



## Examining the Requisite Measures to Achieve Peace in the Alavanyo-Nkonya Conflict Area

**Linda Bedzra**

*Department of Social Science,  
Akatsi College of Education*

Email: [bedzral@yahoo.com](mailto:bedzral@yahoo.com)

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### Abstract

This essay examined the requisite measures to achieve peace not only in the study area but in the world over. It argues that long-term peacebuilding techniques are designed to fill the existing gaps in peacekeeping and to address the underlying substantive issues that brought about conflict. Thus, various transformation techniques aim to move parties away from confrontation and violence, and towards political and economic participation, peaceful relationships, and social harmony (Doyle, 2006). This longer-term perspective is crucial to future violence prevention and the promotion of a more peaceful future. Thinking about the future involves articulating desirable structural, systemic, and relationship goals. These might include sustainable economic development, self-sufficiency, equitable social structures that meet human needs and building positive relationships (Laderach, 1977). The findings concluded that the most effective measure to undertake in peace requires cooperation between partners involved in the peacebuilding process. Aside from that, it may be argued that a multi-track approach is required. Thus, various stakeholders involved in the peace process should work cooperatively.

**Keywords:** *Alavanyo-Nkonya, conflict, peacebuilding, peace-keeping process*



## 1.0 Introduction

The concept of positive peace is described by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP) as an optimal environment under which human potential can flourish. The opposite is Negative Peace which refers to the absence of violence or fear of violence - an intuitive definition that many agree with and is more easily measured than other definitions of peace (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2015). Measures of Negative Peace are used to construct the Global Peace Index (GPI). Societal safety and security refers to internal aspects of violence such as homicides, incarceration or availability of small arms while ongoing conflict and militarization capture the extent of current violent conflict and a county's military capacity. A more ambitious conceptualization of peace is Positive Peace, which IEP defines as the attitudes, institutions and structures that create and sustain peaceful societies. Well-developed Positive Peace represents the capacity for a society to meet the needs of citizens, reduce the number of grievances that arise and resolve remaining disagreements without the use of violence. Positive Peace acts as a system, therefore the sum of the parts is more than the constituent parts and the system must be addressed as a whole. Positive Peace also provides a framework for risk analysis, as historical research has shown that countries which have low levels of violence but weak Positive Peace tend to experience falls in peacefulness over time. In 2008, IEP identified 30 countries that fit this profile which were at risk of deteriorating and becoming more violent. This approach contrasts with most research in the field which is focused on what does not work and why systems or institutions fail. Understanding what creates sustainable peace cannot be found in the study of violence as the factors that are associated with resilient societies are not present in states that are failing, highly corrupt or have large group grievances. The IEP (2015) identified the indicators of positive peace as follows:

**Well-Functioning Government:** A well-functioning government delivers high-quality public and civil services, engenders trust and participation, demonstrates political stability and upholds the rule of law.

**Sound Business Environment:** The strength of economic conditions as well as the formal institutions that support the operation of the private sector determine the soundness of the business environment. Business competitiveness and economic productivity are both associated with the most peaceful countries, as is the presence of regulatory systems which are conducive to business operation.

**Equitable Distribution of Resources:** Peaceful countries tend to ensure equity in access to resources like education and health, as well as, although to a lesser extent, equity in income distribution.

**Acceptance of the Rights of Others:** A country's formal laws that guarantee basic human rights and freedoms and the informal social and cultural norms that relate to behaviours of citizens serve as proxies for the level of tolerance between different ethnic, linguistic, religious, and socioeconomic groups within the country. Similarly,

gender equality, worker's rights and freedom of speech are important components of societies that uphold acceptance of the rights of others.

**Good Relations with Neighbours:** Having peaceful relations with other countries is as important as good relations between groups within a country. Countries with positive external relations are more peaceful and tend to be more politically stable, have better functioning governments, are regionally integrated and have lower levels of organized internal conflict. This factor is also beneficial for business and supports foreign direct investment, tourism and human capital inflows.

**Free Flow of Information:** Peaceful countries tend to have free and independent media that disseminates information in a way that leads to greater openness and helps individuals and civil society work together. This is reflected in the extent to which citizens can gain access to information, whether the media is free and independent and how well-informed citizens are. This leads to better decision-making and more rational responses in times of crisis.

**High Levels of Human Capital:** A skilled human capital base — reflected in the extent to which societies educate citizens and promote the development of knowledge — improves economic productivity, care for the young, enables political participation and increases social capital. Education is a fundamental building block through which societies can build resilience and develop mechanisms to learn and adapt.

**Low Levels of Corruption:** In societies with high corruption, resources are inefficiently allocated, often leading to a lack of funding for essential services. The resulting inequities can lead to civil unrest and in extreme situations can be the catalyst for more serious violence. Low corruption, by contrast, can enhance. Whereas these factors apply to States, this research examines them at the micro level of the Alavanyo-Nkonya area. The idea is to examine the extent to which these factors exist in the Alavanyo-Nkonya area. The examination is necessary given that the area has not benefitted from societal safety and security for over 80 years. Societal safety and security refers to internal aspects of violence such as homicides, incarceration or availability of small arms while ongoing conflict and militarization capture the extent of current violent conflict and a county's military capacity.

## 2.0 Research Design and methodology

Research design according to Kothari (2004) consists of a description of the population of the study focusing on its sample, techniques and procedures that would be used in the gathering of the information from the sample and the methods that would be used in the processing of the information obtained and its analysis which facilitate the smooth flow of the research operations, thus making the research efficient and minimizes wastage of time, effort and money. In the view of Agyedu, Donkor and Obeng (2011), research design refers to the overall plan used by the

researcher to look for answers to the research questions and testing the hypothesis formulated. It is seen as a comprehensive master plan, framework, or a blue print of the research which stipulates the general statement of the various methods used, and also guides the collection and analysis of the data collected. Agyedu *et al.* (2011) maintain that depending on the needs of the researcher, the research design may be very detailed statement or only outline the minimum information essential for planning the research. They argued that the function of the research design therefore is to see to it that the requisite data in accordance with the problem at stake is accurately collected. The research design used is a case study. Gall, *et al.*, (2007) observe that a case study is the in-depth study of one or more instances of a phenomenon in its real-life context that reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon. Punch (2005) gives a prescriptive definition of case study and indicates that: “the case study aims to understand the case in depth, and in its natural setting, recognizing its complexity and its context. It also has a holistic focus, aiming to preserve and understand the wholeness and unity of the case” (Punch, 2005, p.144). To investigate into the peace processes involved in the Alavanyo-Nkonya area, data was collected primarily through qualitative methods; observation and interviews. Qualitative research methods, as stressed by Denzin and Lincoln (2005) are a situated activity that locates the observer in the world, and consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world, and turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self (Cohen *et al.*, 2011). This means that qualitative research study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, the phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Silverman, 2010). This also indicates that qualitative research methods involves finding and understanding experiences, perspectives, and thoughts of respondents, and thereby exploring meaning, purpose, or reality of a phenomenon (Flick, 2006).

The case study design was adopted based on similar works on peace processes and conflict resolution conducted by researchers such as Wolcott (1990), and Adzahli-Mensah (2007). Cohen *et al.* (2011) explained that case study is a form of qualitative research approach that allows detailed investigations of individuals, groups, institutions or other social units. For its utility Adzahli-Mensah (2007) and Tin (2009) argues that qualitative case study focuses on understanding the particular case in its complexity. Docherty (2001) and Adzahli-Mensah (2007) used qualitative case study to study and explore conflict related issues in the USA and Ghana. According to them the study design allowed an in-depth investigation of the issues involved in peace and conflict resolution processes. In the specific case of Alavanyo-Nkonya context Adzahli-Mensah (2007) used the case study design to develop a model that explained how the age-old conflict was resolved. Therefore the case study has both practical and theoretical

relevance for the study of peace processes in Alavanyo-Nkonya area. In spite of the advantages case study offers, critics of case study argue that generalizing the findings of such studies is difficult and unreliable because of their limited coverage (Cohen, et al, 2007). According to Stake (2000), a case study lends itself to 'naturalistic generalization' and not 'scientific generalization', as a survey does. Based on all these considerations, case study was employed to collect data for the study.

## 2.1 Sampling Technique

In selecting participants for the study, different sampling techniques like Snowball and purposive sampling techniques were used. The snowball technique was employed to select participants for the study as they were otherwise difficult to identify and locate. Hanson (2009) asserts that snowballing is a process of accumulation of referrals as each located and interviewed informant suggests other informants whom they happen to know and locate. Sarantakos (2005) opines that to use the snowball technique the researcher first identifies a few individuals or group who meet the set criteria or possess the characteristics and ask them to recommend other individuals within the group. This process continues until you get the required sample size for the study or reach the point of saturation. In this study, the researcher was interested in selecting members from both Nkonya and Alavanyo communities who actively participated in the peace process. Firstly, the researcher enquired and identified one person who actively participated in the peace process from members from both towns. The chiefs and elders were purposively sampled. Purposive sampling, as pointed out by Agyedu, Donkor and Obeng (2006) is a sample chosen arbitrary on the basis of some characteristics possessed by the subjects and deemed important for the research based on the judgment of the researcher. According to Neuman (2006) purposive sampling is a non-random sample in which the researcher uses a wide range of methods to locate all possible cases of highly specific and difficult-to reach population.

## 3.0 Data Analysis

The analysis used therefore was based upon a multi-track approach model developed by Adzahlie-Mensah (2007). The model emphasised the involvement of all groups and the use of multi-faceted theoretical or analytical approach to study of the process of conflict resolution just as advocated for in multi-track diplomacy. As such it was considered fitting to Harold Saunder's theoretical framework (the public peace process) which was adopted for the study. Given that approach critical discourse analysis was chosen as the method of data analysis. The findings of the interview schedules and observations were presented and the data presentation and analysis were done manually. This strategy was chosen because the volume of data collected was manageable, making it less difficult to identify relevant text passages and the desire was to interact and have a hands-on feel for the data (Creswell, 2005). The problem

associated with analyzing data manually is that it is laborious (Creswell 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). The first stage was preparatory where the interview data for presentation began with the organization and transcription of the audio-tape recordings. The transcription involved listening to each tape repeatedly to familiarize myself with the conversations and carefully writing them down in the words of each interviewee. The interview data was categorized into themes of responses for effective management and comparisons. The next stage involved intensive and repeated reading of the data with the aim of immersing myself in it and to determine analytical categories or themes (Schmidt, 2004 and Creswell, 2005) using my professional judgment (Denscombe, 2003). The development of the themes was guided by the research questions and the literature review. The coding processes were begun after determining the themes. The participants were coded to avoid identification. Contributions, responses and comments made were also coded. Brief quotations from the participants were used to add realism to the description (Creswell, 2005). Since the data was collected from different categories of respondents, it was analyzed from their perspectives in order to build some kind of complexity into the study (Creswell, 2005).

#### **4.0. Results and discussion**

The analysis indicates that there are several factors that are need to achieve positive peace in the Alavanyo-Nkonya area. The analysis showed that there are several measures needed to achieve positive peace in the Alavanyo-Nkonya area. The first is cooperation between partners involved in peace building process. Aside from that, it may be argued that multi-track approach is required. Thus, various stakeholders involve in the peace process should work cooperatively. Mediation Committees should work with a wider group of community members, institutions and government. Given the analysis there are several pointers to the need to further strengthen the multi-track approach, especially with reference to the funding of the peace process. Concerning such, an earlier study of the Conflict resolution in the Alavanyo-Nkonya area argued that finance plays crucial role in peace processes (see Adzhalie-Mensah, 2007). Similar proposition is made in track eight of the multi-track diplomacy approach as delineated by Diamond and McDonalds (1996). This would suggest a need to work with companies and financial institutions which may have business interest in the area. The lack of this contact seems to be a major leaking point in the otherwise very successful work of the MC. Therefore, the MC and other interested parties may need to approach banks and other financial institutions including business interest to provide funding to support the peace process with a view of the potentials that future investment in the area holds. Aside from that the issues about undressed needs as in the works of Burton (1990) may be taken more seriously so that there no future concerns about neglected needs.



## 5.0 Conclusion

The analysis shows that there are several measures needed to achieve positive peace in the Alavanyo-Nkonya area. The first is cooperation between partners involved in peace building process. Aside from that, it may be argued that multi-track approach is required. Thus, various stakeholders involve in the peace process should work cooperatively. Mediation Committees should work with a wider group of community members, institutions and government. Several measures were needed to achieve positive peace in the Alavanyo-Nkonya area. Cooperation between both communities is important to the peace building process. They need to work together using a multi-track approach. The Mediation Committee needs funds in order to work with a wider group of community members, institutions and government.

## 6.0 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the research.

- Efforts should be made to document the lessons from the peace process in the Alavanyo-Nkonya area.
- There is need for grounded research on ways to deal with the spoiler problems in peace processes.
- There need to develop system of managing rumours which created new escalations.

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