	245,000.00	245,000.00	
41	Mohammed Keita	Patience Mentee	Residential	150,000.00		160,000.00
42	Vamuya Jabateh	Osaka Tiah	“	150,000.00		150,000.00
43	Lusene Dolley	Colinco Zue	“	80,000.00	80,000.00	
44	Samuel Kromah	Ganta YMCA	School Building	100,000.00	100,000.00	
45	Vamuya Jabateh	John Flomo	Shop	100,000.00		100,000.00
46	Mohammed Keita	Abigial Martin	Residential	150,000.00		150,000.00
47	“	Dominic Dehenue	“	160,000.00		160,000.00
48	“	Albert Tuazama	“	90,000.00		90,000.00
49	“	Obbediah Meinaker	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
50	Mohammed A. Kromah	Cyrus Gaye	“	150,000.00		150,000.00

51	“	Peter Konah	“	125,000.00		125,000.00
52	“	Deborah Teah	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
53	“	Terrance Yeanay	“	150,000.00		150,000.00
54	“	Vincent K. Nah	“	70,000.00		70,000.00
55	“	Abraham Gboyah	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
56	“	Samo Sonkalay	“	200,000.00		200,000.00
57	“	Photo Charles	“	60,000.00		60,000.00
58	“	Princess Mally	“	42,000.00		42,000.00
59	Masama Sanoe	Williams Teage	“	250,000.00		250,000.00
60	Mohammed A. Kromah	Patrick Konah	“	42,000.00		42,000.00
61	Mamadee A Sanoe	Arthue Dahn	Shop/resid.	80,000.00		80,000.00
62	“	Annie Mahn	Storage/Shop	80,000.00		80,000.00
63	Musa Kromah	Nohn Tensonnoh	Shop/resid.	75,000.00		75,000..00
64	Morris Sidiby	Beh Maweh-Gehi	Residential	150,000.00	150,000.00	
65	“	Colinco Zue	“	70,000.00		70,000.00
66	Makaseh Konneh	Othello Fayiah	“			
67	Vakemu Jabateh	Ma Kou Tokpah	“	125,000.00		125,000.00
68	Prince B. Kulah	Amos Warkeh	3Lots	85,000.00	85,000.00	

69	Yousuf Keita	Everlyn Quimulue	Residential			
70	Mamadee A. Sanoe	James Loyld	Shop/resid.	80,000.00		80,000.00
71	“	Borbor Nyumah	“	200,000.00		200,000.00
72	“	James Yarkpazua	“	70,000.00		70,000.00
73	Varlee Kamara	Paye Sue, Jr.	“	42,000.00		42,000.00
74	“	“	Residential (3)	200,000.00		200,000.00
75	Madama Sanoe	Darius Menmah	Shops/resid.	120,000.00		120,000.00
76	“	Arthur Paye	Residential	75,000.00		75,000.00
77	Vaserrbeh Kromah	Ebor R. Tolbert	“	285,000.00		285,000.00
78	Garbing Moore	Felecia Healea	Shop/resid	292,000.00		292,000.00
79	Mamadee A. Sanoe	Herold Geleplay	Residential	75,000.00		75,000.00
80	Manadobah Queatch	George Mentoe	“	105,000.00		105,000.00
81	Korkesi Jabateh	Monica Tokpa	“	100,000.00	100,000.00	
82	Mamada Sanoe	Junior Zor	“	185,000.00		185,000.00
83	“	Chris Dagbeh	“	250,000.00		250,000.00
84	Amara Jabateh	Alex Saye	“	400,000.00		400,000.00
85	Mamadee Sanoe	Prince wahquoi	Residential	120,000.00		120,000.00
86	Lasana Keita	Archie Mahn	Shop	190,000.00		190,000.00

87	Madama Sanoe	Yah B. Quee	Residential	125,000.00	125,000.00	
88	Abu Sheriff	Alvin N. Willi	“	400,000.00		400,000.00
89	Musa Kromah	Sompon Gaye	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
90	Mamadec Kenneh	YMCA School	School Building	150,000.00	150,000.00	
91	Vekeh Kromah	John Kwoan	Shop/resid	90,000.00		90,000.00
92	Mohammed Keita	Alphanson Paye	Residential	75,000.00		75,000.00
93	Abu Donzo	Sam Guann	“	150,000.00		150,000.00
94	Mrs. Joe Brown	Michael Karzon	“	350,000.00		350,000.00
95	Vekeh Kromah	Augustine Troe	“	90,000.00		90,000.00
96	Mamadec Sanoe	Saye Baby Suah	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
97	Karlamon Conneh	Sarah Cooper	“	110,000.00		110,000.00
98	“	Joseph Gbollic	“	200,000.00		200,000.00
99	Amara Jabateh	Alice Cassell	“	65,000.00		65,000.00
100	Vakemu Jabateh	Joseph Gbollics		350,000.00		350,000.00
101	Aleo Kromah	Levi Yeben	“	150,000.00	150,000.00	
102	Musa Turay	Esther Dahngbaye	“	50,000.00		50,000.00

10 3	“	George Mendin	Residential	90,000.00		90,000.00
10 4	Fanta Jabateh	Cyrus Zoe	“	80,000.00		80,000.00
10 5	Ansumana Konneh	Alex Bumie	“	85,000.00		85,000.00
10 6	Layee Konneh	Kou Glay	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
10 7	Kafuma Sanoe	Marran Doe	“	80,000.00		80,000.00
10 8	Mohammed Sanoe	David Tarquie	“	150,000.00		150,000.00
10 9	Musa Turay	Mark Sonkarley	Shop/Resid.	75,000.00		75,000.00
11 0	Abu Fofana	Mark Konah	Resid. (4)Houses	342,000.00		342,000.00
11 1	Abu Donzo	John Quewon	Storage/shop	350,000.00		350,000.00
11 2	Mohammed Kromah	Jimmy Thompson	Shop/resid.	60,000.00		60,000.00
11 3	Musa Turay	Ma-B Ben	Residential	75,000.00		75,000.00
11 4	“	Zian Gonpue	“	110,000.00		110,000.00

11 5	Nya Zengba	Bethel World Church	Church Building	300,000.00	20,000.00	
11 6	Mamadee A. Sanoe	Ranny S. Gbatu	Video Clud	200,000.00		200,000.00
11 7	Stephen Doito	Benedict Flomo	Residential	50,000.00	50,000.00	
11 8	Abu F. Donzo	Samuel M. Gbozah	“	220,000.00		220,000.00
11 9	Junior Moore	Saah Taketime	“	150,000.00		150,000.00
12 0	Machqin H. Jabateh	Ma Mary	“	180,000.00		180,000.00
12 1	Mosonah Fofana	Peter Konah	“	125,000.00		125,000.00
12 2	Lasana Kenneh	Darius Paye	“	110,000.00		110,000.00
12 3	Mamadee Dolly	Darlington Davies	“	90,000.00		90,000.00
12 4	“	Angie Wonlea	“	130,000.00		130,000.00
12 5	“	Jackson Markeh	“	160,000.00		160,000.00
12 6	Lasana Keita	Sam Gbuseh	“	115,000.00		115,000.00

12 7	Kanvalee Konneh	Dickson Guah	“	105,000.00		105,000.00
12 8	Abu Donzo	Jeremiah Garmah	“	75,000.00		75,000.00
12 9	Massa Kromah	Arthur Kpkpah	“	150,000.00		150,000.00
13 0	Sekou Kromah	Adah Ben	“	185,000.00		185,000.00
13 1	Abulia Dukuly	Marson Daily	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
13 2	Aleo M.Donzon	Saye Gondah	“	250,000.00		250,000.00
13 3	“	Nyuma Eatain	“	250,000.00		250,000.00
13 4	“	Aaron Eatain	“	275,000.00		275,000.00
13 5	Partrick Gonwokay	John Clinton	“	135,000.00		135,000.00
13 6	Abu Donzo	Alice Cassell	“	200,000.00		200,000.00
13 7	Bangalee Kromah	Fedis Kolleh	“	350,000.00		350,000.00
13 8	“	David Karto	“	270,000.00		270,000.00

13 9	“	Mamie Mohn	“	120,000.00		120,000.00
14 0	Nyuma Sanoe	Nyu Veinkeh	“	350,000.00		350,000.00
14 1	Aleo M.Donzo	Anthony Paye	Shop/resid	100,000.00		100,000.00
14 2	Bindu Kromah	John Malia	Church Building	375,000.00		375,000.00
14 3	Vekeh Kromah	Paye Garpeh	Residential	100,000.00		100,000.00
14 4	Abulai Dukuly	Thompson Zeayen	“	110,000.00		110,000.00
14 5	Amara Kromah	Hawa Thompson	“	50,000.00		50,000.00
14 6	Hawa Kromah	Ma Moore	“	180,00.00		180,000.00
14 7	Abulai Dukuly	Theresa Thompson	“	42,000.00		42,000.00
14 8	Ansumana Kromah	Concern Woman	Head Office	1,300,000.00		1,300,000.00
14 9	Aleo M Donzo	Tokpah Gayflor	Residential	225,000.00		225,000.00
15 0	Amara Jabateh	Prince Vahn	“(3houses)	300,000.00		300,000.00

15 1	Mohammed Keita	Fedrick Miah	Residential	185,000.00		185,000.00
15 2	Sekou Kromah	Grace Kposor	“	85,000.00		85,000.00
15 3	James Yeanay	Dahn Yoryor	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
15 4	Karlamon Conneh	Ma Hawa	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
15 5	Bangalee Konneh	Cecelia Suah	“	200,000.00		200,000.00
15 6	Valee Kamara	Paye Suo	Rubber Farm	500,000.00		500,000.00
15 7	“	Joseph Sumo	“	250,000.00		250,000.00
15 8	Mamadee A.Sanoe	Haetor Yeah	Shop	42,000.00		42,000.00
15 9	Varsebleh Jabateh	Grace Baptist Church	Church Building	300,000.00	100,000.00	
16 0	Vamala Jabateh	Philip Suah	Residentail	54,000.00		100,000.00
16 1	Nyama Sanoe	Moral Menwon	Residential	100,000.00		100,000.00
16 2	Mohammed Kenneh	Alex Korboah	“	200,000.00		200,000.00

16 3	“	Prince Date	“	125,000.00		125,000.00
16 4	“	Doris Freeman	“	425,000.00		425,000.00
16 5	“	Victoria Gonotee	“	160,000.00		160,000.00
16 6	“	Esther Boumien	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
16 7	“	Darius Gonleh	“	200,000.00		200,000.00
16 8	“	Mamie Bedell	“	150,000.00		200,000.00
16 9	“	Janet Wowah	“	150,000.00		150,000.00
17 0	“	Tomgor Denyeya	“	90,000.00		90,000.00
17 1	“	Mamie Menboe	“	60,000.00		60,000.00
17 2	“	Fanta Kpahn	“	210,000.00		210,000.00
17 3	“	Henry Flomo	“	175,000.00		175,000.00
17 4	“	Edwin Sauh	“	100,000.00		100,000.00

17 5	“	Martin Wonpoe	“	200,000.00		100,000.00
17 6	“	Peter Dahn	“	225,000.00		225,000.00
17 7	“	Mercy Karnue	“	195,000.00		195,000.00
17 8	“	Comfort Materia	“	205,000.00		205,000.00
17 9	“	Moses Gweh	“	175,000.00		175,000.00
18 0	Alfred Queeh	Thompson Zeayen	“	250,000.00		250,000.00
18 1	Madama Sanoe	Beatrice Grugbaye	“	260,000.00		260,000.00
18 2	Vakemo Jabateh	Theresa cooper	Motel/shop	500,000.00		500,000.00
18 3	“	Joe Watson	Residential	150,000.00		150,000.00
18 4	“	Marie Bouh	“	175,000.00		175,000.00
18 5	“	Moses Vaye	“	120,000.00		120,000.00
18 6	Mayama Jabateh	Benjamin Vah	“	175,000.00		175,000.00

18 7	“	Samuel Wehyee	“	180,000.00		180,000.00
18 8	Varlee Kamara	Winston Joe	Resid/shop	300,000.00		300,000.00
18 9	Abraham Dolly	Eva Bartuah	Residentail	100,000.00	100,000.00	
19 0	Mayama Kromah	Alice Gbarleah	“	150,000.00		150,000.00
19 1	Brahama Kromah	Patrice Parsuah	“	150,000.00		150,000.00
19 2	Aloe k.Sanoe	Samuel Kruah	“	50,000.00		50,000.00
19 3	Gaye Kromah	Rufus Say-weah	“	250,000.00		250,000.00
19 4	Sekou Kromah	Abraham Foujolo	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
19 5	Vasabeh kromah	Francis Siaway	“	125,000.00		125,000.00
19 6	Madama Sanoe	Baby Karnue	“	42,000.00		42,000.00
19 8	Vamala Jatatch	Harrison Nehway	“	115,000.00	115,000.00	
19 9	Madama Sanoe	Julius Azuzu	“	30,000.00		30,000.00

20 0	Mohammed Sanoe	Rufus Wontoe	“	175,000.00		175,000.00
20 1	Abu Kromah	Maimah Brown	“	40,000.00		40,000.00
20 2	“	Amelia Doleyan	“	75,000.00		75,000.00
20 3	Massa M. Jabateh	Saye Zawolo	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
20 4	“	Oldpa Wonpoe	“	100,000.00		100,000.00
20 5	Blama Fofana	Deeper Life church	Church Building	100,000.00	100,000.00	
20 6	Mayama Kromah	Mawolo Myer	Residential	100,000.00		100,000.00
20 7	Paul Gbar	John Vaye	“	100,000.00	100,000.00	
20 8	Abu Donzo	Sam Goanue	Shop/resid	125,000.00		125,000.00
20 9	Asatu Kromah	Joseph B.Famah	Residential	110,000.00		110,000.00
21 0	Gabing Moore	Jacob Begben	“	115,000.00		115,000.00
21 1	Joseph Kallay	Harry S.Carson	“	100,000.00		100,000.00

21 2	Vamala Jabateh	Nyumah Fayiah	“	175,000.00		175,000.00
21 3	George Kolleh	Daniel Bonah	Resid/Video Club	185,000.00		185,000.00
21 4	Lasana Kieta	Jerry Luogon	Residential	450,000.00	450,000.00	
TOTAL ESTIMATED AMOUNT FOR RESPONDENTS:						28,578,000.00
TOTAL ESTIMATED AMOUNT FOR CLAIMANT:					2,795,000.	
GRAND TOTAL FOR CLAIMANTS AND RESPONDENTS:						31,373,000.00

Appendix L. The Four Broad Categories and 35 types of land disputes

A) Conflicts occurring on all types of property

1. Boundary conflicts
2. Inheritance conflicts
3. Ownership conflicts due to legal pluralism
4. Ownership conflicts due to lack of land registration
5. Ownership conflicts between state and private/common/collective owners
6. Multiple sales/allocations of land
7. Limited access to land due to discrimination by law, custom or practice
8. Peaceful, informal land acquisitions without evictions
9. Violent land acquisitions, incl. clashes and wars over land
10. Evictions by landowners
11. Illegal evictions by state officials acting without mandate
12. Market evictions and distortion of local land market/values
13. Disputes over the payment for using/buying land
14. Disputes over the value of land
15. Conflicts between human/cultural and natural use (flora and fauna)
16. Destruction of property

B) Special conflicts over private property

17. Expropriation by the state without compensation
18. Sales of someone else's private property
19. Leasing/renting of someone else's private property
20. Illegitimate expropriations by banks
21. Conflicts due to land/agrarian reforms
22. Conflicting claims in post-conflict situations
23. Illegal/improper uses of private land
24. Intra-family conflicts, especially in case of polygamy

C) Special conflicts over common and collective property

- 25. Competing uses/rights on common and collective land
- 26. Illegal/improper uses of common property
- 27. Unauthorised sales of common or collectively owned property
- 28. Disputes over the distribution of revenue from customary land

D) Special conflicts over state property

- 29. Illegal/improper uses of state land
- 30. Competing uses/rights on state property
- 31. Land grabbing by high-ranking public officials
- 32. Illegal sales of state land
- 33. Illegal leases of state land (including concession land, forests, mines)
- 34. Disputes over revenues from state land generated through lease, sale or transformation of its use
- 35. Improper land privatisation (e.g. unfair land distribution or titling)

**Appendix M: Ganta Youth and Student Leadership Academy (GYSLA)
attendance list**

No	Name	Organization	Position
1	Jerry Karngbaye	Peace Community	Youth Chairman
2	Emmanuel Saye	Peace Community	Secretary
3	Odomeo G. Saylor	Valley Community	Youth President
4	Adolphus D. Korkapeh	Public Work Yard Community	Youth Speaker
5	Solomon Garta	Congo Community	Youth Speaker
6	Ruth M. Nyan	Hope Village Community	Youth Speaker
7	Teewon Carson	St Lawrence Catholic High School	Student Leader
8	Ituna Secret Cole	St Lawrence Catholic High School	Student Leader
9	Josephine Y. Gbeanquoi	King's Chapel	Choir Leader
10	Linda D. Markar	Ganta YMCA High School	Peace Club Member
11	Johnson Menkarloe Nunah	LPMC Bye Pass Community	Youth Secretary
12	Eddin K. Meaneh	Messiah Christian Academy	Queen
13	Wesley C. Sumowalt	Ganta YMCA High School	Student Leader
14	James S. Dunn	Ganta YMCA High School	Peace Club President
15	Lydia Gonwo	Public Work Yard Community	Police
16	Alvina Menkor	Hope Academy High School	Representative
17	Promise F. Gongbaye	LPMC Bye Pass Community	Youth Chairlady
18	Amedou M. Kromah	United Brothers And Sisters	Cost Chief
19	Mayanda Kromah	Ganta Central Mosque	Speaker

20	Vera Toman	LPMC Bye Pass Community	Youth Member
21	Lydia Flomo	Borpoanyee Church	Choir President
22	Geta Nyagweh	Borpoanyee Church	Member
23	S. Haidala Sirleaf	Old Car Garage Mosque	Youth Chairman
24	Melvin N.Y Zenniel	Blagay-Pa Community	Youth Chairman
25	Fredrick S. Tumpia, Jr.	Yini Memorial	Student
26	Francis T. Gweh, Jr.	Yini Memorial	Student
27	Cyrus N. Boayue	Yini Memorial	Student
28	Austin D. Gonyor	Blagay-Pa Community	President YMI
29	Charles W. Yormie	Glenyeluu Community	Community Youth
30	Deboria N. Karbah	ULICA-Ganta	President
31	Daa W. Domah	ULICA Ganta	Vice President
32	Agatha Sayegbuoh	ULICA Ganta	Secretary
33	Evelyn N. Venn	ULICA Ganta	Assistant Secretary
34	Aaron D. Duogbah	Ganta United Methodist	President
35	G. Aaron Saye	Ganta United Methodist	Co-Chair
36	Morris Kromah	Mandingo Community	Member
37	Bangalie A. Donzo	Muslim Community	Member
38	Ansu M. Dolley	Muslim Community	Member
39	Winifred Y. Waylaun	Ganta United Methodist	Secretary
40	Ayoub K. Kenneh	Islamic School	Member
41	Angeline K. Kpayelee	Christian	Youth Leader
42	Sharon P. Guah	Kings' Chapel	Youth Leader
43	Bob Emmanuel Paye	Ganta City Corporation	Consultant
44	Edward F. Lekpah	Hope Village Community	Chairman

45	Mrs. Pauline B. Flomo	Guinea Road Community	Member
46	Jesco C. Davis	Catholic Justice & Peace Commission	County Supervisor
47	Amos N.G. Suah	GCC-MIA	City Major
48	Fannie Dwayen	Hope of Life Church	Choir
49	Marshall N. Gbeanquoi	Messiah Christian Academy	Student
50	Emmanuel P. Boandolo	Youth Academy	Student
51	Blessing Martin	Jubilee Church	Youth Leader
52	Rev. M. Mulbah Kallon	Messiah Christian Academy	Teacher
53	Mohammed B. Jabateh	Ganta Mosque	Member
54	Musa Jabateh	Ganta Mosque	Chairperson
55	Jonathan P. Dennis, Jr.	Messiah Christian Academy	Student
56	J. Princetson Kollic	LPMC Community	Youth
57	Shadrach K.D. Murpue	Gbloryee	Youth
58	Georgeline Garziah	Messiah Christian Academy	Student
59	Deric M. Dangan	Temple of Hope Church	Youth
60	Cyrus S. Ganah	Nimba Orphanages	Director
61	Exodus Y. Nyah	Royal Community	Youth
62	Doris Yardolo	Toweh Yard Community	Youth Assistant
63	Washington N. Dolo	Catholic Community	Youth Chair
64	Ben Cheyee	Hope Village Community	Youth
65	Josephine Y. Kardamie	Concerned Women	Member
66	Blamah Fully	Ganta Peace Club	Member
67.	Opee K. Kenneh	Ganta Peace Club	Member
68.	Mohammed A. K. Kamara	Ganta Central Mosque	