

# **An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure:**

Determining the necessity of conflict prevention in Ghana

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Politics and International Relations

February 2013



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February 2013

## Correction sheet

## **Abstract**

The central aim of this paper is to assess if conflict prevention is necessary in Ghana, a country that is seen as one of Africa's success stories, with a multi-party democracy in place since 1992, a growing economy and recently discovered oil. Reviewing the literature surrounding conflict prevention, the resource curse and how conflicts can be created and applying the findings to Ghana, which was used as a case study, the necessity of conflict prevention could be determined. Vulnerabilities and risks of conflict were discovered illustrating the necessity of conflict prevention in Ghana. When the necessity of conflict prevention is evident even in a relatively stable country like Ghana it highlights the fact that conflict prevention is becoming an international norm that carries weight; the thinking in international society is coming around to the idea that it is better to act now to create positive peace than wait until after violence has broken out to try to fix a situation.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Rachel Ibreck, whose expertise and understanding added significantly to my research experience. I would also like to thank my family for the support they provided me through my entire life and in particular, I must acknowledge my partner Holly and best friend, Becky, without whose love, encouragement and cups of tea, I would not have finished this project.

## **Author's Declaration**

I hereby declare that this project is entirely my own work, in my words, and that all sources used in researching it are fully acknowledged and all quotations properly identified. It has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other credit/grade.

## Abbreviations

ACET – African Centre for Economic Transformation

AU – African Union

CSPOGG – Civil society Platform on Oil and Gas Ghana

EC – European Commission

ECOWAS – Economic Community of West African States

EEC – European Economic Community

EIA – Environmental Impact Assessment

EITI – Energy Industry Transparency Initiative

EPA – Environmental Protection Agency

ESIA – Environmental and Social Impact Assessment

EU – European Union

GDP- Gross Domestic Product

GNI – Gross National Income

GNPC – Ghana National Petroleum Company

GPRA – Ghana Petroleum Regulatory Authority

GPRS II – Ghana’s Poverty Reduction Strategy (2<sup>nd</sup>)

HDI – Human Development Index

ICT – Information and Communication Technology

IDA – International Development Association

IGO – Inter-governmental Organisations

IMF – International Monetary Fund

IO – International Organisation

ISODEC – Integrated Social Development Centre

NDC- National Democratic Congress

NGO- Non-Governmental Organisation

NPP – New Patriotic Party

ODA – Official Development Assistance

OECD – Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

OSCE – Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe

PCB – Petroleum Commission Bill

PNDC – Provisional National Defence Council

PRMB – Petroleum Revenue Management Bill

SADC – South African Development Community

USD – United States Dollars

UN- United Nations

UNGA – United Nations General Assembly

UNSC – United Nations Security Council

USD – United States Dollars

WB – World Bank

## Introduction

This paper asks, is conflict prevention necessary in Ghana? Ghana is one of the most stable countries in Sub-Saharan Africa; multi-party democracy has been in place since the early 1990s and has survived handovers of power on numerous occasions. Conflict prevention may seem wholly unnecessary in a country like Ghana at first glance, but it is quickly becoming standard practice for international agencies working in developing countries, and is emerging as an international norm (Ackermann, 2003a). This paper demonstrates the relevance of conflict prevention by taking a closer look at Ghanaian politics and society, beyond the optimistic declarations that Ghana is an 'African tiger' where democracy works even when the margins between the winning and losing parties are razor thin. It aims to seek out the tensions and weaknesses that exist in Ghana's social, economic and political structures and assess what threat they pose to stability in Ghana.

Since the 1990s thinking and practice around the management of conflict has evolved greatly. Conflict prevention has emerged from the field of conflict resolution as a way to deal with conflicts in the stages before violence has broken out (Ackermann, 2003b). Conflict prevention has received so much attention since the 1990s because of the increasing numbers of intrastate conflicts that have occurred since the end of the Cold War (Aggestam, 2003b). During this time a lot of work was done advancing the merits and necessity of conflict prevention, including work by the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict and USIP's study group on Preventative diplomacy among others (USIP, 2009).

Conflict prevention's path to becoming an international norm was aided by norm leaders, actors who are integral to the development of international norms, advocating it as a course of action. Norm leaders construct norms by calling attention to issues (Ackermann, 2003b). The OSCE and the UN have been important norm leaders (Ackermann, 2003b). The OSCE's role in developing a norm of conflict prevention began in 1992 with the Helsinki document where it outlined the use of fact-finding and peacekeeping missions with the aim of preventing conflicts, monitoring tensions before they became conflicts (Ackermann, 2003b). In the 1980's the UN began to advocate for the norm of conflict prevention, the promotion became stronger in 1992 with Boutros Ghali's report, 'An Agenda for Peace' which had conflict prevention as one of its central aims boosting conflict prevention as an

idea. Kofi Annan has advanced this idea further stating that the UN needed to move from a culture of reaction to a culture of prevention (Ackermann, 2003b).

Conflict prevention is becoming more and more widely accepted in international society, supporters of preventative action now include UN, WB, OSCE, OECD, SADC, USAID (Ackermann, 2003a). Conflict prevention is a routinely affirmed goal in international forums (USIP, 2009). Governments who have made policy statements in favour of conflict prevention include Indonesia, Sweden, UK and the USA. Regional bodies including the AU, EU, G8, UNGA and UNSC have all called for increased capacities for preventative action (USIP, 2009). Prevention programmes have been attempted in areas that were at risk of conflict but it was avoided, including South Africa, Macedonia and Crimea (Lund, 2009).

Previously, conflict prevention lived in the margins of foreign policy, now it is a central goal of governments, regional bodies and civil society (USIP, 2009). Many governments and IOs and NGOs have made serious commitments to preventing violent conflicts through the use of conflict prevention strategies (USIP, 2009). An international norm of preventing conflict has emerged; international society is obligated to respond to situations where the risk of an outbreak of violence is a real possibility. Conflict prevention has become more and more common over the last 20 years. Successes include those in Albania and Romania (Lund, 2009). Conflict prevention is an international norm that is strengthening with time. Political support for preventative action is easier to mobilize now than before and institutional capacity to design and implement prevention strategies is improving (USIP, 2009). Efforts have led to preventative deployment missions (Ackermann, 2003a). Jentleson once wrote that conflict prevention was possible, difficult and necessary (USIP, 2009). The necessity of conflict prevention has never been clearer as it is now and this is reflected in the establishment of conflict prevention as an international norm.

In order to discover if conflict prevention is necessary in Ghana, we must first answer the question, what is conflict prevention? The first chapter of this paper focuses on conflict prevention, how it developed as a field, how it is defined, what actions it includes and its role in international society. The second chapter aims to determine what conflict risks exist in Ghana that could warrant or justify preventative action. This chapter begins by examining the tensions that have existed in Ghana historically. It then discusses the recent discovery of oil, followed by a section outlining the general damaging effects of oil on a country and finally it examines how existing tensions in Ghana could be worsened by oil and how new tensions could be created. The last chapter aims to show that conflict prevention is necessary and is increasingly recognised as such, the actions of the government, donors and civil society to prevent conflict becoming violent provide evidence of this recognition. This chapter also illustrates the extent to which conflict prevention is being implemented in practice.

## Methodology

The researching of the paper involved a review of the literature surrounding conflict prevention, the resource curse and how conflicts can be created; this is covered in depth in the overview. I applied my findings from the literature to Ghana, which was used as a case study against which the necessity of conflict prevention could be determined. A case study was chosen in order to capture the intricacy of a single case, which we can then use to understand a wider state of affairs (Stake, 1995). Using a case study contributed to understanding the complex political and social phenomena discussed in the paper (Yin, 2009). Ghana was chosen as the case study because it is a peaceful country that is experiencing economic development; by using Ghana as an example the necessity of conflict prevention in countries undergoing economic development can be illustrated. If conflict prevention can be proved to be necessary in a stable and peaceful country like Ghana it can further prove the value of conflict prevention in other resource rich countries. In order to develop a deeper understanding of the case study documentary analysis was necessary; this included examining reports from different donor organisation and civil society groups.

## **Overview**

### **Chapter 1 - What is conflict prevention?**

The first chapter focuses on conflict prevention, which became more prominent during the 1990s due to the end of the Cold War, an idea asserted by Wallensteen (1999), Boutros-Ghali (1995) and Cousens, Kumar and Wermester (2001). Conflict prevention is aimed at resolving the root and proximate causes of conflict before violence occurs. The focus rests on transforming structural and cultural violence to avoid direct violence, concepts touched on by Lederach (1997), Galtung (1996) and Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (2005). The levels of conflict prevention described by Ackermann (2003), Spiram, Martin-Ortega and Herman (2010) and Brown and Rosecrance (1999) include deep prevention aimed at structural changes and light prevention which focuses on preventing imminent violent conflict. The methods commonly used in conflict prevention such as early warning strategies, fact-finding missions and track II diplomacy among others outlined are based on the works of Jeong (2000), Homans (2011), Hynek (2012) and Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (2005). This chapter concludes with examination of the process on which conflict prevention has become part of the international agenda by different authors including Wallensteen (1999), Van Walraven (1998) and Adelman (1999).

### **Chapter 2 - What are the risk factors for conflict in Ghana?**

The second chapter in this paper is divided into three sections, the first part looks at the tensions that existed in Ghana prior to the discovery of oil, Gary (2009), Throup (2011) and Hughes (2003) point to regional disparities and ethnicity, while Fred-Mensah (1999) and Van Der Linde and Naylor's (1999) work focuses on land disputes. The problematic nature of development aid is covered by Mac Ginty and Williams (2009) and Beswick and Jackson (2011) and the weaknesses in democracy in Ghana have been outlined by Gyimah-Boadi and Kwasi-Prempeh (2012). The second part of this chapter focuses on how the discovery of oil in Ghana could lead to a resource curse. The negative effects of oil include economic damage, Auty (1993) and Van Der Ploeg and Peolhekke (2009), weakening of democracy, Humphreys, Sachs and Stiglitz (2007) and Le Billon, 2009) and an increased likelihood of violent conflict which Ross (2008)(2004a) has covered extensively. The final part of this

chapter looks at how oil may exacerbate existing tensions and create new ones. Burke (2012) and Mitchell (2012), Gary (2009), Throup (2011) and Ross (2001) all note the potential damage to the economy and democracy. As well as that, damage to fishing industries and the environment are some of the outcomes that could lead to civil grievances discussed by Gary (2009) and Kow (2012) and Badgley (2011).

### **Chapter 3 - Is conflict prevention necessary in Ghana?**

The final chapter of this paper outlines the actions that have been taken by the government, donor organisations and civil society that have reduced the likelihood of violent conflict occurring. The actions that have been taken prove that these actors believe that conflict prevention is necessary. Gary (2009), Throup (2011) and CSPOGG (2011) each outlined the government actions and included their own set of recommendations. The actions of donor organisations such as USAID, Oxfam, WB and the government of Norway were generally found on each organisations individual websites USAID (2010)(2012), Oxfam (2013), World Bank (2009) as well as information regarding these organisations being included in the CSPOGG (2011) report. Civil society in Ghana is active and vibrant and has already begun to have some influence on the management of the oil and gas sector and the actions of civil society in Ghana are included in the work of CSPOGG (2011), Oxfam America (2010) and Gary (2009). The chapter finishes with a critical examination of the actions that have been taken and evaluates how effective and comprehensive they are using the work of Gary (2009), Throup (2011) and CSPOGG (2011).

## **Chapter 1: What is conflict prevention?**

This chapter focuses on conflict prevention, how it developed, how it is defined and what it entails. The chapter is divided into five parts, part one looks at the historical development of the field of conflict prevention, part two seeks to narrow down a concrete definition of conflict prevention. Parts three and four deal with the scope and methods of conflict prevention respectively and in part five the role of conflict prevention in global governance is examined.

### **Historical development of conflict prevention**

Throughout the history of humanity conflict has occurred and alongside it exists methods with which to deal with it (Laue, 1991). Formalised actions to prevent conflict can be seen as far back as the Vienna Congress in 1815 where states formed an agreement establishing neutral states and demilitarized zones (Ackermann, 2003a). Conflict prevention during the Cold War came under the moniker of preventative diplomacy; examples of organizations created for the purpose of preventing conflict include NATO and the EEC (Ackermann, 2003a). Up to the end of the Cold War, conflict had been, for the most part, interstate in nature (Spiram et al., 2010). During the Cold War the USA and the USSR had interests in conflicts outside of their regions, battling each other by proxy through other states (Wallensteen, 1999). When the Cold War ended the number of civil wars occurring exploded and resolving these conflicts became a key objective for the international community (Spiram et al., 2010). Conflicts now are more often within states than between them, the bipolar Cold War system constrained these conflicts but this is no longer the case (Boutros- Ghali, 1995). The decline of the bilateral world system resulted in the UN and other international organizations becoming more active with regards to conflict (Wallensteen, 1999). So while the international community had mechanisms in place to try to prevent and resolve interstate conflict, the sudden increase in intrastate conflict meant methods needed to adapt (Spiram et al., 2010).

Since 1989 there have been 101 armed conflicts, conflict being defined here as battles over government or territory where more than 25 people died (Wallensteen, 1999). The initial reaction by the UN and other actors resulted in the settlement of many conflicts in the early 1990s which

included Mozambique, Cambodia and Angola (Cousens et al., 2001). After this period the need for a more comprehensive approach became evident, there was a need to resolve the issues that caused the conflict and the issues caused by the conflict. Approaches that dealt only with immediate issues like militarisation and violence could not result in long lasting peace and would likely relapse into conflict (Cousens et al., 2001). Peace-building was developed as an approach to bridge the gap between international assistance and aid, and the role of peacekeepers in order to achieve long lasting peace (Cousens et al., 2001). At one point peace-building referred to post-conflict scenarios and conflict prevention referred to actions prior to the break out of violent conflict (Wood, 2003). This has changed recently and peace-building has become an overarching term for actions intended to contribute to peace, encompassing emerging, current or post conflict actions (OECD, 2008).

Conflict prevention at one point only referred to short term measures to prevent the immediate outbreak of violence. It is now often understood to include long term measures, and aims to create systems in which societies can deal with conflict without breaking into violence (OECD, 2008). Both peace-building and conflict prevention include a diverse array of efforts undertaken by many different actors aimed at addressing the root causes of conflict. Conflict prevention includes diplomatic, economic, social and legal reforms while peace-building is aimed at transforming a conflict using diplomacy, dialogue and mediation (3P Human Security, 2011). In chapter vii of the charter authorizing the Security Council there are many references to fact finding missions, conciliation and negotiation for the purpose of preventing conflict. Today the United Nations holds conflict prevention as one of its key aims (Ackermann, 2003a).

### **Defining conflict prevention**

Lund has described conflict prevention as actions taken to prevent tensions and disputes from escalating into violence, to strengthen the means of peaceful conflict resolution and to work to reduce the underlying issues that cause a conflict (Ackermann, 2003a). Others define conflict prevention as simply preventing the occurrence of violent conflict (Miall et al., 2005). Depending on which definition one chooses, the scope of conflict prevention can be very different. Galtung, in his models of violence differentiates between direct, structural and cultural violence. Direct violence is when the perpetrator of violence intends to inflict the consequences of violence (Galtung, 1996). Indirect violence or structural violence is when societies' structures result in people suffering; although this may not be the intention of the structure in place and cultural violence can be understood as the attitudes, norms and beliefs that make the other two forms of violence justifiable or tolerable to people (Galtung, 1996). Negative peace is the absence of direct violence; positive peace is the absence of structural and cultural violence (Galtung, 1996). Definition wise conflict

prevention has often been a contested concept (Van Walraven, 1998). The definition of conflict prevention and its aims depend on how one defines peace. It can be understood in two ways; the narrow definition of peace, which is an absence of war and a broader definition which is one that includes economic and social stability and protection of human rights (Laue, 1991).

For the purposes of this project conflict prevention will be understood as actions taken with the aim of structural and cultural peace-building during the early stages of conflict sometimes called difference and contradiction, before any significant violent conflict has taken place (Miall et al., 2005). Difference relates to when there is an awareness of division within society and contradiction is when these cleavages are brought to political level (Hynek, 2012). It is during these stages that it is critical that conflict prevention action takes place. The hourglass model of conflict resolution uses Galtung's ideas of conflict and violence combined with escalation and de-escalation models of conflict resolution. The model matches the stages in escalation and de-escalation with strategic responses and from these strategic responses the tactical measures required can be chosen (Miall et al., 2005). The reason it is important to act early in these situations is because it is at these stages preventative actions have the maximum chance of success; in the early stages there is more room for political manoeuvre and a wider set of prevention tools available to use. This space narrows as conflict escalates (Hynek, 2012).

Conflict prevention is closely related to conflict transformation and peace-building. The deepest level of conflict resolution is peace-building which aims to transform the institutions and discourse that reproduce violence (Hynek, 2012). Peace-building entails the processes that need to take place in order to transform a conflicted society into one where peace is sustainable and conflict can be dealt with without violence (Lederach, 2007). Conflict transformation involves responding to human conflict by changing processes in society to increase justice and reduce violence (Lederach, 2003). Conflict transformation occurs through peace-building processes aimed at establishing peace and preventing conflict. Conflict prevention broadly shares the same goals as conflict transformation and peace-building, that is to embed peace into a society and prevent further outbreaks of violent conflict.

### **The scope of conflict prevention**

Conflict prevention involves a wide variety of activities in the areas of diplomacy, economics and politics. Both long term and acute causes of conflict need to be dealt with and prevention programmes are carried out by IOs, NGOs and states (Brown and Rosecrance, 1999). Conflict prevention activities can be divided into structural, operational, and most recently systemic

prevention (Spiram et al., 2010). Operational and structural prevention are applicable at different times and in different sections of society (Ackermann, 2003a).

### *Structural*

Deep prevention deals with the profound issues of a conflict and involves more economic and political measures (Miall et al., 2005). Deep rooted conflict has a basis in history, cultural norms and belief systems. Successful conflict transformation involves solving structural violence (Jeong, 2000). Deep rooted conflict occurs between groups when one or both groups behaviour is deemed unacceptable by the opposing group. In order to resolve these conflicts it is necessary to change the existing frameworks that fostered the conflict and create ones that have better capabilities to accommodate both groups without leading to conflict. Without changing the frameworks the conflict is likely to occur again (Burton, 1990). Structural prevention is generally long term in focus and seeks to resolve these deep rooted underlying causes, it includes activities addressing poverty, corruption and institution building and these activities are often carried out by development and humanitarian organizations (Spiram et al., 2010). There is a general consensus that in order to prevent conflict it is necessary to acknowledge and resolve the deep rooted causes of conflict (Ackermann, 2003a). This consensus however does not always reflect conflict prevention in practice, with many actors reluctant to carry out long-term initiatives. Long term efforts to prevent conflict include reducing security concerns among conflicting parties via confidence building measures, for example sharing information about military capabilities etc. Other measures with long term aims include the promotion of civil and human rights, reforming structures that helped cause conflict and safeguarding the cultural, religious and educational rights of conflicting communities (Brown and Rosecrance, 1999). Other measures include truth and reconciliation commissions which can help opposing groups empathise with and forgive each other and this can help heal divisions between groups (Staub, 2006).

Structural prevention is more long term and is often less controversial than operational prevention because it can be built into development programmes (Ackermann, 2003a). Increased development and economic growth may, according to Brown and Rosecrance reduce the likelihood of violent conflict. Development promotion needs to be approached carefully however as experience has shown us that development programmes can have unintended and damaging consequences that can prolong conflict, for example a development programme may unevenly advantage one group in a conflict (Schmeizle, 2005). Actors engaging in areas of conflict often adopt conflict sensitive approaches to the actions in order to avoid these unintended and negative consequences. Conflict

sensitivity refers to the organisation's ability to understand the context within which they are operating to avoid negatively impacting on the situation (Barbolet et al., 2005).

### *Operational*

Light prevention aims to prevent violence from worsening into armed conflict. This method deals with symptoms of conflict rather than the root causes and can include diplomatic intervention and private mediation efforts (Jeong, 2000). Operational prevention is used when violent conflict is looming and includes measures like fact-finding missions, creating means for dialogue between conflicting parties, mediation (Ackermann, 2003a). Operational aims to resolve the proximate or mobilizing causes to prevent imminent violent conflict; it does so by trying to calm issues of tension and grievance between the parties. Proximate prevention is usually undertaken by security forces (Spiram et al., 2010). When trying to prevent imminent violent conflict, international actors can do a number of things; some measures require the cooperation of the parties involved in the conflict, others are of a more coercive nature (Brown and Rosecrance, 1999).

### *Systemic*

Kofi Annan developed the third category 'systemic prevention' which focuses on global factors that influence conflicts in general, not on a case by case basis. Issues include weapons proliferation, treating diseases like HIV/AIDS and regulating industries that have a reputation for causing conflict and increasing global development (Spiram et al., 2010).

## **Conflict prevention methods**

### *Early warning*

Early warning programmes aim to identify the potential for conflict in any given country by monitoring and assessing situations and gauging the likelihood of violence erupting. There are generalised theories which can be applied to many countries at once and there are more qualitative methods that are country specific (Miall et al., 2005). Some early warning theories focus on monitoring areas of potential conflict and identifying the type of conflict and its location. Others focus on risk assessment based on identifying communities deemed to be at risk and likely to gain from collective action. More broad theories focus on country wide dynamics that could lead to conflict, for example countries with uneven distribution of wealth and countries that rely on the

export of primary commodities which are at a high risk of prolonged conflict (Miall et al., 2005). The problem when trying to prevent conflict is not often a lack of information to give early warning, rather there is information overloads and in these cases it can be difficult to decipher which information is most pertinent (Miall et al., 2005).

#### *Fact-finding missions*

Fact-finding missions are often the first step taken in conflict prevention efforts, these missions are undertaken with the aim of gathering impartial information on a conflict. Some missions will focus on determining the causes of the conflict while others will focus on human rights violations that may have occurred. Fact finding missions can be initiated by the state or states involved in a conflict or by the UN, but in order for the mission to go ahead the state where the mission is to take place must put forward an invitation (Brown and Rosecrance, 1999). Fact finding operations are necessary in order for the UN (and others) to gather accurate and impartial information so they can react appropriately to a potential conflict (Boutros- Ghali, 1995).

#### *Mediation*

Mediation missions are an inexpensive way for the international community to lend a hand in a conflict; these missions consist of mediating the dispute between conflicting parties (Brown and Rosecrance, 1999). Mutually acceptable solutions are investigated under a third party who is neutral providing an alternative to violent action with a view to realizing both parties' goals (Jeong, 2000).

#### *Confidence building*

Confidence building measures entail promoting transparency to increase trust between the disputing parties. Measures include both parties declaring the size and power of the military forces, creating buffer zones and IOs deploying impartial monitors (Brown and Rosecrance, 1999).

#### *Military and Economic assistance*

Military assistance may be offered but this assistance can be controversial as it increases the insecurity of opposition parties (Brown and Rosecrance, 1999). Preventative deployment is the deployment of soldiers with consent of conflicting parties, for example, the UN troops placed in Rwanda in the early 1990s (Boutros- Ghali, 1995). Economic assistance can be channelled through international organisations and into development programmes. More coercive methods include arms embargoes, economic sanctions, international judicial systems and military force (Brown and Rosecrance, 1999).

### *Track II diplomacy*

Emerging during the 1970's, track II diplomacy is now a commonly used method in the field of conflict resolution (Homans, 2011). Track I diplomacy is classic formal communication between states (Hynek, 2012). Track II diplomacy can be understood as informal interactions that can work more flexibly than traditional diplomacy and as a result can often achieve more in certain situations (Jeong, 2000). Track II diplomacy is used when a level of expertise is required that a regular diplomat would not have, so they bring in an expert on a specific subject, for example black market arms dealing. Track II diplomacy is also used when situation may be too controversial for a state to have official involvement in for example negotiating with rebel groups (Hynek, 2012).

### **Conflict prevention and International society**

Regional and international actors have accepted the validity and importance of conflict prevention but this acceptance is not always backed up with direct action (Ackermann, 2003a). Probably the biggest obstacle to conflict prevention is garnering the political will to take action (Miall et al., 2005). Since the 1990s IGOs and their member state governments have talked a lot about conflict prevention action (Van Walraven, 1998) but many states are sceptical of the effectiveness of conflict prevention (Ackermann, 2003a). Conflict prevention needs to have resolution of conflict as its goal not just suspension of violent action, which means it requires sustained action. Problems in maintaining sustained action include the expense of maintaining troops and locals can begin to see peacekeeping/building forces as invaders. Local parties may only temporarily stop violent action in anticipation of 3rd party withdrawal from an area (Wallensteen, 1999). The burden of one state partaking in conflict prevention is great and with considering the unwillingness of most states to do many have reached the conclusion that conflict prevention should be an obligation of regional actors rather than individual states (Ackermann, 2003a).

### *Conflict prevention as an international norm*

Conflict prevention has become an area of increased interest for different reasons. Particular cases like Rwanda have reminded the global consciousness of the harrowing cost of conflict but there is also a growing realization among actors that tackling conflict before it becomes violent is easier and more cost-efficient than waiting until violent conflict begins. The far reaching effects of violent conflict include mass Diasporas of refugees and other spill over effects that affect surrounding regions (Miall et al., 2005). International and regional actors, NGOs and forums on early warning and early response have been important in establishing conflict prevention as a viable option in global

security (Ackermann, 2003a). The international norm of state sovereignty has become weaker, and the norms of 'responsibility to protect' and humanitarian intervention are gaining precedence. As a result conflict prevention has become a key concern for the UN and many other IOs and NGOs etc. (Miall et al., 2005). Conflict prevention is still in the early stages of being an international norm and has yet to become as developed a field as human rights (Ackermann, 2003a). Conflict prevention at a global level is difficult to achieve as a global political community has not developed enough (Miall et al., 2005).

#### *Conflict prevention and the international agenda*

The sudden increase in intra-state conflict peaked in 1992 and has been declining since (Wallensteen, 1999). During this period the need for a more comprehensive approach to conflict resolution, and subsequently conflict prevention, became evident (Cousens et al., 2001). After the many failures of the UN and other organizations to resolve or stop intrastate conflicts, conflict prevention began looking like a more viable option to use when approaching conflict situations. Targeting conflicts at the very early stages means international organizations are more likely to be welcomed in to intervene by those involved in the conflict and people will not be as emotionally invested in a conflict as they would be had violence already occurred (Van Walraven, 1998). Creating a norm of conflict prevention in international society came as a result of the combined efforts of NGO's, Academics, the UN and others (Adelman, 1999). To create a stronger more institutionalised norm of conflict prevention it is necessary to make it a worthwhile activity for states and highlight the potentially damaging regional and even global effects in order to motivate states to act to prevent conflict. Receptivity to warnings about conflict can differ, if a 3rd party has interests in the region or in the parties involved they may be more receptive to warnings and more inclined to act (Wallensteen, 1999).

#### *Conclusion*

Conflict prevention is becoming more commonly used to tackle the complex conflicts in the world today. In this paper different definitions of conflict prevention are considered and here it is narrowed to pre-violent conflict action that aims to prevent conflict by establishing positive peace. This chapter also looked at common methods used in conflict prevention and the role of conflict prevention in international society. In chapter 2 the risks for conflict in Ghana will be assessed.

## **Chapter 2: Risk factors for conflict in Ghana**

This chapter seeks to identify tensions in Ghana that could potentially lead to violent conflict and is divided into three different sections. The first section explores the underlying tensions and grievances that exist in Ghana. The second section takes an in depth look at the resource curse and its effects and the final part of this chapter addresses areas where oil could exacerbate existing tensions and create new ones.

### **Underlying tensions and grievances in the country**

Before the discovery of oil in Ghana, tensions that carried the risk of spilling into violent conflict already existed in the country. Ghana is a country that is considered stable but there are ethnic divides as well as class and regional ones (Hughes, 2003).

#### *Western region*

The western region has been underdeveloped historically (Gary, 2009). The people of the Western region have often felt like a neglected part of the country and now feel like they, above all else, should benefit from the oil that is coming from their part of the country (Mitchell, 2012). There are tensions between the government and traditional chiefs in the western region, who are demanding an extra cut of the revenue produced from oil just for the Western region (Gary, 2011).

#### *Ethnicity*

Ethnicity and religion have not been major sources of tension in Ghana. Ghana has approximately 100 different ethno linguistic groups. Conflict has been avoided by a culture of tolerance where tribalism and ethnicity has intentionally been downplayed. Policies are in place to increase internal mobility and increase group diversity in the country (Throup, 2011). Ethnic divides are clearer in rural areas; the Northern Ghanaian savannah belt has experienced episodes of ethnic conflict over the years (Throup, 2011). Politicians have, in the past, played on ethnicity to attempt to win votes, this tendency could lead to conflict in the future (Throup, 2011).

### *Regional*

In Ghana there are regional disparities in income rates, the north being poorer (Gary, 2009). The northern region of Ghana, which is primarily Muslim, is less developed than the rest of the country. In the northern region there is a sense of alienation from the central government in Accra (Hughes, 2003). In 2000 an NPP government was elected; NPP is an Asante -dominated party and the policies it pursued were considered by many to be favourable to Ashanti people. The Ashanti region has one of the higher incomes in the country (Hughes, 2003). This practice of regionally favourable policies could lead to conflict between regions.

### *Gold mining*

Gold mining in Ghana has been controversial because it has led to conflict between companies and communities, environmental damage and appropriation of land, and all this has meant little in revenues for the government (Gary, 2009). Human rights abuses have been reported to have been carried out by mining companies and their security teams (Gary, 2009).

### *Land disputes*

Land disputes are another area of contention. Beginning with British colonial era modernization reforms on land ownership clashing with traditional practices, as well as clashes with post colonial governments' attempts to reform land ownership laws (Hughes, 2003). Complicated matrilineal and patrilineal inheritance and ownership laws also mean that the laws surrounding land ownership can be unclear, leading to disputes (Hughes, 2003). Akan groups are matrilineal which means inheritance rights follow the female line of a family and non-Akan groups are patrilineal where it follows the male line of the family (Fred-Mensah, 1999). Land conflicts are a key source of communal divides in Ghana. Issues of land ownership and rights emerge when traditional authorities, like chieftaincy, lose their power to deal with these issues but the government does not replace the traditional roles with anything else effective (Fred-Mensah, 1999). Ghana is a relatively peaceful country but in 1994-95, land disputes in the north of the country resulted in ethnic violence which led to the deaths of over 1000 people and displacement of 150,000 (BBC News Africa, 2012). Fighting in the northern region of Ghana broke out in 1994 and concluded in 1995 after the formal peace treaty was signed. The underlying causes of the conflict were not dealt with however, which included economic and ethnic factors (Van Der Linde and Naylor, 1999).

### *West Africa*

Ghana benefits from support of international community and donors but it is in the relatively unstable neighbourhood of West Africa (Hughes, 2003). There are dangers of spill-over of refugees and fighting from Ivory Coast and Nigeria. The Liberian war resulted in 22,000 Liberian refugees entering Ghana. Togo and Burkina Faso border Ghana and are both countries through which the illegal diamond trade from Sierra Leone flows (Hughes, 2003).

### *Development Aid*

Many had come to see development aid as key to preventing conflict but development can have negative and unintended consequences, it can trigger and sustain violent conflict (Mac Ginty and Williams, 2009). This can happen when an aid economy is created, much like a war economy, where a conflict continues for the purpose of getting continued aid resources. Corruption can lead to aid being used to fund activities other than its intended purpose or falling into the hands of warlords (Mac Ginty and Williams, 2009). Large aid inflows often raise concerns about the adverse effects they may have on a country, particularly the economy. Aid can have effects similar to the Dutch disease, causing appreciation of the currency and damage to the export market. If aid money is spent on large quantities of domestic goods the rise in demand will cause prices to rise locally (Sanusi, 2011). The ODA Ghana received in 2010 accounted for 5.5% of the GNI. The top donors over the 2009-10 periods were the IDA, U.S.A and the UK (OECD, 2012). Many development organisations have realised that in any development plan it is important to have conflict sensitivity plans built into their development programmes (Beswick and Jackson, 2011).

### *Democracy*

Ghana was under the military rule of the PNDC from 1979 up until 1992 when free elections were held, which were won by the NDC party and marked the beginning of a multiparty democratic system that remains in place today (Cooke, 2004). Ghana has been praised for its democratic stability. In 2009 there was a peaceful handover of power from the NPP to the NDC for the second time since 1992 (Gyimah-Boadi and Kwasi-Prempeh, 2012). Ghana has a stable and competitive two-party system. The two main parties, the NDC and NPP, are fairly even in support so they provide credible opposition to each other. Democratic institutions are laid out in the constitution; these include regular elections and a two term limit on presidency and protection of free speech. As well as that the media is free and access to uncensored news is widely available to all Ghanaians (Gyimah-Boadi and Kwasi-Prempeh, 2012).

Despite this praise, democracy in Ghana is still young and has certain weaknesses. The razor thin margin of victory in the 2008 elections has served to increase polarization and distrust between the two main parties in Ghana today (Gyimah-Boadi and Brobbey, 2012). Politics in Ghana can be very factional and rancorous, with politicians making personal attacks against one another instead of arguing over policies and principles and both parties have appealed to voters along ethnic lines in the past, deepening divisions between groups (Gyimah-Boadi and Kwasi-Prempeh, 2012). Winning the presidency means access to financial and political advantages, including the power to appoint many high levels positions in the public sector. The disproportionate amount of power that the president has access to means winning elections is a high stakes game in Ghana (Gyimah-Boadi and Brobbey, 2012). In an attempt to gain votes both the NDC and the NPP have taken part in Patronage politics, which result in short term policies around elections such as increased public spending, e.g. free school uniforms, and encourages government to spend on influential interest groups like public sector employees (Gyimah-Boadi and Kwasi-Prempeh, 2012). The increasing animosity between the two main parties combined with tendency to appeal to voters along ethnic lines shows that there is vulnerability in Ghana's democracy.

### **The nature of the resource curse**

The discovery of oil in Ghana threatens to bring with it a phenomenon known as the resource curse the potential effects of which will be examined in this part of chapter 2.

#### *What is the resource curse?*

The term "resource curse" relates to the underperformance of resource rich countries since the end of World War II (Sachs and Warner, 2001). Revenue collected by governments from mineral production was once thought to be beneficial, that it could be used to free economies of common constraints to growth. This however has not proved to be the case for many developing countries (Di John, 2009). During the 1990s literature began to emerge examining the negative effects of natural resources, which had up until then been considered advantageous (Brunnschweiler and Bulte, 2009). The resource curse refers to the process in which countries with a lot of mineral resources are less successful economically and with regard to governance than their peers without resources. Resources can actually form an obstacle to success, depending on how they are managed (Humphreys et al, 2007). Resource wealth is different from other types of wealth because it is naturally occurring, as opposed to the manufacturing industry for example and can successfully generate revenue without having to rely on the rest of the economy (Humphreys et al, 2007). The paradox of plenty is another term used to describe the problems that commonly accompany

resource windfalls. Countries that make a lot of money from mineral resources, particularly oil, will have a high GDP but the HDI of these countries is often much lower, a discrepancy which shows that the money made in these countries does not always translate into development (Bridge and Le Billon, 2013). The effects of the resource curse can be divided into three different sections, slow economic growth, violent civil conflict and weakening democracy (Brunnschweiler and Bulte, 2009).

#### *Ghana discovers Oil*

Ghana is one of Africa's most stable countries (BBC News, 2010). In June 2007 oil was discovered off of Ghana's southwest coast. This oil find is expected to make Ghana one of Africa's leading producers of oil, alongside Nigeria and Angola (Mitchell, 2012). Former President John Kufour, claimed Ghana would become an African tiger boosted by the oil find (Gary, 2011). Ghana's oil stocks are expected to last around 20 years (Burke, 2012). In December 2010 production began in the Jubilee field and has approximately 600 million barrels of oil reserves (Mitchell, 2012). In 2011 the country was into its first year of production and reportedly made 444 million USD (Burke, 2012). The WB estimates that Ghana could garner 1 billion USD in government revenue per year from 2011 to 2029 provided oil prices stay above 75 USD per barrel (World Bank, 2009). Ghana's discovery of oil makes it vulnerable to the resource curse and the potential for conflict that accompanies it.

#### *What are the effects of the resources curse?*

##### *Obstacles to economic growth*

In countries with economies reliant on mineral exports, economic growth and social welfare are at a lower standard than similarly developed countries without mineral economies, despite mineral rich countries having more revenue (Auty, 1993). The non-renewable nature of resources like oil and gas, the resources commonly associated with the resource curse, mean it would be better for governments to use the money from the resources to put in place renewable sources of income, however governments usually want to stay in power and spend the income in ways to gain votes (Humphreys et al, 2007). Long term economic growth is often low on the agenda for a government trying to remain in power. Countries without a large base of natural resources to rely on are quicker to adapt to more efficient industrial policies and practices (Auty, 1993).

##### *Weakening Democracy*

The political effects of the resource curse include spoliation and corruption, which are the most common or obvious political risks resulting from resource dependence. Politicians have more motivation to stay in power because they have access to greater financial assets and can use these to

stay in power, spending on election campaigns, patronage or coercion (Humphreys et al, 2007). Governments with access to resources are less reliant on citizens for support. If citizens are not paying tax, or are paying very little tax, they have no power to threaten to withdraw finances from government (Humphreys et al, 2007). This can lead to political leaders becoming less accountable to the people (Luong and Weintahl, 2010).

### *Violent civil conflict*

How the resource curse can cause or increase the risk of violent conflict will be dealt with more thoroughly later in the chapter but briefly we can see that grievances and military challenges are two outcomes of the resource curse. Grievances refer to the tensions that many exist within the local population that arise from forced migration, pollution, devaluing of other export industries (Humphreys et al, 2007). Military challenges come in different forms, occurring if it seems like the government are illegitimately in power, or if being in control of the government appears like a viable way to access the country's wealth or outside actors may have interests in a country's resources and may try to influence rebellions (Humphreys et al, 2007).

### *What causes the resources curse?*

The resource curse involves three different processes coming together, Dutch disease, disruption caused by fluctuation of prices of main commodity and how political conditions are affected by mineral wealth (Soros, 2007).

### *Dutch Disease*

One key element of the resource curse is known as the Dutch disease. The term originated following the economic problems faced by the Netherlands after they discovered natural gas (Ross, 2008). When a country becomes a major producer or exporter of a commodity, increased resource exports mean the country's currency increases in value (Ross, 2008). The strengthening of the currency on the exchange rate results in a loss in competitiveness in the non-oil (or primary mineral resource) traded good sector resulting in a level of deindustrialization in the rest of the economy (Di John, 2009). As other exports start to decline a country is left dependent on its one major commodity (Ross, 2008). An example of this can be seen in Venezuela during the oil boom in the late 1970's when non mining industries became totally uncompetitive internationally (Auty, 1993). Resource industry crowds out other industries that become less competitive and people who would have previously worked in these now redundant industries lose their jobs. These jobs are not replaced by resource industries like oil and gas, which are quite self-contained and employ few local workers, and this can lead to increased poverty and inequality (Bridge and Le Billon, 2013).

Ghana has a fast growing economy (Heritage, 2013). Ghana's economy over the last 25 years has benefitted from sound management, improving competition in business and reducing poverty levels (Central Intelligence Agency, 2013). Ghana's economy is relatively diverse; there are cocoa and gold industries and now, oil (Throup, 2011). Between 2008 and 2011 economic growth in Ghana was aided by high gold and cocoa prices. Agriculture has been one of the strongest sectors of the Ghanaian economy and accounts for 50% employment and 39% of exports (Heritage, 2013). The agricultural sector is on the decrease however and increasing unemployment with a rapidly growing population increases the risk of unrest (Throup, 2011). Ghana is the second largest cocoa producer in world after Ivory Coast (BBC News Africa, 2012). Unfortunately, oil and gold employ few and cocoa is on the downturn as an industry (Throup, 2011). In Ghana the oil revenue expected would only represent 6% of economy which is small when compared to Angola where oil revenue accounts for almost 100% of economy (BBC News, 2010). Oil will probably replace cocoa as a driving force in the economy. The manufacturing industry is held back by unreliable power supplies (Throup, 2011). Ghana has a more diverse economy than other oil rich African states and, it could be argued, is in a better position to manage the revenue that oil will bring in (Mitchell, 2012). Ghana's reliance on agriculture, cocoa and gold exports makes it vulnerable to the effects of Dutch disease which is a key part of the resource curse that can lead to conflict.

### *Volatility*

An important element of the resource curse is volatility. Revenue gathered from oil and other minerals can be volatile and can result in an unstable, insecure economy. Volatility makes long term planning harder because of the boom and bust cycles a country's economy experiences (Humphreys et al, 2007).

### *The effect of mineral resource wealth on politics*

Political downsides associated with the resource curse include corruption, weakening of democracy and increased government revenue helping to consolidate the power of authoritarian regimes. Governments become less accountable for a number of reasons; they are less reliant on the citizens for tax, have much more revenue and can choose to get rid of or pay off their opponents (Ross, 2008). Some argue that in poor, underdeveloped countries the political elites who control government do not act in the interest of the people but rather they work with multinational corporations for personal gain (Di John, 2009).

### *How does the resource curse cause conflict?*

There is strong evidence that resource wealth is connected to an increased likelihood of violent conflict and that these conflicts last longer in resource rich states (Ross, 2004a). Not all primary commodities increase chances of conflict occurring e.g. legal agricultural commodities do not, but oil, gemstones and illicit drugs do (Ross, 2004a). Incidences of civil war have decreased in the last decade but this drop cannot be applied to countries that produce oil. The percentage of oil producing countries in conflict is increasing. One third of civil wars are in oil producing countries (Ross, 2008). The connection between oil production and a subsequent onset of armed conflicts has been shown in quantitative and qualitative studies. Separatist conflicts in particular are likely to occur (Ross, 2004b). With regard to developing countries there are double the chances of internal conflict in oil producing countries than non oil producing countries (Ross, 2008).

### *Volatility*

Volatility of commodity prices in the global market is an impediment to economic growth (Van Der Ploeg and Poelhekke, 2009). The volatility of oil prices means oil producing countries economies are particularly vulnerable to shocks. People lose their jobs when the economy becomes more dependent on one resource, like oil, and are discontent and more easily recruited to rebel armies. This is more likely the more dependent a country is on oil (Ross, 2008).

### *Government*

The resource curse can lead to increased risk of conflict through political channels. The governments in these countries are often being funded by the oil industry rather than by taxation (Le Billon, 2009). This means governments can afford to be less receptive to the people and civil society (Bridge and Le Billon, 2013). The political effects of natural resource windfalls include the increased value of staying in power for the government, and increased likelihood of having to face a power struggle because of this (Caselli and Cunningham, 2009). A less receptive government will increase citizens' discontent and make rebellions more likely (Caselli and Cunningham, 2009). Facing these challenges a government can attempt to stimulate growth in the economy and create jobs making recruitment into rebel armies less likely or it can increase its own security in order to protect itself from any threats. If governments choose to increase their security it can lead to repression effects where the government can afford to fund large armies which can be used to block citizens attempts to influence the government and keep themselves in power (Ross, 2001).

## *Rebellions*

Resource wealth funds insurgents but in general rebellions come to an end when their leaders run out of revenue to support the rebellion. In oil rich countries it is far easier to raise money; one can do so by stealing oil and reselling it, extortion from oil companies working in the country or finding business partners to fund them (Ross, 2008). Ross notes that countries with resource wealth have a greater chance of experiencing 3rd party intervention in their country and a greater chance of rebel armies selling 'booty futures' (e.g. oil contracts when rebels come to power) to third parties in return for funding their rebellion (Ross, 2004a). Rebellions are usually motivated by greed, grievance or separatist ambitions.

The greed motivation for conflict usually comes from opportunistic rebel leaders (Brunnschweiler and Bulte, 2009). People are more likely to be recruited into rebel armies in states experiencing the resource curse and these armies have more motivation and purpose to exist because capturing government is an attractive and profitable venture because of resources available (Le Billon, 2009). Greed often plays a role in conflicts in countries with lootable resources (e.g. diamonds) (Herbst, 2000).

The grievance motivation for conflict comes from discontentment in the population due to inequality and social exclusion, usually exacerbated by resource extraction. Grievance can also be due to insufficient compensation over lost land, forced migration, environmental damage, lost job opportunities and devaluing of other export industries (Brunnschweiler and Bulte, 2009, Humphreys et al, 2007).

Separatist aspirations often grow from the desire to claim ownership of mineral rights. This is more likely when minerals are centred in one region of country. Separatist conflict is also more likely when the extraction process offers little to the local population in way of benefits, like jobs (Ross, 2004b). If extraction is centred in a particular ethnic region it can increase tensions in that area (Ross, 2001). Locals are usually the ones bearing the brunt of the negative effects of oil production like environmental damages and can result in destruction of industries like fishing, for example. As a result, dissatisfied groups may seek to separate from central government (Ross, 2008).

### **The effect of oil on existing tensions and the creation of new tensions**

Is Ghana likely to fall prey to resource curse? Some would say no, Ghana has made real progress towards stability, democracy, economic growth and poverty reduction, but the areas where Ghana is most successful are also the areas where oil can do the most damage (Mitchell, 2012). Ghanaians are

wide awake to the risks that come with oil. Ghana is a maturing yet young democracy and oil can weaken democratic institutions and cause conflict (Gary, 2009).

### *Economy*

The projected earnings in 2013 are at 1.3 billion dollars, which is over 30% of the governments' total revenue in 2009. Oil is expected to surpass the cocoa and gold industries that have dominated Ghana's economy (Mitchell, 2012). N.D Chauvin of ACET said the government needs to invest in developing the wider economy for the revenue to have any real benefit (Burke, 2012). Without investment in economy new jobs will not be created for growing population. There is already growing unemployment with the cocoa sector already in decline and this has the potential to be made worse by the oil sector, which will provide little employment (Throup, 2011). It has been estimated that the revenue made from selling oil will provide over 30% of government revenue, this will likely lead to inflation and Dutch disease (Throup, 2011). Export competitiveness is likely to drop which would lead to a drop in productivity and could severely affect the agricultural sector (World Bank, 2009).

### *Western region*

Sekondi-Takoradi in Ghana's Western region is at the centre of the national oil developments. The area has experienced growth since the discovery, but locals have complained of rising cost of living, damage to the fishing industry and lack of jobs from the oil sector (Mitchell, 2012). Ethnic tensions in the region have surfaced with chiefs demanding that a percentage of revenues be set aside just for the Western region (Throup, 2011). The winner of the 2008 presidential campaign, John Atta Mills, promised the region would be first to benefit from oil during his election campaign. Expectations in the region are rising and there are fears that the Western region could go the way of the Nigeria's Niger Delta (Gary, 2009). The risk here is that these grievances could lead people to mobilize towards a secessionist movement as the oil that has been discovered has all been off the coast of the Western region.

### *Corruption*

There is a global effort to avoid resources like oil becoming a 'curse'; media, civil society and international society are focusing on increasing transparency of where revenue goes and what it is spent on (Gary, 2009). Transparency in the oil sector and how the government interacts it can help fight corruption, as it is often corrupt practices that increase grievances and lead to outbreaks of violent conflict.

Ghana's political system is quite centralized, the executive has a lot of power, the separation of powers that exists between the president and parliament is mainly theoretical and this is a key weakness in the Ghanaian political system (Throup, 2011). Systems of this nature are weaker and more prone to the democracy weakening effects that oil can have on a country because the parliament is too weak to keep a check on executive power (Mitchell, 2012).

A system of political patronage exists in Ghana, and the executive has a lot of power over local government due to appointments being given based on party loyalty (Throup, 2011). This executive power has very few limitations placed on it, the opportunity for corruption here is great and for this reason transparency is absolutely important to avoid the development of an unresponsive and authoritarian executive leading the country down a dangerous path.

### *Fishing*

The Western region's coastal communities depend on the fishing industry (Gary, 2009). Fishing provides for 4.5% of GDP in Ghana (Kow, 2012) and provides employment for up to 2 million people involved in catching, marketing and processing of fish (Badgley, 2011). Now it seems that as a result of oil production in the region, the fishing industry is under threat (Gary, 2011). Issues are arising for a number of different reasons; there is a no-go area surrounding the oil rigs where fishermen are not allowed to fish (BBC News, 2010). Some fishermen have claimed that the powerful 24/7 lighting on a storage tanker vessel attracts fish into the no-go zone preventing the fishermen from catching them (Badgley, 2011). Fishermen have reported poorer catches in the years since oil production began (Kow, 2012). There have also been reports of the Ghanaian navy confiscating fishing boats' catches for going too close to oil installations (Gary, 2009), and reports of times where foreign vessels have destroyed fishermen's nets without compensation (Kow, 2012). Increased vessel traffic has meant more collisions and ballast water being dumped into the sea threatens marine life as well as increased noise being attributed to scaring fish away from the area (Badgley, 2011). The government has so far not done much to ease tensions (Gary, 2009). As exploration continues more drill sites and no go zones are popping up along the coast (Badgley, 2011). In a readiness report card the Ghanaian government received a 'poor' rating in how it deals with social and environmental issues (CPSOGG, 2011). This could well be a source of conflict in the future especially since the government does not seem to be acting to reduce tensions in the area.

### *Expectations*

People in Ghana have expectations that the money from oil production would lead to improved social services and increased employment, but so far these have not materialised (Burke, 2012).

Media and civil society have drawn attention to risks of oil curse that come with this new oil find, referencing Nigeria as an example and have tried to manage expectations of the people (Throup, 2011). The potential risk is that people may be inclined to mobilize against the government because they are not experiencing the expected benefits from oil. Alternatively it may lead to overspending on patronage and unsustainable projects by the government to win votes (Gary, 2009).

#### *Risks to environment*

In the past in the gold mining sector there has been cyanide spills and other environmental damage so Ghana does not have a spotless record of environmental protection, which is important as the effects of oil on the environment could be far more damaging (Gary, 2009). The EPA has few resources and no expertise in dealing with oil pollution (Gary, 2009). ESIA's have not been carried out for exploratory activities or existing oil drilling. Despite this, exploration projects are going ahead. This is problematic because without ESIA's a project can go ahead without any assessment of potential impact; some oil companies are using old machinery which increases risks of accidents etc. (Gary, 2009). An oil spill could have untold effects on the fishing industry in Ghana and is a potential conflict point.

#### *Democracy*

Countries with rising incomes generally also become more democratic, the exception to this is when income growth is as a result of oil production, according to Ross (Ross, 2001). Oil becomes an obstacle to democracy in the following ways; first, governments use low tax and patronage to avoid accountability, Second, wealth gives governments the chance to boost internal security and repress their citizens and third is the modernization effect, oil production may bring economic changes but does not bring social or cultural change along with it and it is the latter two that produce democracy (Ross, 2001). In Ghana there is an already existing propensity of patronage politics as well as growing animosity between the NPP and NDC and the higher stakes with regards to potential financial benefits of having access to power. These factors combined with the democracy weakening effects of oil production in a country could present a very real threat to democracy in Ghana.

#### *Conclusion*

Prior to the discovery of oil in Ghana there existed latent tensions in society, with the recent discovery of oil the potential for conflict has increased. Oil production carries with it the possibility of making the existing issues worse and creating a multitude of new tensions in the country. In the next chapter the necessity of conflict prevention in Ghana will be assessed based on the actions of the government, donor organisations and civil society.

## **Chapter 3: Is conflict prevention necessary in Ghana?**

### **Actions that have been taken to prevent potential conflict**

So far in this paper conflict prevention has been outlined and defined. The risks Ghana faces have also been outlined, justifying the argument that conflict prevention is necessary in Ghana. In this chapter the actions taken by the Ghanaian government, donor organisations and civil society in order to prevent potential conflict or diffuse issues that might lead to conflict will be examined. That fact that these actions have been taken and the clear awareness that these actors have for the necessity of these actions further justifies the argument that conflict prevention is necessary in Ghana. Finally a critical evaluation of the steps taken will investigate whether there are any issues that are being left unresolved.

#### *Government Action*

Ghana had a legal framework for oil exploration and production prior to the discovery of oil in 2007, but it was partial and in need of an update by the time oil was discovered. Now that oil has been discovered a comprehensive framework is needed in order to avoid ad hoc legislation (Gary, 2009). Ghana started producing oil before they had fully worked out the legislation in the area and many worried that without the legislation needed in place early on Ghana would not avoid the negative corrupting effects of an oil boom (Gary, 2009). The centralized system of government and the power of the executive means there is an increased likelihood of the government becoming more authoritarian. The Ghanaian government has since taken steps that will bolster effective management of the petroleum industry and protect the country's democratic institutions.

After discovery of oil in 2007 the government established an oil and gas technical committee. This committee was set up with the task of examining the economic and social effects of oil production and minimize the negative effects (Gary, 2009).

The government also held a 'National Forum on Oil and Gas Development' which included three civil society organisations as invited guests (Gary, 2009). The forum also included experts from Norway,

IMF, WB and Oxfam and was concerned with how to effectively use oil revenue to create sustainable development, how to ensure transparency and how to safeguard security and the environment (Gary, 2009). This showed a level of willingness by the Ghanaian government to listen to international expertise (Gary, 2009). After the forum 6 working groups were set up to work on oil and gas planning for the country (Gary, 2009).

The government aimed to create a strong legal basis with the PRMB and the PCB (Mitchell, 2012). There were fears that these bills would not be passed by the government (BBC News, 2010) but both of these bills became acts in 2011 (PRMA, 2011, PCA, 2011). The government of Ghana has made strong provisions for transparency in the PRMB and petroleum bills are to be subjected to public consultations (CSPOGG, 2011). Petroleum contracts now require cabinet approval and parliament ratification which increases the strength of the separation of powers (CSPOGG, 2011). The PRMB has put down strict guidelines on moving oil revenue in and out of funds and revenue is to be channelled through the budget, increasing transparency. Outlined in the PRMB is a requirement that spending is in line with long term development planning (CSPOGG, 2011).

In October 2008 a draft of the 'Ghana Petroleum Authority Bill' was published, the aims outlined included creating an independent regulatory authority the GPRA. The GNPC is both an oil producer and an industry regulator (Throup, 2011). The GNPC took on regulatory role due to absence of expertise elsewhere in government (Gary, 2009). If this bill is passed the GNPC is to become strictly commercial, doing so would remove the conflict of interest that exists when the national petrol company also has a role as industry regulator (Gary, 2009) an untenable situation that could easily lead to corrupt practices. In Angola the national oil company was in a similar position and became unaccountable and corrupt (Gary, 2009).

Ghana is part of EITI (Mitchell, 2012) and have recently extended the provisions of the EITI to include oil and gas further increasing transparency in the sector (CSPOGG, 2011).

Rules have been put in place regarding contracts and licensing, contracts are agreed by negotiations and need cabinet approval and parliament ratification (CSPOGG, 2011). The government has allowed for more citizen participation, there were public consultations regarding the PRMB and the parliament committee on energy held three public forums (CSPOGG, 2011). Petroleum revenue collection has been improved with a petroleum tax unit established and the GNPC publishing first sales of oil by government (CSPOGG, 2011). EIAs have been conducted based on consultations with communities and stakeholders and the EPA produced an environmental scoping report. (CSPOGG, 2011)

The government of Ghana still has a lot to do with regard to mitigating conflict risks in the country particularly with regard to the petroleum sector, but a concerted effort is being made to place obstacles in the way of the corrupting effects of oil. The government has made some effort to include public participation, a strong civil society provides a positive alternative to resorting to violent conflict.

### *Donors Initiatives*

The Ghanaian government has already begun to receive advice from Donor organisations (Young and Moss, 2009). Support to government and civil society has come from many IOs (CSPOGG, 2011). In this part of the chapter USAID, OXFAM, WB and Norway's actions in Ghana will be examined.

#### *USAID*

USAID notes that Ghana has weak governance institutions that are beleaguered by corruption and policies to manage gas and oil revenues are not yet fully formed. USAID had a government accountability programme up until 2009 and continues to attempt to strengthen democratic governance in the country through civic involvement. USAID provides technical assistance and training to civic groups which helps strengthen the ability of these groups to engage with local government (USAID, 2010).

USAID's other programmes in Ghana include health and education initiatives as well as programmes geared toward economic growth, part of this includes USAID providing technical assistance to the government of Ghana in order to develop and regulatory framework that will effectively manage the oil and gas sector in the country (USAID, 2012). USAID's education programme includes a project based in northern region, providing education centres for school age children who are unable to participate in formal education (USAID, 2012). This education programme makes an effort to counteract regional inequality.

#### *Oxfam*

Oxfam programmes in Ghana include working to bridge the income inequality gap between regions; the northern region of Ghana is much poorer than the south. Oxfam also works to promote transparency and accountability in the government's management of natural resource revenue. Often extractive industries in Ghana cost the locals socially and environmentally and these people do not benefit directly from these industries (Oxfam, 2013).

Oxfam and ISODEC together published a report assessing the potential risks to stability in Ghana that came with the discovery of oil and how oil could potentially exacerbate latent tensions in the

country. This comprehensive report included recommendations to government, civil society, petroleum companies, other donors and parliament on how to manage the oil sector and how to work to avoid the corrupting and damaging effects of oil (Mitchell, 2012).

#### *World Bank*

The WB has taken note of the risks that accompany oil; how it could affect the economy and how political and economic elites could use the revenue to serve personal interests rather than the public good (World Bank, 2009). The WB recommends that measures ensuring transparency are put in place to avoid those in power using their powers of discretion to use revenue in a way that could damage the country (World Bank, 2009). The WB has noted that patronage politics is a problem in Ghana, as is the social polarization between the north and south and rural and urban communities. The importance of ethnic identity in politics is also rising which could prove to be dangerous to stability (World Bank, 2009). The WB recommends sharing the benefits of oil revenue out fairly, taking into account that some regions may be affected more than others, for example the Western region which is already being affected (World Bank, 2009).

The WB supports the GPRS II program, the three pillars of which are improving private sector competition, human resource development and government and civic responsibility. The goals of the strategy include diversifying the economy, moving away from a reliance on cocoa to a wider range of cash crops. Other sectors that are focused on include tourism and ICT with the aim of creating medium to long term growth. The GPRS II focuses on regional poverty disparities, sharing benefits of growth equally as inequality breeds conflict. It also includes decentralization planning to improve local government and citizen's participation (World Bank, 2007).

#### *Government of Norway*

The Norwegian delegation expressed the view that the cooperation between the two countries gave them a good opportunity to share their experience on oil and gas management (Norway, 2012). It is important to note that some donors may have vested interests in oil. Norway for example has worked closely with the government but has offered no support to civil society (CSPOGG, 2011).

The donor organisations working in Ghana have, in general, offered support not only to the government but also to the people of Ghana, working against the polarization of society by working to decrease regional disparities. Civil society groups in Ghana have received training and support, making civil society more effective and hence providing a check on government actions.

### *Civil society action*

There is a vibrant and strong civil society in Ghana. An EC study from 2008 stated that there were approximately 3,800 civil society organizations in the country. Organisations operate throughout the country in rural and urban areas achieving different levels of effectiveness. Obstacles these organizations face is a lack of technical expertise and a shortage of funding (USAID, 2010). The government held a 'National Forum on Oil and Gas Development' but while it was originally to be an open event it was changed to invite only with only three civil society representatives invited. This created fears among civil society activists and donors that Ghana would follow other oil producing countries by keeping tight control on oil industry and with little transparency (Gary, 2009). Citizen participation has increased however with public consultations on the PRMB and the parliament committee on energy holding 3 public forums (CSPOGG, 2011). Civil society has made significant impacts on government legislation but is hampered by technical weaknesses that limit the abilities to monitor the petroleum industry and the government effectively (CSPOGG, 2011).

The strength of civil society in Ghana is very positive for Ghana's hopes of avoiding conflict (Throup, 2011). Media and civil society have focused on increasing transparency of where revenue goes and how it is spent (Gary, 2009). Strong civil society is important for Ghana to overcome the governance challenges it will face with an oil boom and to keep a check on government power (Gary, 2009).

Civil society groups have grouped together under CSPOGG to pressure the government into ensuring transparency, accountability and responsible management of its petroleum resources. It has been influencing the legislation being brought through by government, using a campaign of texting, Facebook, radio and television advertisements. The group petitioned parliament to ensure transparent disclosure of petroleum agreements be made mandatory in PRMB when it was being put through parliament. The actions of civil society in this case aided the creation of a stronger bill going through to regulate the petroleum industry (Oxfam America, 2010). Civil society groups held the Mankesim forum in 2008, opposing approval for a facility for Tullow and Kosmos because they had not carried out ESIA's and made significant input in PRMB and PCB (CSPOGG, 2011).

Civil society in Ghana is remaining vigilant in monitoring the government's actions, despite technical weaknesses these groups are actively participating in the creation of the structures that will manage the petroleum industry in the country. The high levels of activity in civil society in Ghana not only quell the grievances of citizens by giving them a voice but it provides a constant obstacle to a government that could fall victim to corrupt practices.

## **How these actions have contributed to conflict prevention**

Conflict prevention was defined earlier as peace-building initiatives undergone before any significant violent conflict has taken place. The actions of the government, civil society and donors can be understood as conflict prevention because they have contributed to peace-building by altering processes to reduce conflict and create sustainable peace. The government have altered the structure of the petroleum industry, by enshrining transparency and the role of parliament in decision making as well as having a somewhat inclusive attitude toward citizen's participation in politics. By putting in place strong legislation regarding the petroleum industry the government has placed an obstacle between political elites and corrupt practices, reducing the opportunities for corruption contributes to building sustainable peace. Public consultations create an arena for conflict to be dealt with without resorting to violence because it gives the opportunity for citizens to contribute to decision making. Donor organisations have contributed to preventing conflict by building peace through initiatives such as training civil society groups, expanding the opportunities for people to take political action without having to resort to violence. Programs to offset regional inequality reduce grievances. Civil society groups work to protect the interests of the groups they represent and have made real progress in having their voices heard in Ghana. This vibrant civil society offers people an alternative to violence as an outlet for their frustrations with the government.

## **Weaknesses in conflict prevention in Ghana**

Despite the positive actions taken there are still many issues that have been dealt with insufficiently or not at all. There are social and environmental issues that have not been dealt with comprehensively. Environmentally there are quite a few gaps in the government's plans, there is no readiness in case of oil spills, inadequate assessment of effects for endangered species, bumping of drilling wastes into sea and the policy of zero gas flaring is not backed by law (CSPOGG, 2011). The EPA needs more support and resources as it currently has no expertise in dealing with oil pollution (Gary, 2009). The government has also been silent on how it plans on dealing with the grievances within the fishing communities in the western region and whether they will be entitled to compensation for any potential loss of livelihood (Gary, 2009). The lack of action in these areas is worrying because there is already tensions growing in the western region over the fishing industry, an accident or oil spill could push these tensions toward violent conflict.

The government may choose to include civil society groups in some decision making processes but public consultations have been of low quality and public opposition has at times been completely ignored, for example; opposition to using oil revenue as loan collateral was ignored and amounted to a betrayal of public trust (CSPOGG, 2011). Civil society has made significant impacts on government legislation but is hampered by technical weaknesses that limit its abilities (CSPOGG, 2011). Civil society needs more support and the government should become more receptive to civil society, if people believe acting through civil society is ineffective they may choose to take violent action instead.

Ghana's reliance on mid-term planning means it is likely to experience Dutch disease. The government is also choosing to continue including stabilization clauses in contracts which make the economy more vulnerable to economic shocks (CSPOGG, 2011). This will make long-term planning more difficult and make it harder to offset Dutch disease and the negative effects that follow it (Throup, 2011).

The flaws and gaps in the actions of the government, civil society and donors illustrate where initiatives to prevent conflict are seriously lacking. There has been a lot of progress, and the actions that have been taken should be seen positively but it is important to also be aware of the areas that are being ignored from where violent conflict could erupt.

### *Conclusion*

The actions of the government, donor organisation and civil society show an awareness of the dangers to stability that Ghana faces and active attempts to counteract these threats. Conflict prevention has become an international norm and so these actions are the natural step for these actors to take. There are however areas where no actions has been taken or the action that has been taken is insufficient, it is these gaps in conflict prevention that must be considered most pertinent because it is from these blind spots that conflict could emerge.

## Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to determine whether or not conflict prevention, defined as structural and cultural peace-building during the early stages of conflict before any significant violent conflict has taken place, is necessary in Ghana. Ghana is for the most part a peaceful country with stable democratic institutions in place, so why would one of the most successful and stable countries in Sub-Saharan Africa have any use for conflict prevention? Over the course of this paper we have examined the latent tensions in Ghanaian society and the potential impact of oil production on the country. This new found oil has the power to exacerbate these tensions to the point where they could boil over into conflict and also brings the possibility of creating new conflict risks regarding the economy, democracy and citizens' grievances.

The necessity for conflict prevention in the country is clear when we consider the tensions that are existing and imminent in the country. The actions of the government, donors and civil society also reflect this line of thinking, each has taken action to reduce the likelihood of conflict breaking out whether it is through legislation preventing corruption, programs to create more equality between regions or allowing citizens recourse through civil society rather than through violence. The weaknesses and gaps in the conflict prevention strategies outlined in chapter 3 highlight the continued existence of Ghana's vulnerability to conflict. Conflict prevention is necessary in Ghana because the country, while stable, has many weaknesses which are likely to be tested in the coming years and while the actions being taken are indeed positive a more comprehensive strategy may be required to ensure peace and prevent conflict.

The necessity of conflict prevention is evident even in a relatively stable country like Ghana, this highlights the fact is conflict prevention is becoming an international norm that carries weight; the thinking in international society is coming around to the idea that it is better to act now to create positive peace than wait until after violence has broken out to try fix a situation.

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