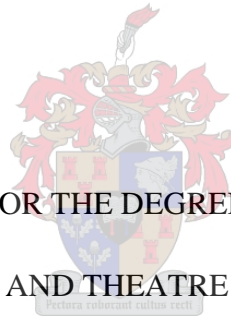


INDIGENOUS PERFORMANCE AND MODERNITY: INVESTIGATING THE VITALITY OF
PLAY AND WORK SONGS OF THE DAGAABA COMMUNITY IN NORTH WESTERN GHANA
AS VERBAL ART PERFORMANCE

BY

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Declaration

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Abstract

This study looks at play and work songs of the Dagaaba in north western Ghana as verbal art performance and how modernity has influenced the vitality of these indigenous performances. Performance studies remain a contested subject as it cuts across disciplines. However, the overarching theme in scholarship on performance defines it as a paradigm-driven concept which needs to be discussed in context. Aligning with this position, play and work songs of the Dagaaba is studied as performance in the context of an activity in motion as theorised by Richard Schechner. By investigating the vitality of play and work songs of the Dagaaba, I set out to draw attention to the declining nature of indigenous performance. I argue that social change, an inevitable phenomenon which has swept through the Dagaaba land, has halted the motion of play and work songs performances – hence its vitality – and call for alternative platforms to revitalise performances to ensure continuity.

Using the qualitative approach, this study focuses on play and work songs as indigenous art forms among the Dagaaba. The main objective of this study is to unearth the influence of modernity on indigenous Dagaaba performances. Specifically, the study seeks to investigate the role of play and work songs as traditional verbal art performances in the Dagaaba community. The study also aims at exploring the manifestations of modernity in the Dagaaba community as well as analyses the perceived impacts of modernity on play and work song performances of the Dagaaba. In addition, the study investigates alternative platforms for indigenous performances.

The study finds farming, domestic chores, recreation, environmental rituals, ancestor veneration, and rites of passage as some platforms that sanction the performance of indigenous art forms. The study however finds that modernity has influenced these performances and identifies formal education, Christianity, technology, industrialisation, and urbanisation among others as causes of this change. The study discovers meeting places of identifiable groups and competitions of indigenous performances as alternative platforms for continuity and vitality of play and work songs performances.

The study reveals, based on songs collected, that play and work songs satisfy Bauman's analysis of verbal art as performance. Analysis of songs collected responds to what Baumann identified as the frames of communication, communication devices and keying in performance which provides the audience a structure within which to interpret and appreciate the text.

The study contributes to scholarship on performance studies by propounding play and work songs as accessorial performance. It concludes that though play and work songs are vital in the social organisation of the Dagaaba, they are gradually losing their places due to the influence of modernity.

Opsomming

Hierdie studie bestudeer speel- en werkliedere van die Dagaaba in noordwes Ghana as gesproke kuns performance en hoe moderniteit die lewenskrag van hierdie inheemse performance vorme beïnvloed. Performance studies bly 'n betwiste vakgebied omdat dit oor verskeie dissiplines strek. Die oorkoepelende tema binne die lering van performance definieer dit egter as 'n paradigma-gedrewe konsep wat binne konteks bespreek moet word. In lyn met hierdie posisie, is speel- en werkliedere van die Dagaaba as performance bestudeer in die konteks van 'n aktiwiteit wat uitgevoer word soos geteoretiseer deur Richard Schechner. Deur die lewenskrag van speel- en werkliedere van die Dagaaba te ondersoek, wou ek aandag vestig op die afname in inheemse performance. Ek argumenteer dat sosiale verandering, 'n onafwendbare fenomeen wat deur die Dagaaba gebied swiep, die voortbestaan van speel- en werkliedere se performance halt – gevolglik ook hul lewenskrag – en maak 'n oproep vir alternatiewe platforms om die liedere te laat herleef en hul voortbestaan te verseker.

'n Kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering word gebruik en die studie fokus op speel- en werkliedere as inheemse kunsvorme van die Dagaaba. Die hoofdoel van die studie is om die invloed van moderniteit op inheemse Dagaaba performance te bepaal. Meer spesifiek ondersoek die studie die rol van speel- en werkliedere as tradisionele gesproke kuns performance in die Dagaaba gemeenskap. Dit poog ook om die manifestering van moderniteit binne die Dagaaba gemeenskap te ondersoek en die waargenome impak van moderniteit op die performance van speel- en werkliedere te ontleed. Daarby ondersoek die studie alternatiewe platforms vir inheemse performance.

Die studie bevind dat boerdery, huishoudelike take, omgewingsrituele, voorvader verering en deurgangsrites sommige van die platforms is vir die performance van inheemse kunsvorme. Die studie bevind egter ook dat moderniteit wel hierdie performance vorme beïnvloed het en identifiseer onder andere formele onderrig, Christendom, tegnologie, industrialisasie en verstedeliking as oorsake van verandering. Die studie ontdek vergaderplekke van identifiseerbare groepe en kompetisies vir inheemse performance as alternatiewe platforms vir die voortbestaan en lewenskrag van speel- en werkliedere.

Op grond van die versamelde liedere, toon die studie dat speel- en werkliedere voldoen aan Baumann se ontleding van gesproke kuns as performance. 'n Ontleding van die versamelde liedere kom ooreen met wat Baumann identifiseer as kommunikasieraamwerke, kommunikasiemiddele en sleutels in performance wat 'n struktuur vir die gehoor verskaf waarbinne die teks geïnterpreteer en waardeur kan word.

Die studie dra by tot die lering van performance studies deur speel- en werkliedere voor te hou as bydraende performance. Dit bevestig dat alhoewel speel- en werkliedere lewensbelangrik is vir die sosiale organisering van die Dagaaba, die liedere geleidelik besig is om hul plek te verloor as gevolg van die invloed van moderniteit.

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Glossary of Dagaare Terms

Bader	A trickster in folktales
Bagr	A ritual / an Initiation
Bagbêrê	Senior members
Bagli	Junior members/children of bagr
Bagê	Advocates of bagr
Bagr erê	Performer/elders of bagr
Belo	Matronymic clan
Bekuone	A patrilineal clan
Berfuole	A patrilineal clan
Bene	Dance
Berea	Twigs
Bibiir	Children
Bi-yaglélyelé	Lullaby (Central Dagaare)
Bɛwaa	Recreational dance for the youth
Dabulbakyenkyen	A xylophone tune
Dagara/Dagao/Dagaaba	The ethnic group
Dakumé	Associates of bagr
Dalare	Youthful instrumentation
Dano	Praise
Domé	Totems
Fuwra	Fan
Gyil	Xylophone
Kaare	Recreational dance
Kakyiirê	Low quality grains
Ko-tuo-dem	The bereaved family
Kobenê	Name of a festival
Kpankpol	Dummy xylophone
Kpimê	Guardian spirit
Kpogda	A Matronymic clan
Kpɛtâa yielu	Type of work song (Central Dagaare)

Kurkur	Farming
Kultaa yielu	Wedding song
Kuor-benɛ	Funeral dance
Kuor-yaaro	Conclusion of the funeral
Kuor-wuofɔ	Beginning of the funeral
Kyaro	Bride wealth
Kyiiro	Taboo
Kyɛnsɛ yir	A house roofed with roofing sheet
Langkone	Dirge performer
Langne	Dirge
Lobri	A tune from the xylophone to announce the occurrence of death
Mma	My mother
Mwin	Sun
Naa	Chief
Nabawlɛ yielu	Song performed by hunters
Naa kyeenɛ yielu	Song performed by herdsmen
Naamwin	God
Naayiile	People of the chief's house. One of the patrilineal clans of the Dagaaba
Nakole koɔra	A farmer of high repute
Nsaa	My father
Neɛr	Grinding stone
Neɛr zu yielu	Song performed while grinding on the stone
Nimbɛrɛ	Elders
Nufola	An instrument played by shepherds
Nuru loba	Recreational song and dance
Paala	A raised platform for laying the dead
Piriime	Grass
Pito	Drink brewed with malt made from sorghum
Pog naa	Queen mother
Pognamine	Queen mothers

Puor a kuor	Greet the funeral, to wit mourning
Pɔlɛ̃	Youth
Saab	Staple food of the Dagaaba prepared from either millet, sorghum or maize
Setaana	Corrupted word, Satan
Simaan dem	Neighbours
Somé	A Matronymic clan
Suolu	Storytelling
Taabɛ̃	Peers/age mates
Takɔ daa	A day of no farming
Teem	We/us
Tendaana	The chief priest (Central Dagaare)
Tengan	Earth- shrine
Tengan sob	The chief priest of the earth shine and custodian of the land. He is the traditional political head
Tengan dem	Plural of Tengan sob
Teng	Village/community
Tuo zaafi	Popular name of <i>saab</i>
Wââlon̩ yielu	Type of work song (Central Dagaare)
Wele	An instrument played by shepherds
Yielu	Song
Yiilo	Lineage/clan
Yir	Household
Yir –dano	Lineage praise songs
Yir-nikpɛ̃ɛ̃	Head of a lineage
Yir sob	Head of family
Zibuule	Higher quality grains

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background: the Dagaaba of north western Ghana

Dagaaba is a plural form of the word Dagao and refers to an ethnic group located in the Upper West Region, in the north western part of Ghana and southern Burkina Faso. The people describe themselves and the language as Dagara (Hien, 2019; Lentz, 1994) but most literature refers to the people and language as Dagaaba and Dagaare respectively (Dankwa, 2018; Doggu, 2015; Bodomo & Mora, 2007, 2002; Alenuma, 2002; Bekye, 1999; Bodomo, 1997). In Ghana, some of the Dagaaba homelands are Lawra, Fielmuo, Nandom, Piina, Ko, Hamile, Jirapa, Daffiema, Babile, Kaleo and Nadowli. Due to the absence of documented studies on the Dagaaba, it is difficult to state their precise place of origin (Doggu, 2015). Tuurey (1982) for instance states that the origin of the Dagaaba in pre-colonial Ghana is debatable; however, oral tradition reveals that they are descendants of the Mole-Dagbani. The Mole-Dagbani is a conglomerate of ethnic groups comprising of the Mossi, Mamprusi, Nanumba and Dagbamba. The Dagaaba are believed to have migrated from the Sahel region in the 14th century (Doggu, 2015) but followed different migrating patterns. Depending on when a group left, their leader's attributes and the motive for the migration, they settled at their present locations. One oral tradition also places the beginning of their migration at Gao in Mali (Yelpaala, 1983). Another account asserts that Naa Nyagse's tyrannous rule led to the Dagaaba exodus from the Dagbon kingdom (Lentz, 1994). The reason for the different origin narratives is captured by Lentz (1994:477) as follows:

To begin with, it is important to note that until well into the 1960s, when Dagara intellectuals entered the scene, little new historical research was being carried out on the Black Volta region, either in Ghana or in Upper Volta. While pre-colonial states such as Dagomba, Gonja, Wa and Mossi attracted some scholarly attention, the so-called 'stateless' societies remained rather marginal to the interests of most historians. Of course, the intensity of scholarly interest was dictated partly by the availability of pre-colonial dichotomy between state and non-state societies. The states, which often had their own indigenous historians, were more easily conceded a history in their own right which made them more attractive to academic historical research. By contrast, 'stateless' groups appeared to have had no history or at best a rather uneventful one, a view which tended to produce only 'timeless' study of social organisation couched in the 'ethnographic present'.

From Lentz's (1994) observation, the challenge in getting a uniform account on the history of the Dagaaba lies in the time it took for historians to conduct research on them. Most of the earlier accounts on the Dagaaba were from colonial administrators' notes, anthropological research or missionaries' diaries. Thus, the oral tradition from first generations' account might have been lost at the time historians began their research in the 1960s.

According to Songsore and Denkabe (in Abdul-Korah, 2011:392), the social organisation of the Dagaaba traditionally involved a communal mode of production in which village communities were relatively autonomous with the *Tendaana*, (the earth priest/owner of the land) acting as a mediator between people and their lands. Though most literature on the Dagaaba uses *Tendaana* (Central Dagaare), this study employs *Tengan sob*, which is in northern Dagaare, the dialect of Lawra and Fielmuo. Doggu (2015:14) submits that the *Tengan sob* is a "religious cum political head, [who], in consultation with a council of elders, who are family heads in their own right, promulgates and administers law and order that affect cultural, religious and economic life as well as all forms of social practices in the area under his jurisdiction". The *Tengan sob* of every community was responsible for the political, religious, social and economic administration of his community. This however changed around 1890 when the British colonial administration introduced the system of indirect rule. Chieftaincy was institutionalised to facilitate the governing system of the colonial administration. As a result, the *Tengan sob* was stripped off his political functions though he still performed his religious duties and has remained to do so since independence. The *Tengan sob* and his functions are discussed in more detail in chapter four (4).

The Dagaaba, like most ethnic groups in Ghana, from the time of independence embraced both the central governance and the chieftaincy institution for the traditional administration of their communities (Doggu, 2015). The current governance structure of Ghana, which came into being in 1993, enforced by the 1992 Constitution, is a dominant presidential system supported by a parliament. Executive power is vested in the president who is the head of state and head of government, and the commander-in-chief of the armed forces. The president is elected for a four-year term and is eligible for a second four-year term. He is responsible for appointing a cabinet who assists in determining policy of the government (Abdulai, 2009). Thus, the governance structure of Ghana is made up of the executive (decentralised into regional and district administrations), the judiciary responsible for justice and rule of law, and the parliamentary drawn from two-hundred and seventy-five (275) constituencies in the country.

Among the Dagaaba, the resources, power, status, rights and duties between men and women are allotted based on factors such as descent, succession and inheritance, paternity, and economic potential amongst

others. An individual's status and authority in society depends on his wealth as well as the number of wives and children he has. Politically and socially, men have the authority and they control the most important means of land management and crop production. This is because of the belief that men established village boundaries while hunting. The household is usually headed by the man, the woman is subordinate. The social set up prevents women from either inheriting or owning properties. For example, if a Dagao woman wants to buy a cow, she has to do so through her husband or a male relative or in her son's name (Abdul-Korah, 2011:392). There have been some changes to this system as a result of modernity. Most Dagaaba women are now encouraged to be more enterprising and business minded.

Activities in the household of the Dagao are clearly divided on the basis of gender and age. As part of their contribution to the welfare of the home, men, women, and children are given different tasks or responsibilities. For instance, men are responsible for clearing the land and building huts while the women sow and harvest the crops as well as mending huts. The children on the other hand fetch water for watering the crops and drive birds, insects and other animals away from settling on the crops.

The 2010 population census of Ghana indicates that the Dagaaba constitutes 56% of the population of the Upper West Region (Abdul-Korah, 2011: 392). It is estimated that the population of the Dagaaba is 577,000, which represents 3% of the national population. (Doggu, 2015:19). According to Songsore and Denkabe (in Abdul-Korah, 2011:392), the economic base of the Dagaaba hinges on agriculture. Over 80% of the population depends on farming for their livelihood. Other economic activities include pastoralism, hunting, trading and xylophone making.

The climate of the north western Ghana where the Dagaaba are located has influenced their lifestyle significantly. The region is characterised by a single rainfall season which falls between May and October. The seasonality of the rainfall limits the ability of farmers for year-round agricultural activity. This result in insufficient farming and poor crop yield (Abdul-Korah, 2011:392). Due to the single farming season, migration of the Dagaaba to the southern part of Ghana, especially the Bono and Ahafo Regions is rampant. Most of the young people who travel to these parts of the country during the dry season work in mines and on farms (in the forest region of Bono and Ahafo) but return home as soon as the rainy season begins. Though the Dagaaba are noted for migrating to the southern part of the country for greener pastures due to the seasonality of rainfall, they are very much attached to their homeland. The staple food of the Dagaaba is *saab* (food prepared from either millet or maize flour) but it is known popularly by its Hausa name, *tuo zaafi*. *Pito* (drink brewed with malt made from sorghum) is their indigenous beverage.

The Dagaaba in the various communities share common linguistic features but there are significant dialectal differences. Bodomo (in Doggu, 2015:23) identifies four dialect groups. One Dialect group is Northern Dagaare which is spoken by the Dagaaba of Nandom, Lawra, Fielmuo, Hamile and their areas of influence. Central Dagaare is found in Jirapa, Ullo, Daffiema, Nadowli, and their spheres of influence. It is called Central Dagaare because it is used in approximately the middle belt of the Upper West Region and enjoys a considerable degree of intelligibility from speakers of other dialects (Doggu, 2015:23). Because Central Dagaare is well understood by speakers of other dialects, it is used for literary works, Catholic Church literature, and radio presentations. A third dialect is referred to as Southern Dagaare or Waale; and is mostly prevalent in Kaleo and Metropolitan Wa and their surrounding villages. Southern Dagaare or Waale is the trade language and is widely spoken in markets and other trading centres. The last group is Western Dagaare and this dialect is spoken by the Tuna community. It is called Birifor which is similar to Northern Dagaare. It is mostly spoken in the western part of the Black Volta, in Burkina Faso and Cote d' Ivoire.

The most important unit among the Dagaaba is the *yir* (family). *Yir* can also mean village or a house. In this study, my use of *yir* will be interchangeable depending on the context. The family or house is made up of both the nuclear and extended families. Membership of a lineage is traced through a person's patrikin (Doggu, 2015:33). That is to say the lineage takes its root from the patrilineal descent. People are also related through clans. Members of a clan usually have certain things in common. For instance they can have a common *kpimè* (guardian spirit), a common prohibition from eating certain foods or wearing certain clothes. The Dagaaba practice the patrilineal type of inheritance. Children, mostly boys, inherit farmlands, moveable properties and spiritual functions from their fathers. They could receive gifts and animals from their mothers but not as an inheritance. According to tradition, a woman can inherit from her mother clothing, utensils for cooking and other properties particular to women. How the Dagaaba construct their kinship is discussed in more detail in chapter four (4).

The supreme God and creator is *Naamwin*. *Mwin* means sun, so *Naamwin* is sometimes associated with the sun, sky or rain, drawing the embodiment of God through these natural things. Each settlement of about 300 to 1,000 people has a *tengan* (earth-shrine) and the *tengan* is usually situated in a grove in the central part of the settlement. Sacrifices and obeisance are performed by the *Tengan sob* and his assistants. Some *yir* have a common deity they worship. It is usually placed in the central part of the compound. The *yir-sob* (family head) makes sacrifices on behalf of the entire family to the deity. However, the introduction of Christianity and Islam has altered this. Most people have become Christians

or Muslims and have turned away from this practice. The few who still worship the deities now keep them in their individual rooms or spaces where they make obeisance to them. Details of the Dagaaba belief system is found in chapter four (4).

Dagaaba folk wisdom is oral and is transmitted through storytelling sessions, proverbs or in folksongs. Doggu (2015:178) reiterates this when he says “Dagaaba stories are spiced, interwoven and interspersed with songs and a number of wise sayings or proverbs”. Stories mirror the society and create an opportunity for the elderly to impart wisdom and knowledge to the younger generation. These stories also contain in them the tradition and cultural heritage of the Dagaaba. The storytelling session usually happens late in the evening or at night. Both children and adults are allowed to participate in the storytelling session.

The Dagaaba folk songs express the facts about the human experience and journey; these are manifested in play songs, work songs, *dano* (praise songs) and *yir-dano* (lineage praise songs). Play and work songs are discussed at length in chapter two (2). *Dano* and *yir-dano* are song genres performed to extol virtues (Doggu, 2015:175) and acknowledge personal attributes that are commendable to encourage community members to uphold good behaviour. While the *dano* is a general praise accorded to good behaviour in the community, the *yir-dano* acknowledges good deeds of a specific lineage or a member of the said lineage. The lyrics of these songs are often derived from experiences and emotions of the composers. Some songs are used to admonish and praise people in the society while others condemn certain vices in society. Folk song compositions are often the attributes of Dagaaba women and they find the grinding stone as a space for such performances while grinding cereals or at recreational grounds Doggu (2015).

Music making among the Dagaaba is said to be an integral part of their social lives (Lawrence, 2011; Bodomo & Mora, 2002). Songs are composed as accompaniment to dance movements for recreation as well as to lampoon persons who have violated societal mores to serve as deterrent to others. Songs thus act as social control among the Dagaaba. Musiyiwa (2013:1) reiterates this perception when he refers to songs as a “construction of identities in terms of human behaviour”. Songs are also composed to motivate hard work. The implication is that music making plays a vital role in the total social orientation of a Dagao. *Kaare*¹, *nuru loba*², and *bi-yaglélyielé*³ are some of the Dagaaba play songs. Play songs are recreational songs performed by women to express their sentiments of love, admiration, contentment or

¹A Dagaaba maiden’s recreational dance with emphasis on singing.

²A type of recreational song.

³A Dagaaba lullaby.

dissatisfaction of situations. Indeed, play song performance serves as an avenue for women in this strictly patriarchal society to ‘find their voices’ to express their emotions which traditionally may not be permissible. Work songs – music that accompanies activities like grinding, pounding, plastering, floor-beating, farming and hunting – can be identified as *kpetâayielu*⁴ and *wââlon yielu*⁵. Play songs are recreational, while work songs are sung to accompany work related activities.

Though the four (4) types of songs, *dano*, *yir-dano* and play and work songs are the Dagaaba way of expressing their life history, my interest in the latter two is due to their comprehensiveness, they incorporate the other two. For instance, *dano* and *yir-dano* are praise songs that are performed as work songs by women while grinding. Thus, *dano* and *yir-dano* are subsumed in work songs.

Play and work songs of the Dagaaba are song types driven by recreational and occupational activities. The implication is that these songs are stimulated by an action. Recreational activities such as storytelling and *nuru loba* and *Kaare* (youthful dance) are marked by play songs. The occupations which are accompanied by work songs include shepherding, hunting, plastering of walls, grinding, pottery and drawing of water from the stream. In these communities, play songs were usually performed by maidens and women. It was an opportunity to voice out their social conditions, learn and perfect dance steps, strengthen social bonds and most importantly for recreational purposes. Work songs on the other hand create pace and rhythm for a task to be accomplished.

Play and work song performances, among other genres of music of the Dagaaba, function as an important medium of social orientation. Taylor (2010:25) acknowledges the important role of performance in a society when she comments on performance “as a vehicle for the creation of new meaning and the transmission of cultural values, memory, and identity”. However, there has been a gradual change in performances. According to Hendricks (2018) modernity and extreme commodification has resulted in distortion of culture. In a keynote address at the 4th International Research Conference on “Prospects and Challenges of Humanities Research in the 21st Century”, Hendricks stated that focus has shifted from preservation of heritage to packaging and branding to the highest bidder. His position affirms the concerns of the study: in pursuit of modernity, performance spaces are either consciously erased or ignored therefore affecting the vitality of performances. This situation, if not managed, may result in the

⁴A motivational song to encourage hard work in communal labour.

⁵Songs to motivate good works and discourage slackers.

younger generation lack of knowledge and skills in these indigenous performances which may result in distortion of culture.

1.2 Rationale and problem statement

In a society where, indigenous knowledge systems are mostly transmitted orally through performances from older generations to the younger to educate and circulate for continuity, the disappearance of platforms for transfer increases the danger of extinction (UNESCO, 2008). According to Mapara (2009:139), “indigenous knowledge systems are a body of knowledge, or bodies of knowledge of the indigenous people of particular geographical areas that they have survived on for a very long time....they manifest themselves through different dimensions”. Mapara (2009) emphasises further that the manifestation of this knowledge could be in agriculture, medicine, linguistics and arts. It can be inferred that the North-West University in South Africa, anticipating such an occurrence as reported by UNESCO, already established indigenous knowledge systems courses of study at both under- and postgraduate levels in 2001 (Kaya & Seleti, 2013). According to Kaya and Seleti (2013) the institutional, national, continental and global imperatives motivated the teaching of these courses. The continuous call for protection and preservation of indigenous heritage (UNESCO, 2018, 2003, 2001, 1989, 1972), the advocacy for indigenous performance and the institutionalisation of indigenous knowledge studies (Kaya & Seleti, 2013; Younge, 2011) show a global engagement in indigenous knowledge and performance. This global engagement has spurred on the interest of countries to make strides towards this drive and countries such as Japan, Korea and Kenya have made commitments towards safeguarding indigenous art forms that are disappearing due to non-performance of the arts. A UNESCO report (2008) from Kenya indicates that oral traditions of the Suba, Yaaku and Segeju ethnic groups are becoming extinct due to the assimilation of traditions of the dominant ethnic groups. To curb this threat, a research study funded by UNESCO was conducted to record most of the oral traditions of these minority ethnic groups.

Acknowledging the importance of intangible heritage and its role in social cohesion and the threats assimilation of cultures and modernity pose to intangible heritage, UNESCO has established funding to help countries who avail themselves to salvage the situation. On 17 October 2003, UNESCO’s *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* was put in place, however, Ghana only submitted her instrument on 20 January 2016 for ratification, thirteen (13) years after the convention was put in place in Paris. Ghana seems to be moving at a very slow pace in accessing this fund for major research or policy implementation on safeguarding intangible heritage. The UNESCO office in Accra, in an effort to develop institutional and professional environments favourable to the sustainable

safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, organised a validation workshop on needs assessment in Ghana for capacity building strategy for the implementation of the 2003 convention in 2018. If there seems to be less commitment towards UNESCO's drive on the national front, then attention may not be given to the state of indigenous arts and indigenous performances at the local levels.

Mawere (2014) calls for Africa, as a continent, to revive indigenous cultures to aid in sustainable development, since reliance on Western knowledge alone will not help in achieving the needed results. The major mode of transmission of indigenous knowledge has been through artistic expression such as dance movements, proverbs, drum language, symbols, paintings, sculpture and songs. Maurial (in Darko, 2009:10) explains indigenous knowledge as

the people's cognitive and wise legacy.....this knowledge is immersed in the whole culture and it is recreated through generations in the daily oral stories, symbols, songs, riddles, myths and idioms constructed in local languages to reflect their daily agrarian work in the land, the curative powers of their local plants as well as the celebration of special events.

Thus, the performances of songs, stories, myths, idioms and the use of symbols can be considered the life wire of indigenous knowledge and, by extension; these performances build the cultural heritage of a group of people such as the Dagaaba. These performances are what Hansen et al (in Smith, 2001:1367) refer to as tacit knowledge, the transfer from older generation equips the younger generation of a "know-how" skill for them to continue. Drewal (1991:65) states the following regarding performance as knowledge production:

In Africa performance is a primary site for the production of knowledge, where philosophy is enacted, and where multiple and often simultaneous discourses are employed. Not only that, but performance is a means by which people reflect on their current conditions, define and/or re-invent themselves and their social world, and either, re-enforce, resist or subvert prevailing social orders.

What can be deduced from Drewal's submission is that performance spaces in Africa become platforms where knowledge of identity and worldview is affirmed and transferred from performer to audience/observer. In this space, culture is produced and subsequently preserved for posterity, becoming the cultural heritage of the people. Gyekye (2013:141) broadens the understanding of culture when he states:

When human beings come to live together in a particular geographic space and share a life, they would feel the need to establish a social framework

within which they can function as human beings. To fulfil this need, they would evolve and nurture certain values, practices, institutions, patterns of thought and ways of behaving. These would constitute themselves into a social, conceptual and normative framework that embodies their way of life in its totality: this framework would be the culture of the people.

Thus, the performances of these art forms or cultural practices validate the identity of a group of people whereas the absence of these performances arguably weakens it. These performances could be perpetuated by the younger generation through experiencing the arts when they participate in the process.

In Ghana in the past, indigenous arts had platforms such as the courtyards at dwellings where folklore such as play songs were performed in the evenings, and at the grinding stone where work songs were performed while cereals were milled. However, modernity has erased most of these platforms. To maximise limited space due to urbanisation, estate developers mostly build apartments, erasing courtyards. The grinding machine has also replaced the grinding stone. These ‘erasers’ are limiting performances and the vitality of performances. Studies, conducted in 2013 and 2014 on the viability of storytelling and folktales as an instructional method in formal institutions in Ghana and the vitality of storytelling (Kuusangyele, 2013; Dorgbadzi, 2014), revealed that some indigenous performances are not as vibrant as they once were. The presence of televisions and home theatres in most homes has further pushed indigenous performances to the peripheries, when indigenous performances such as folk songs, storytelling and communal dances were common practices in the past as these performances were embedded within specifically a Dagao’s and generally a Ghanaian’s social orientation for communal growth (Gyekye, 2013).

Traditional social institutions such as marriage and family over the years have undergone drastic changes due to the waves of change in the form of formal education, Christianity and modernity (Nukunya, 2003). This change has also found its way among the Dagaaba community with regards to the performance of traditional arts (Diboro, 2011; Nanbigne, 2003; Bodomo & Mora, 2007). It is becoming common practice in Ghana and other neighbouring countries such as Togo, Benin, Nigeria and Burkina Faso to use technology to view and transform traditional arts through recordings, thus erasing the platform for nurturing and the participatory nature of the arts. Though this new development is archiving the songs that are usually transferred orally from generation to generation, the recording in the studios takes away a major function of performance of indigenous art – nurturing younger generations to be able to perform in future. Malinowski, (in Okpewho, 1992:10,173) in an ethnographic research study of the Trobriand narratives, revealed that the text of a performance loses some of its meaning when it is not performed in

context. Malinowski (in Okpewho, 1992) noted that the environment, setting and audience reaction influence the performance. Similarly, according to Finnegan (2012), oral literature, unlike written literature, needs indices like gestures, vocal tone, delivery, audience composition and response to be better appreciated. In Africa, where traditional performances are not necessarily just for entertainment, the moment a performance is transferred from its natural environment and the appropriate setting (where everyone in the community can participate) into a recording studio (and transformed into an audio and/or visual recording), its primary functional role of nurturing talent and imparting knowledge for continuity is lost.

Existing literature on play and work songs of the Dagaaba emphasises the text of the compositions – which usually praise, criticises or lampoons an individual to maintain social order in the community – but not the vitality of the performance thereof. Vercelli (2006) explores the *Dagara-Birifor*⁶ as a repertoire to make it easier for non Dagaare speakers to appreciate the music. Sutherland-Addy, Mudiare and Nanbigne (2005), in their work on poetry, looks at how Dagaaba women, in their quest not to be subdued by tradition which restricts them from singing praise songs, have turned praise songs to work songs. Nanbigne (2003) also discusses the text of poetry performed by Dagaaba women as a mark of evolution. However, Dankwa (2018) brings a different dimension to indigenous performance research of the Dagaaba. In his work, *When the Gyil speaks: Music, Emotions and Performances in Dagaaba Funerary Rituals*, Dankwa notes that the music from the *gyil* (xylophone) moves people into action, thus the *gyil* speaks to the people to either mourn or dance at the funeral grounds. With the exception of Dankwa (2018), most existing literature on indigenous arts of the Dagaaba are either on textual and tonal interpretation (Woma, 2012; Vercelli, 2006), literary criticism of songs (Sutherland-Addy, Mudiare and Nanbigne, 2005) or documentation of song texts (Bodomo & Mora, 2007). Very little literature, however, exists on the performance vitality of play and work songs. Shelemay (2006:217) observes that “music making depends on individual and shared (“collective”) memories. An individual may compose a song, but it will last only if it is transmitted by others in a community. A song cannot survive if it is not performed”.

Indigenous performances – such as play and work songs – are opportunities for the Dagaaba community to learn and nurture talents and skills and for the acquisition of indigenous knowledge in general. The

⁶A subgroup of the Dagaaba ethnic group.

problem this study is concerned with is the disappearance of the performance spaces of, or platforms for, work and play songs due to modernity and investigating alternative spaces for indigenous performances.

1.3 Research questions and objective of study

This research investigates the disappearance of platforms for performance and the effect of social change on the performance vitality of play and work songs among the Dagaaba community; that is, the impact these changes have on the role and functions of these performances. The focus of the study will move beyond (but not exclude) the text of the songs as explored by Vercelli (2006) and Bodomo and Mora (2007) to investigate how the absence of platforms for the performances of these songs has affected the text. Shelemay (2006:217) states that “when we participate in a musical performance, we experience a moment similar to the moment when a memory was first generated. Thus, a musical memory is cued and retrieved the next time the music is encountered”. What this implies is that irregular or absence of performance of a text or a song may lead to it being altered or forgotten. The study will investigate perceived disappearances of performance platforms for play and work songs and will include field work in two Dagaaba communities. The research will also try to identify alternative platforms on which these indigenous performances could be performed to reactivate their vitality and popularity.

The general objective of the study is to unearth the influence of modernity on indigenous Dagaaba performances. The following are the specific objectives of the study:

- To investigate the role of play and work songs as traditional verbal art performances in the Dagaaba community.
- To explore the manifestations of modernity in the Dagaaba community of north western Ghana.
- To analyse the perceived and/or experienced impact of modernity on play and work song performances of the Dagaaba community.
- To investigate alternative platforms for indigenous performances such as play and work songs.

The study will therefore be guided by the following questions:

1. What is the role of traditional performances, such as play and work songs, in upholding the social structure of the Dagaaba community?
2. How has modernity influenced the Dagaaba community of north western Ghana?
3. What is the impact of modernity on play and work song performances of the Dagaaba community?

4. What alternative platforms for indigenous performances such as play and work songs can be considered in relation to their role within the Dagaaba community?

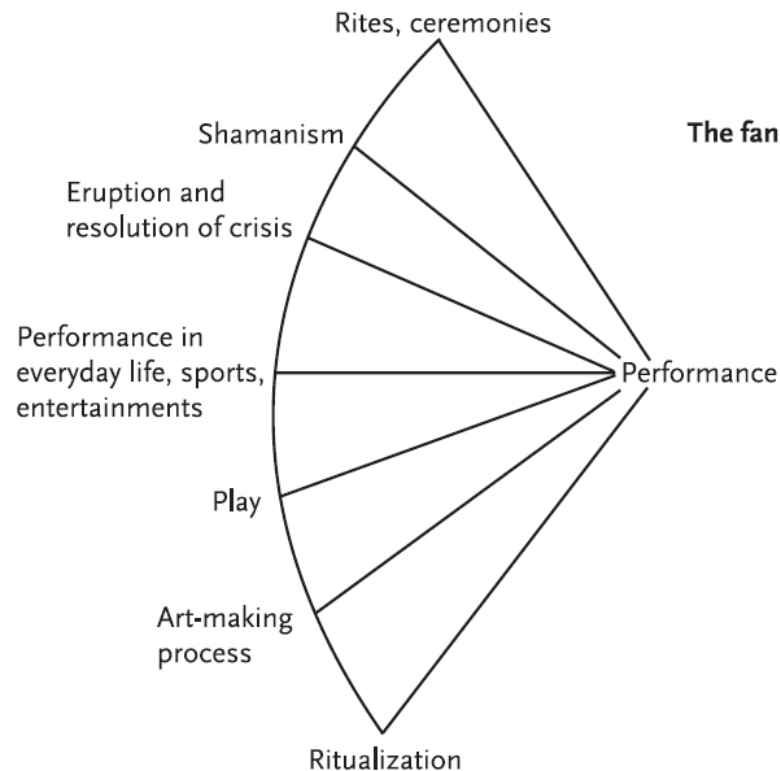
1.4 Theoretical framework

Performance studies have taken on various meanings and have been severely contested (Mckenzie, Roms & Wee, 2010). The study therefore adopts a multi-perspective approach (John, 2017; Musiyiwa, 2013), because “contrast of perspectives found across contemporary performance research caution us against holding an overarching notion of exactly what this research ‘is’” (Mckenzie et al, 2010:20). The multi-perspective approach will thus give latitude to explore various perspectives to enrich the research. The first point of departure is on earlier studies on songs, such as Musiyiwa (2013), Njoku and Maupeu (2007), and Mvula (1986). These studies deduce their songs from politics and gender power relations (John, 2017). Play and work songs on the other hand, has nothing to do with political affairs in Ghana. Commentary on behaviour, thoughts, appearances and productivity in society is the main focus of the play and work song performances. The mentioned studies therefore serve as background for this investigation and help in informing the first research question regarding the role of play and work songs within the social structure of the Dagaaba community.

The second point of departure focuses on aspects of the performance theory of Schechner (2003; 2013). Though his perspective is inclusive, play and work songs are not geared towards theatrical performance; rather these songs are performed spontaneously as and when inspired. Though performers consciously meet to engage in singing, the performance is not for a conscious audience as in the theatre.

The study thus employs the fan model of Schechner’s performance theory which presents performance as a variety of actions or activities that are not necessarily intended for theatre.

See figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Fan model (Schechner, 2003: xvii)

Schechner (2003: ix) indicates that “performance is not restricted to the theatre but can take place anywhere, under a wide variety of circumstances, and in the service of incredibly diverse panoply of objectives”. My understanding of this interpretation is that performance is not limited to what happens in the theatre as Schechner (2013:2) further explains that “there is no historical or cultural fixable limit to what is or is not ‘performance’.... the underlying notion is that any action that is framed, presented, highlighted or displayed is a performance”. From the illustration in the fan model above, each activity is done based on a frame and presented with or without an audience but to serve a purpose. For instance, a Dagaaba rite such as the *Bagr* initiation rite is framed as a rite of passage to transit from *bagli* (junior/children of *bagr*) to *bagr eré* (senior/elders of *bagr*) (Tengan, 1999:597). The ritual therefore presents several activities to actualise this transition. The presentation of these activities, such as camping for grooming, test of endurance, outdoorings of initiates is what Schechner concludes as performance. A rite for a deity is also framed depending on the circumstance, whether thanksgiving or atonement; the circumstance will further indicate demands and requirements for the activities to be done. Thus, there could be presentations of activities such as incantation, divination, and possession. Though these rites are not scripted and staged in a conventional theatre space, Schechner (2003) acknowledges them as performance. This study falls in line with this interpretation of performance by Schechner because play

and work songs are framed as activity songs and can take place anywhere as inspired by the activity and the circumstance and the purpose could be either to applaud and encourage good behaviour or reprimand for transformation.

The study also incorporates aspects of social performance studies as proposed by Fei and Sun (2013). The proponents of social performance studies advance that there are actions performed outside the theatre that have precise impact on a specific group of people and emphasises social discipline. The concern of understanding one's social discipline is raised by Shava and Manyike (2018) when they advocate for formal institutions to recognise indigenous language and indigenous knowledge as a foundation for learners to process information. Their argument is that most Africans get to the formal classrooms with a foundation base in indigenous knowledge which needs to be built upon rather than replacing it with knowledge hegemony. This argument is supported by Kaya and Seleti (2013:33):

Indigenous institutions of knowledge production, conservation and sharing such as initiation schools, indigenous games, agricultural systems, dances and songs, storytelling, proverbs, et cetera, still remain pillars of indigenous African ways of knowing.

As mentioned earlier, play and work songs are performed to, among other things, lampoon social deviance, encourage virtues and motivate productivity. Both Schechner's performance theory and Fei and Sun's social performance studies further serve as frameworks for determining the role of play and work songs within the Dagaaba community. Fei and Sun's (2013) concept of social discipline posits that one's action is shaped by the social discipline he/she belongs to, such as a law enforcing officer, a teacher and a priest. Each of these social disciplines has rules and regulations and those who belong there know the consequences of deviant behaviour within that social discipline. Thus, play and work songs serve as checks within social disciplines of the Dagaaba. For instance, there are rules guarding hunting which hunters have to adhere to or face the consequence. On the other hand, Schechner's fan model unpacks what constitutes performance. That is, performance as an analogy of the fan can be identified strand by strand when given deeper interpretation. As the full capacity of the folding hand fan in blowing air is realised when one stretches it, so will activities be perceived as performance when analysed further.

Okpewho's (1992:42) ideas about "the various physical factors that influence the creativity of the oral artists" inform research questions 2 and 3. Okpewho's (1992) position is that the oral artist's performance is influenced by external factors such as the setting, the audience and the occasion. Thus, disappearing

platforms, that is, the setting for play and work songs of the Dagaaba may influence the performance and text of the songs.

Documentation and analysis of songs (John, 2017; Musiyiwa, 2013; Bodomo, 2007; Vercelli, 2006) is adopted to document play and work songs during the field work, in order to analyse the influence (if any) on the song text due to infrequent performances. It is also necessary to document some of these knowledge systems because as McNeely (in Kaya & Seleti, 2013:33) observes:

The wealth of knowledge that still exists among elders and other knowledge holders in African communities demonstrates the vibrant intellectualism to which African researchers and intellectuals should turn. It needs to be documented and share with the youth for sustainability.

Finally, verbal art as performance as posited by Bauman (1977; 2002) is employed. Bauman's theory deals with studying the social and cultural lives/performances in relation to the use of language. His perception of folklore as an artful way of speaking further guides research question 1 of the study.

1.5 Methodology and research design

A qualitative mode of inquiry was adopted through fieldwork for primary data collection in addition to a literature study and archival research for secondary data collection. Relying on oral tradition, ethnographic research was conducted in two Dagaaba communities, Lawra and Fielmua⁷ for the primary data. Ethnographic enquiry was employed to facilitate the investigation as the research involves a specific community and an exploration of a social phenomenon which has to be done in context (Dewan, 2018). Multiple qualitative data collection tools, such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussion were used. This approach was used to help triangulate data from the field to ensure the data obtained are credible for analysis in achieving the objectives of the study.

Participant observation was one of the data collection tools chosen to observe play and work song performances. My choice of this approach was to help extract the dynamics of performances within the selected communities to ascertain whether performances are vibrant or otherwise. However, it was not possible for me to participate due to the change in the platform for indigenous performances. Most indigenous performances are now performed during meetings of identifiable groups instead of the open

⁷ These two communities are firstly selected based on the dialectical proficiency of the researcher. Dagaare, the language of the Dagaaba has dialectical differences. These two communities speak the same dialect which the researcher is proficient in. Further reasons for selecting these communities will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, as well as in chapter three (3).

performances. Thus, a non-member of a group may observe but not participate. The observation was originally scheduled to be done during the off-season for farming, from late November to April, a period when work on the farms has ended but the beginning of major repair works on huts that have been destroyed by the heavy rains of the farming season. This period thus gives community members the opportunity to engage in traditional performances while working to mend roofs and plaster walls. But this schedule was interrupted by the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic; observation was thus halted in mid-March 2020 when Ghana and many other countries went under lockdown to contain the spread of the virus, this did not in any way affect the approach, but solely impacted on the duration of the data collection period. Observation was done on works such as the making of blocks and plastering for building and renovation.

Repositories of indigenous knowledge such as chiefs, traditional priests and members of traditional councils were purposively sampled for in-depth interviews for information on play and work song performances. It was presumed that these individuals have experienced and observed the trend of performances of these arts forms and therefore have reliable information. The purposive sampling approach is ideal for the study because it presents the opportunity to interact with informants who have knowledge and skills on the subject. The youth were also engaged in focus group discussions to collect their views on the state of performances in the community. The age identified as youth by various entities, instruments and organisations' (UN, UNESCO, ILO, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA and African Youth Charter) ranges from fifteen (15) to thirty-five (35). However, the socio-cultural context influenced my identification of the youth. The Dagaaba consider those below the age of eighteen (18) years as children, and in the social structure, they do not contribute to deliberations on matters concerning the community. Also I would have had to seek for parental consent before inclusion of participants below the age of eighteen (18), something that was not catered for in my ethical clearance. My age bracket for the focus group discussion was therefore from eighteen (18) years to thirty-five (35). A detailed discussion on the primary data collection process and approach is done in chapter three (3).

The secondary data were obtained from books, journals, newspapers, magazines, and unpublished theses and dissertations. Relevant information was also retrieved from the internet.

1.6 Ethical consideration

I went through the procedures prescribed by the Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research of Stellenbosch University and obtained Human Research (Humanities) ethical clearance before going to the field to collect data.

I also needed to get consent of the chiefs and members of the two communities to interview them. Through the late Mr George Yasamé Sulley and Mr Thomas Danikuu, contact persons in Lawra and Fielmuo respectively, the chiefs, Naa Puowele Karbo III of Lawra and the late Naa (Dr) Francis Danikuu of Fielmuo gave the needed consent. This was after I observed the traditional homage of giving bottles of drinks and a token of money to the chiefs. The chiefs showed interest in the study and gave permission for me to collect the data from their subjects. They, (the chiefs) also consented to be participants. There were neither reservations nor objections from the community members when they got knowledge of their chiefs' consent to the study.

There have been instances where distribution and transferring of indigenous knowledge to modern scholars has been considered as exploitative (Okpewho, 1992:355), as such keepers of this knowledge are often reluctant and, in some cases, sceptical to share. They believe, should there be any financial returns, they will not benefit. It is even more challenging in this era where indigenous arts are transferred from their natural state into recordings for economic ventures. I was therefore apprehensive when I entered the communities to collect data that this study could be misconstrued as such. I had decided beforehand that should any such notions occur, I would employ a strategy adopted by Dorgbadzi (2014) in a similar study on storytelling. She reports that when she was confronted by community members of her study area with such sentiments, she resolved the situation by signing a contract with the opinion leaders in the communities that the data will be used solely for academic purposes. However, my apprehension was diffused due to the collective interest. While the elders of both communities were interested in the study because of the opportunity it offered them to make their concerns known about the state of indigenous performances in their jurisdiction, the youth saw it as a platform to respond to the public's perception of neglect of indigenous performances by the youth.

There was no demand for any form of financial benefit from respondents in Fielmuo and Lawra; however, Lawra being a paramountcy with chiefdoms far apart, Naa Puowele Karbo III suggested that I compensate participants who travelled longer distances to the designated location for the interview by paying for their transportation. The chief had set aside a room in the palace as an interview room. This

act by Naa Puowele Karbo III provided privacy for the respondents. Thus, the envisaged obstacles with regards to exploitation of respondents based on earlier research (Dorgbadzi, 2014; Okpewho, 1992) were not experienced in this study.

1.7 Organisational structure of the study

This study is organised into seven chapters. In this chapter I have provided the background to the study, which provides insight into the history, location, identity and worldview of the Dagaaba. This is followed by the rationale and problem statements which present the need for the research study; then the research questions and objectives which drive the study. A theoretical framework which positions the study in a perspective is also discussed. The methodology and research design gives a summary of the research design and data collection tools used. This chapter also includes ethical considerations made before and during data collection, this is followed by the organisational structure of the study. The chapter concludes with a discussion on my position in the study and the delineation of the study.

In chapter two, existing literature on African songs are briefly reviewed to establish why the current study departs from them. Secondly, songs of the Dagaaba are discussed with specific focus on play and work songs. This is followed by the theoretical framework of the study which includes discussions on the theories of Schechner (2003, 2013) and Fei and Sun (2013). The chapter concludes with a discussion on verbal art as performance.

Chapter three discusses the chosen methodology for this study. It focuses specifically on the primary data collection process within an ethnographic approach. Data collection methods, such as interviews, focus group discussions and observation, are discussed. An overview of the sampling procedure, population and sample size selection and sampling design, as well as a number of challenges that impacted on the fieldwork are considered.

Chapter four analyses the role of traditional performances in the social structure of the Dagaaba. The social organisation and political institutions are discussed to situate them in the vitality of traditional performances of the Dagaaba. The first part of the chapter focuses on the social organisation and political institutions and the second part of the chapter discuss social control mechanisms of the Dagaaba.

Chapter five continues the analysis of collected data. It firstly gives an overview of the indigenous performances still prevalent within Dagaaba communities and secondly, it analyses the manifestations and impact of modernity on play and work songs.

Chapter six provides an analysis of the work and play songs that were collected during the fieldwork and includes the lyrics and translations of the collected songs.

Finally, chapter seven provides the summary, recommendation and conclusion to the study.

1.8 Researcher positionality

In this section, I discuss my identity in the research and the scope of the study. Positioning myself within this study gives recognition to and distinction from, my subjectivities and or bias as they may appear in the research.

Literature on qualitative research deem it essential for identification and status in research (Mercer & Merton in Kerstetter, 2012; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009) to ensure credibility and trust in the process and the result. Qualitative research such as this study is noted to be prone to subjectivities and or bias. However, subjectivity places the researcher in a position to employ varied tools for triangulation to shape the data to ensure credibility (Given, 2008). As the main player in a research process the tendency for a perceived subjectivity is arguably very high (Merriam, 1998). It is therefore essential for me to bring out the identities and statuses I bring to the study.

There have been debates over positioning in qualitative research; while some lean towards insider, outsider doctrines (Merton in Kerstetter, 2012), others also consider a possible in between (Milligan, 2016; Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Merton (in Kerstetter, 2012) for instance, defends his outsider and insider doctrines in positioning a researcher. He asserts that in a research study where a researcher does not belong to the community the tendency to be a neutral, detached observer and thus objective is high. The insider on the other hand is acknowledged to be uniquely positioned to understand the experiences of the groups which they are part of. Although Serrant-Green (in Kerstetter, 2012) adds that the insider may have difficulty in confronting questions about potential bias in the research, Arthur (in Milligan, 2016) and Dwyer and Buckle, (2009), however, argue that the identity of the researcher keeps changing, and is not fixed. They assert that the positioning as an insider, outsider or in between could be made in relation to context, a particular person or the status of the researcher. Thus, even though I am a Dagao who conducted a study in Dagaaba communities, there were instances I identified myself as an insider, outsider and in between; what Israel et al (in Kerstetter, 2012) call multidimensional identities. My geographical location, socio-economic status, and life experience positioned myself variously in the study depending on the context or situation. Geographically, I identified myself as an outsider since I am not residing in any of the communities, though I lived in Fielmuo between 1985 and 1992. This outsider

position enabled me to distance myself from the subject thus giving prominence to my role as a researcher. This is manifested in my use of ‘the Dagaaba’ instead of ‘we’ or ‘us’ throughout my descriptions and analysis. At the same time, having lived in Fielmuo for seven (7) years and with my extended family still there, in a Dagaaba socio-cultural context I was an insider. I therefore relied on this position to gain access to places and information that an outsider would not have. For instance, in Fielmuo, the *Tengan sob*, realising that I am an indigene, and from the same clan as his mother, acknowledged me as a ‘mother’ and provided answers to questions that I believe he would not have given to an outsider. I was a complete outsider in Lawra but again in the Dagaaba socio-cultural context, I gained access to information as an insider in relation to being a Dagao and through clanship.

In respect of my socio-economic status, I was both an insider and outsider. My gender as a woman who has been privileged to be in a position to conduct a research endeared me to the participants. I rode on this admiration to ask probing questions to paramount chiefs, chiefs, and elders to enrich the data. For instance, in Mr. Yiribo Danikuu’s narrative which supported the legitimacy of the Dagaaba in Fielmuo, I probed to know why a Dagaaba community should bear a name in the Sisaala language. This made him to provide further details to the account, a situation which enhanced the data on the Dagaaba of Fielmuo. My employment status as a faculty member in a university and my income level compared to my participants, the majority of who were subsistence farmers, positioned me as an outsider but this did not affect the research process. As indicated in the ethical consideration, respondents were not influenced by monetary benefit to participate. They rather admired what I have achieved in the academic scene and per Dagaaba principle of shared benefits and sanctions would want to be associated with my achievement. My respondents thus availed themselves in every aspect to ensure that I got the needed information. For instance, when I could not get any grinding stone in Lawra, the late Mr. George Yasamê Sulley, who was a member of the elders of the Lawra Traditional Council and a former District Chief Executive, assisted in locating a household which still uses it in Tabier. This is a community within the Lawra traditional area but closer to the Ghana-Burkina Faso border, thus quite a distance away, but he went there personally with me to ensure that I collected the data needed with regards to work songs.

Life experience positioned me as an insider. Having lived in Fielmuo in my teenage years exposed me to night life of indigenous performances of the Dagaaba, the time of no electricity. This allowed me to rely on the experience to ask questions with regards to traditional performances to generate useful debate during my focus group discussion with the youth. Also, I could identify with the youth during the focus group discussion. They rejected the tag of neglecting indigenous performances placed on them by the

elders. Their defence was that they have found themselves in a new system that makes it impossible for them to function in the old one. I could relate to that because I was at one point in my life blamed for my inefficiency in the things of a Dagao. I was born and raised outside of Dagaaba culture, and then had to be in the community on vacation during my secondary education in the Upper West Region. However, I was expected to function as everyone else, not considering the difference in orientation which frustrated me. I could therefore relate with their frustration of being tagged wrongly which also gave me a deeper understanding in my analysis of the causes of the weakness in indigenous performances.

My identity as an insider at various points, as expressed by Kanuha (in Kerstetter, 2012) put me in a difficult position separating personal experiences from those of participants. However, Dwyer and Buckle (2009:59) respond to such misgivings as follows:

Being a member of the group under investigation does not unduly influence the process in a negative way. Disciplined bracketing and detailed reflection on the subjective research process, with a close awareness of one's own personal biases and perspectives, might well reduce the potential concerns associated insider membership. Furthermore, one does not have to be a member of the group being studied to appreciate and adequately represent the experience of the participants. Instead we posit that the core ingredient is not insider or outsider status but ability to be open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one's research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience.

In my role as a researcher, I also want to acknowledge my personal interest which has influenced the study, namely an interest in gaining in-depth knowledge of indigenous performance and getting credible data to serve as resource in teaching African Performance Theories and Drama in African Societies at the University of Ghana. This interest in collecting credible data also informed the delineation of the study.

1.9 Delineation of the study

The subject of indigenous performance and issues of modernity are broad and manifest differently, hence the need to delineate the study. Though the Dagaaba constitute 56% of the population of the Upper West Region, the scope of this study does not cover the entire population of the Dagaaba of north western Ghana. The study is limited to two Dagaaba communities, Lawra and Fielmuo. In addition to my dialectical proficiency of the language as indicated earlier, these communities were purposively selected to be pointers of the impact of modernity on indigenous performance due to their characteristics and

strategic locations. Lawra is a traditional paramountcy which has to uphold traditional practices, a district capital that attracts people from diverse cultures to work in both government and private establishments and one of the busy market towns in Upper West Region. These features make Lawra a melting point of traditional practices, urbanisation and commerce. Fielmuo is neither a paramountcy nor a district, it is a community surrounded by the Sisaala ethnic group, thus isolated from other Dagaare speaking communities. Apart from being surrounded by a dominant culture, Fielmuo is also a market town. These factors make Lawra and Fielmuo prone to acculturation hence their selection as sites for a research study on the impact of modernity on indigenous performances. A more detailed discussion of the reasons for my choice of these communities will follow in chapter three (3).

1.9.1 Indigenous performance

As discussed earlier, indigenous performance is an activity or expression specific to a group of people which demonstrates their worldview, their understanding, sense of some control and establishes their identity (Riccio, 2010:150; Thornberry, 2002). Indigenous performance ranges from rituals, ceremonies, dirges, various dances and songs specific to a group of people. In this study, indigenous performance is used in reference to play and work songs of the Dagaaba in their unique form before the emergence of modernity.

Thus, my study does not cover the entire repertoire of Dagaaba indigenous performances.

1.9.2 Modernity

Modernity is a concept used in varied contexts but in sum describes a historical period and a transformation in social life. Historically, it is the transition from the post-medieval period through the renaissance, enlightenment, reformation and the industrial revolution (Trainer, 1998). Thus, this is a phase in human history where dramatic changes occurred in human activities. Giddens (1990:1) in his book *The Consequence of Modernity* adds to the historical perspective when he explains modernity as “modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence”. As a social phenomenon, Eze-Uzomaka and Oloidi (2017:82) see modernity as a product of “social evolution...due to [societies’] adaptation to the surrounding environments [and] their interactions with other societies”. Habermas and Ben-Habib (1981:3) also describe modernity as “a result of a transition from the old to the new”. These definitions thus situate modernity as a period and product, a period in human history which separates one era from the other and a product of evolution in human thought which has resulted in change in various

aspects of human life. This study contextualises modernity as a transformation in traditional social life which has had an impact on indigenous performance vitality. Thus, the study uses modernity in reference to change in the space for and regularity of the performance of play and work songs, engineered by technology, urbanisation, formal education and Christianity. Modernity will be revisited in chapter five (5) in greater detail.

1.9.3 Vitality

Vitality can be a vast construct but is a term generally used to describe strength, energy, enthusiasm and improved performance. While Steenbergen et al (2015:354) define vitality “as energy, motivation and resilience”, Guérin (2012:897) in his research on vitality, well-being and quality of life identifies vitality as a component of well-being. In an attempt to conceptualise vitality, Ryan and Frederick (1997:529) describe vitality as “a positive feeling of aliveness and energy”. However, Lavrusheva (2019:5) points out that “even in this canonical paper the authors variously refer to vitality as an ‘experience’, ‘indicator of personal well-being’, ‘reflection of wellness’, ‘sense of energy’, psychological state’, ‘maker of one’s health of spirit’, ‘phenomenon’, ‘feeling of personal energy’”. Though variously explained, vitality can be summed as an active state of being due to energy, enthusiasm and strength. This study uses vitality with regards to enthusiasm, strength and consistency in the performances of play and work songs.

1.9.4 Verbal arts

Verbal art is an expressive culture. It is an intangible artistic expression. According to Bascom (1955:245) verbal art was a term proposed in anthropology “to distinguish folktales, myths, legends, proverbs, and other ‘literary forms’ from the other materials which are commonly considered as folklore”. Bauman (1977:291) also explains that “verbal art may comprehend both myth narration and the speech of certain members of society whenever they open their mouths”. Verbal art performance is therefore an artistic communication among groups which differs from ordinary speech. Bascom (1955:247) reiterates the difference between verbal art performance and ordinary speech. He identifies the form of statement, the choice of vocabulary and idiom, use of obsolete words, imagery of metaphor or simile, repetitions, formalised openings and closings, the incorporation of cultural details, conventional greetings (Bascom, 1955).

Austin (1975) takes the use of speech further when he propounded the speech act theory with *How to do things with words*. In this theory, Austin (1975) submits that we perform an action when we say something, thus speech acts. In everyday life, speech act performance include greeting, apologising and

complaining. He cites the pronouncement by the official at a wedding, 'I pronounce you man and wife' as a speech that does something rather than represents because by that pronouncement, the status of the man and woman changes to husband and wife. It is the performance of that speech which brings the husband and wife into being. It can therefore be inferred that we rely on conventions of the social world we belong to and enact the reality. Thus, a statement of one with authority in a community, with reference to social values and norms, changes one's status within a community.

Leaning on Austin's speech act theory, Butler (1990:175) posits that performativity constructs identity, society would not have referred to a child as a boy or girl if the doctor had not declared so at birth. The doctor's utterance therefore becomes a performative act that initiates and constitutes that infant's way of being in the world. Butler presents a different perspective of performativity when she discusses gender to mean what one acts but not what social reality says, thus identities are established through gesture, language and all manner of symbolic social signs. From her analysis, performativity determines identity, meaning, identity is not a given, a being, but a doing – what one professes.

From these submissions, it is clear that verbal art performance is a mode of speaking, a speech act which is consciously constructed with selected expressions of cultural specifics for intended purpose. This study focuses on the use of verbal art performance as an intentionally constructed mode of expression and a channel of communication.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As introduction to this chapter, I briefly review literature on African songs to distinguish the focus of this study from previous ones. Ideally the literature overview should be centred on Dagaaba songs and/or studies on the performance culture of Dagaaba indigenous songs. However, existing studies and research on Dagaaba songs are primarily on instrumentation, namely the xylophone (Hien, 2019; Dankwa, 2018; Woma, 2012; Vercelli, 2006) and not on vocal song performance. The sole research which has a bearing on the present study namely, Bodomo and Mora (2007) – which deals with the documentation of musical and linguistic practices of the Dagaaba – is therefore reviewed alongside research on indigenous songs from Nigeria, Zimbabwe, East Africa and Malawi. The second section of this chapter focuses on a discussion of the songs of the Dagaaba, with specific reference to play and work songs.

Theoretically, the study is performance driven, I therefore, thirdly introduce performance theories of Auslander (2008), Burke (1945), Drewal (1991), Turner (1974) and Sutherland (1975). This is followed by discussions of Schechner's (2013, 2003) performance theory and the social performance theory of Fei and Sun (2013). A discussion on verbal art as a performance concludes the chapter.

2.1 Introduction

Departure points for the study and research on songs have been textual appraisal; linguistically oriented; compositional trend; politically inspired; and/or the documentation thereof, but none is performance centred. In his study of the "Narratives of Identity and Sociocultural Worldview in Song Texts of the Ham of Nigeria: A Discourse Analysis Investigation", John (2017) integrates analyses of narrative theory, genre theory and appraisal theory to investigate texts of Ham songs. He appraises the textual content of Ham songs to establish its viability of transposition from their mainly oral state to text for documentation. John's critique of earlier studies (Musiyiwa, 2013; Njoku & Maupeu, 2007; Mvula, 1986) is based on their politically oriented and gender-based outlook. However, what he failed to recognise in these studies was the linguistically oriented nature (Musiyiwa, 2013) and expression of concerns (Mvula, 1986), issues similar to the appraisal of Ham songs he set out to do, with the argument that

Ham songs give emphasis predominantly to the immediate collective concerns of the communal order of the Ham and express the anxieties of a minor socio-cultural group bothered about preserving its identity in the face of the overriding threat posed by a growing inclination towards dominant cultures in the country (John, 2017:34)

Musiyiwa (2013) in “The Narrativization of Post-2000 Zimbabwe in the Shona Popular Song- genre: An Appraisal Approach”, explores how language is variously manipulated for communicative purposes. In his study of songs of the Shona in Zimbabwe he explores appropriation of popular songs: how language of existing songs is manipulated to serve a purpose of the appropriator. The study investigates the intentions of politicians of the ruling party in Zimbabwe, the opposition and ordinary citizens in appropriation of popular songs, and concludes that while politicians use songs to advance their legitimacy in governance, the ordinary people use songs to register their concerns. The politicians and the ordinary citizens of Zimbabwe appropriate songs in relation to meanings given to land, history and identities. While members of the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) appropriated *chimurenga* (a nationalistic popular song genre) to legitimise their hegemony, the opposition’s appropriation of songs was to legitimise their struggle for change through counter-state discourses. The ordinary people on the other hand appropriated popular songs to communicate their concerns, struggles and sense of worth to the leaders in Zimbabwe for redress.

Appropriation of popular songs by politicians is not peculiar to Zimbabwe. In Ghana, the National Democratic Congress (NDC), a major political party appropriated a popular Christian hymn as an anthem in 2008 to garner public sympathy and support, a move which arguably contributed to the NDC victory in the 2008 election.

Christian Hymn

Stand up! Stand up for Jesus!
Ye soldiers of the cross;
Lift high His royal banner,
It must not suffer loss:
From vic’try unto vic’try
His army shall He lead,
Till every foe is vanquished
And Christ is Lord indeed

NDC Anthem

Arise! Arise for Ghana!
Ye patriots of the land
towards a secure future
Development our goal
From victory unto victory
The NDC shall lead
A stable democracy, Ghana
our strength in unity

(George Duffield, 1858)

(Jewel Ackah, 2008)

The NDC capitalised on the suitability of the tune and lyrics to appropriate this Christian hymn into a nationalistic one to mobilise the electorates to support the NDC as the obvious choice for Ghanaians. This appropriated song became the theme song for the 2008 electioneering year and eventually the anthem of the NDC which is sung at every function and campaign tours.

Similar to the appropriation of songs, Amuah, (2012) investigates the adaptation of Ghanaian traditional music elements in the composition of contemporary choral music in Ghana. In his study “The use of Traditional Music Elements in Contemporary Ghanaian Choral Music: Perspectives from Selected Works of G.W.K. Dor, Nicodemus Kofi Badu and Newlove Annan”, Amuah analyses songs of three art music composers, to systemise the compositional trend of emerging choral music composers. He concludes that they situate their songs in social, cultural and political landscapes from their respective ethnic backgrounds based on their knowledge of traditional elements.

Njoku and Maupeu’s (2007), compilation of sixteen (16) essays on popular songs in *Songs and Politics in Eastern Africa* adds to the literature on the role of songs in shaping citizens’ understanding of politics and social events and emerging trends of song composition. Citing instances from the Philippines and the United States of America, Njoku and Maupeu, (2007), present how songs have shaped the thoughts of ordinary people as well as politicians in their quest to convince or persuade citizens to either maintain or change their position on a discourse. To emphasise how widely songs are used in rallying political support, Njoku and Maupeu, (2007) take readers back to the Spaniard occupation in the Philippines. According to the authors, revolutionary songs were used to mobilise the Indios to fight for the repossession of their territories. Njoku and Maupeu, (2007) observe that in the late 19th century, lyrics of a popular love song, *kundiman*, were appropriated to serve the purpose of the revolutionists. Lyrics expressing courtship and love to a woman were replaced with love for a country. This was to stimulate patriotism in the indigenes whose nation had been taken over by the Spaniards to fight for what they desire. Njoku and Maupeu, (2007) further reveal how for years in the United States of America, ‘*God Save the Queen*’ was appropriated as ‘*God Save George Washington*’ as an election song which saw George Washington become the first president of the United States of America. The United States of America followed the trend of using existing melodies to compose election jingles.

The remaining essays look at the changing trend of music composition in Eastern Africa. The authors have identified the wind of change that has swept over Africa and other continents with regards to music composition and genre. The authors emphasize this in the forward:

But the benga beat does not resonate well with the urban youth who have significant access to global media. Instead it is hip-hop, a trans-cultural genre encapsulated in rap music and expressed through speech, clothing, video, attitude, disposition, activism, graffiti and body movement, which holds sway (Njoku & Maupeu, 2007: xvi)

The youth of Eastern Africa in particular and Africa in general have developed a new approach to music composition, which is totally different from what is indigenously African, like the *benga* referred to (Njoku & Maupeu, 2007). Though some of the authors discuss the changing trend in song composition and other functions of songs, such as shaping social lives, fighting epidemics like HIV/AIDS, gender and the aesthetic in songs, the emphasis of the essays are on politics.

In their research, *Documenting Spoken and Sung Texts of the Dagaaba of West Africa*, Bodomo and Mora (2007) demonstrate their support of UNESCO's quest to record traditional oral cultures that are fast disappearing due to threat posed by strength of dominant cultures over lesser ones and globalization. The study recorded songs, riddles, proverbs, spoken and sung folktales, instrumental music dance performances of the Dagaaba of Kogri, Ullo and those who have settled in Accra. These recordings were further transcribed and a copy sent on a CD to UNESCO for dissemination. The authors further called on disciplines such as linguistics, music and anthropology to make documenting cultural elements such as music and language for posterity part of their studies (Bodomo & Mora 2007: 81). It is their expectation that such a drive would help retrieve and archive this intangible cultural heritage.

Mvula's research, *Chewa Women's Songs: a Verbal Strategy in Manipulating Social Tensions* (1986) looks at gender imbalance in folklore representations in scholarship. He argues that though folklore scholarship has over the years overlooked and labelled women folklore as minor genres or just gossips, this genre of folklore is a survival strategy, which plays a crucial role in appreciating the position of women in societies (Mvula, 1986:265). Mvula reveals that the Chewa women of Malawi use the pounding songs (work songs) as verbal strategy to make their voices heard in a society that is patriarchal in orientation. According to Mvula (1986), through these pounding songs, the Chewa women artistically avoid social tensions by manipulating verbal messages through sarcasm, ridicule and indirection to assert

themselves as well as express their agonies. The pounding songs therefore serve as outlets for women grievances.

Though these studies and research partly address my work by providing evidence that songs are used to express groups' or individuals' emotions in society (Musiyiwa, 2013; Njoku & Maupeu, 2007; Mvula, 1986), they are politically oriented and gender inspired studies. While Musiyiwa's study covers an entire nation's political orientation and examines the structure of the Shona popular song genre, thus dwells on language use, the focus of this present study is on the trend of performance shaped by modernity. Mvula (1986) reaffirms the role of work songs within the social structure in a society, but it is skewed towards gender representation to highlight the insufficient literature on women folklore and adds to literature on the role of women folklore. The present study looks at work songs in general, not in terms of gender representation and thus departs from Mvula's study.

In the documentation of songs (Amuah, 2012; Bodomo & Mora, 2007), emphasis is on compositional processes of third and fourth generation of Ghanaian choral music composers (Amuah, 2012). Amuah (2012) examines how traditional music elements such as *asafo*, *mmoguo*, *ebibindwom*, *nnwonkro*, *adowa adevu* and *gabada*⁸, are incorporated into western harmonic idioms for art choral composition. While Amuah's study is noteworthy, it is on art music which has no connection to play and work songs, an indigenous performance of the Dagaaba. Bodomo and Mora's (2007) research on Dagaaba songs, proverbs and riddles set the pace for documentation of intangible arts, but their focus was on documentation hence emphasis was placed on collection of prepared arts – similar to staged activities – unlike the present study which seeks to ascertain the frequency of performance that is a part of the Dagaaba's daily live activity not a onetime prepared act.

2.2 The songs of the Dagaaba

Agordoh (1994: 25-26) has categorised African song into multi-functional nature, associated with dance and audience participation. The multi-functional nature of song manifests during a performance when both performer and listener (1) are entertained and (2) specific messages are communicated within a song world. Songs performed during ceremonies such as naming, puberty and marriage rites often serve as a collective goal of the performers to warn against evil, offer blessings and give advice about the kind of behaviour to assume in a new stage of life (Derive, 2004:415-416). These songs therefore philosophically

⁸ These are traditional songs from the Akan and Ewe ethnic groups in Ghana.

arm the new born child with goodwill to make his journey in this world smooth as well as successful. A message of assurance that, in spite of the presence of malevolent spirits, he is shielded by the goodwill messages. Similarly, the transition of the youth and/or a bride into a new phase in their lives needs adjustment; the songs at these ceremonies thus communicate to them to condition their minds for this new environment.

The multi-functional nature of songs is therefore also visible in the different messages it communicates: a song can protect, bless, advise and motivate at the same time.

Salm (2000:279) also theorises that in African communities, music functions on two levels; that it presents an opening in taking part and sharing in specific experiences, and also provide a means by which societal beliefs and values can be transferred. For instance, the *Kob bené* and *Kukur-bagr* (harvest/agricultural) festivals of the Dagaaba of Lawra and Fielmuo respectively, bring people together to share in the joy of harvest and the reminiscence of the past, as well as inculcating the societal beliefs and values through indigenous performances. Also, there is a correlation between singing and dancing, once a song is raised, it is accompanied by dancing. A unique thing about African songs such as play song performance, is its ability to draw audience in to participate; there are usually no boundaries between audience and performers.

The relationship between songs and the social structure of the Dagaaba manifests in the organisation of song performances in the community. The Dagaaba sing to establish the social structure and cultural practices (Hien, 2019). The social structure is headed by the *Tengan sob* who has the responsibility among other things to distribute land for farming, the main economic backbone of the Dagaaba. When the *Tengan sob* is approached for a piece of land, he leads and directs the way as the rest follows. On the way, the demarcation of the plot of land is done using natural landmarks such as rivers, rocks and identifiable trees (Hien, 2019). These serve as boundaries between plots to secure one's land from the other; it also helps avert litigation thus promotes peaceful co-existence. This exercise requires that no one overtakes the *Tengan sob* no matter how energetic and fast an individual walks, since the *Tengan sob* is the one who knows the land and the boundaries. Overtaking him will be of no benefit because one may either get lost or have to wait for him to indicate where to pass or stop. Thus, the social structure is upheld by adhering to the hierarchy to wait for one's turn, resulting in a smooth administration of the community. This leadership skill and role of the *Tengan sob* is replicated in Dagaaba song and dance performances (Hien, 2019).

In the organisation of Dagaaba song types, it is always after the lead singer has raised a song that the others join in singing, it will be out of order for the refrain to be sang first. This way of song rendition suggests the lead singer as a *Tengan sob* leading and directing the way as she employs topical issues, philosophy, worldview and the norms and values in the community to compose songs. These songs, just like the demarcations of the plots serve as pointers to, and reminders of, the norms and values of the community for members to uphold. Thus, the lead singer, through the songs, indicates to community members what the norms and values are and how to live accordingly. Those who have lived exemplary lives are praised in the songs as a reward while deviant behaviour is recounted in the songs as criticism and protest to serve as deterrent. According to Hien (2019), it is shameful to kinsmen for a member's behaviour to be used in a composition. For this reason, it becomes a collective responsibility for kinsmen to ensure that everyone lives according to the rules and regulation of the society. Similarly, kinsmen pride themselves in the achievements of their family members when they hear songs of praises about them.

It is therefore argued that songs and music making among other verbal expressions of the Dagaaba constitute an integral part of their social-cultural systems (Lawrence, 2011; Bodomo & Mora, 2007, 2002). This is demonstrated by the central role songs and music play in most of their cultural activities. As part of the Dagaaba culture, songs are performed with the accompaniment of the *gyil* to provide a passage for the deceased to the spirit world. These songs, performed at different stages at a funeral, establish identity, relationship, character and achievements of the deceased. The stages include *kuor wuofa*, a heralding wailing by the deceased household to inform neighbours of the death for them to join in the wailing. This is followed by the *lobri*, which involves playing of the *gyil* music to announce the death to reach where the wailing could not. *Ko-bené* is the stage where music from the *gyil*, *langne* (dirge) and the *bené* dance are combined to stimulate mourning. While this is going on, mourners who arrive at the funeral grounds perform the *owre a kuor*, (viewing the corpse) which is, to file past the corpse while wailing, this is to confirm the identity of the dead and the funeral announcement. After this money is thrown at the *paala* (a raised platform for laying the dead), (Dankwa, 2018:137-156). It is culturally unacceptable for these songs not to be performed at the various stages. In his examination of the funeral rites of the Dagaaba, Dankwa (2018:3) observes the following:

In Dagaaba worldview, death is not the end of life...However, the death of a person is believed to destabilize the carefully calibrated systems of *tengzu* (the physical world) and, accordingly, requires some practical measures to ensure the restitution of balance and to protect the living from

potentially harmful spirit of the dead, as well as comfort the bereaved. The medium for taking these practical measures is the funeral (kuor). It provides the framework for the performance of significant rituals that would ensure the smooth transition of the deceased person's spirit to the hereafter...Central in the organisation and celebrations of death in Dagaaba society is the *gyil*....The music that the *gyil* performs for the funeral is called *kuorbine*.

It is notable that the *gyil* is not performed in isolation, it is accompanied by the *langne*. Thus, as a cultural practice, this musical performance moderates an interaction between humans and spirits for a continuous balance between the world of the living and the dead. At the time of completion of the field work, most funeral rites of people who died since the outbreak of COVID-19 were on hold because the different stages in the funeral rites could not be performed due to health and safety restrictions. Burials have been done waiting for the opportune time to accord the deceased the appropriate cultural rites

The significance of songs in the socio-cultural systems of the Dagaaba manifests in the numerous song types in the community. Though songs of the Dagaaba are classified generally as *dano*, *yir-dano*, and play and work songs, the songs are associated with particular occasions such as religious rites, cooperative work groups and organised labour, age groups, rites of passage, pounding, grinding, plastering storytelling and playing (Bodomo & Mora, 2007:85). The Dagaaba also sing their life through performances of songs in relation to their cultural practices such as funerals and marriage ceremonies (Hien, 2019:64). The philosophy, genealogy, as well as kinship systems of the Dagaaba are found in their verbal expressions such as songs.

The Dagaaba sing in recognition of a supernatural being that is responsible for creation and human existence. This is done during the celebration of the *Bagr* (traditional religious system of the Dagaaba) festival to establish and consolidate their relationship with the Supreme Being. This song type however is not a public performance, that is, only adherence of the *Bagr* belief such as the *bagé* and *dakumé* (Tengan, 1999:607-608) who have observed the prohibitions for the period of the preparation of the festival can sing (Tengan, 1999:616). The *Bagr* song performance is therefore a religious activity strictly done by followers of the *Bagr* belief.

In addition to songs of religious belief, the Dagaaba engage in *kpétaa yielu* (a type of work song, Central Dagaare) during reciprocal help for farmers (Bodomo & Mora, 2007). This performance is associated with cooperative group work. Songs of this nature are performed to announce inception of work and to motivate workers to keep the rhythm and pace of work, thus a work song. These songs also act to divert

workers' attention from tiredness, thus as they sing, they pay attention to the songs but not the tedium of the work. *Kpétāa yielu* is not a restricted performance; it is done publicly to the admiration and for the enjoyment of the community members.

Kultaa yielu (wedding song) (Bodomo & Mora, 2007) are mostly performed by females accompanying a bride to her marital home. These are usually songs of praises in support of marriage, highlighting the qualities of the bride and words of counsel to the bride. *Kultaa yielu* is performed while escorting the bride and on arrival at the groom's home. The songs usually stimulate dance performances such as *béwaa*, a recreational dance.

As discussed earlier the *langne* is one of the song types of the Dagaaba performed at funerals as part of the rites of passage. It is therefore a rendition done in a very serious and solemn moment.

Though all these songs are at the disposal of the Dagaaba, there are prohibitions to their performance. For instance, (and as mentioned earlier), the *Bagr* song cannot be performed by a non-member of the religious group. Also, it is an abomination for one to engage in a performance of any of the song types when a community member is seriously ill.

These songs function as resources (John, 2017) the Dagaaba use to express themselves at a given occasion. While the *Bagr* songs grant followers of the traditional belief an opportunity to communicate their thoughts to the supernatural being, the *langne* offers an avenue for the Dagaaba to pay tributes to a departed community member and also creates an opportunity for members of the community to get to know the deceased and the family better. The *langne* therefore provides the history of a people thus a channel through which their origin, exploits and achievements are communicated. This resource is also employed prominently by the griots of the Bambara society. The griots are oral artists who use the resources of songs to perform to audiences ranging from the kings' courts to the village square of the community. Hale (1998:30) observes that "when a griot recounts for several hours the story of heroes in a multigeneric narrative that includes genealogies, praises, songs, etymologies, incantations, oaths and proverbs, he is recounting the past – the history – of a people". Similarly, the *langkone* (performer of dirges) makes use of this resource during funeral rites when he captures the attention of mourners through the *langne*. Though the *langne* primarily invokes empathy for mourning, it further educates people gathered about the values of the Dagaaba, reminding them to uphold their values. In addition to the griots and *langkone*, communication is achieved through songs by hunters, shepherds and women in the community. While the hunters use songs to rally members to go on a hunting expedition or locate a lost

colleague, cow boys use the songs to guide their cattle to grazing spots and the women find expression of censored issues through songs.

Most rites of passage and festivals of the Dagaaba benefit from the resources of songs through announcements. At the onset of the *Bagr* rituals for instance, specific songs or music are performed to inform the community members to be aware of the period of preparation for the ritual and also their responsibilities within the period (Naa Debomo Gandaa, 2019⁹). As part of this ritual, members are prohibited from certain practices and activities. Songs thus communicate to them to respond to the demands the period makes of them. Also, songs are integral part of a transition of the youth to adulthood or the graduation of neophytes to the next phase in the *Bagr* belief. In this situation, the songs may serve as cues to the various phases of the ritual and as a celebration to climax the process. These songs, according to Naa Debomo Gandaa exults the bravery, successes and courage of the celebrants for completing the journey to transition from one phase to another. Songs are also used to motivate the next participants to take the bold step to enrol in the ritual to transition to adulthood or from *bagrli* (junior members/children of bagr) to *bagr nebêrê* (senior members of bagr) of the *Bagr* belief.

The Dagaaba belief in life after death makes funeral rites an occasion to celebrate a life well lived, or question a life cut short. As indicated earlier Dankwa (2018:6) observes that the singing of the *langne* and playing of the *gyil* form an essential part of the funeral rite of a Dagao because they are rites that indicate the transition of the spirit of the dead to the hereafter to assume the role of an ancestor to protect the living from malevolent spirits. The *langne* accompanied by the *gyil* are thus ritual songs to affirm the identity and status of the deceased. When an elderly person dies, songs are performed to demonstrate the achievement of the deceased and task him to prepare a place for those yet to die. However, when a young person dies, it is believed that the person has not completed his task on earth. In such instances, songs are performed to lament and question the ancestors why such a situation occurred (Kuur Belaar Sentu, 2020¹⁰). As indicated earlier, rituals are presently the most reliable avenue for the utilisation of songs as resources; however, the focus of the study, play and work songs does not fall within rituals.

What has been discussed so far are the traditional resources of songs, however, modernity has added more resources to communicate with songs. Agawu (2016:43) submits, that

Given the rapid social changes that have taken place over the last half century or so, many institutional practices and associated modes of music

⁹ Naa Debomo Gandaa, chief of Birifoh and a practitioner of traditional religion.

¹⁰ Kuur, Belaar Sentu, an informant in Fielmua

making are being modified daily to reflect new social, economic, religious, or even aesthetic choices and realities. Some aspects of “tradition” are being abandoned, some are being transformed to yield newer traditions, and others are being replaced by modern ones.

From Agawu’s (2016) submission, songs have now shifted from their traditional worlds due to growth and development of the digital media and cosmopolitan influences. Though new names such as Afro Pop, Hip Hop and Hip-life have been accorded, they still serve the same purpose, a resource that is employed to communicate. In the electronic media, there are often commercial breaks where sponsors of programmes are acknowledged. In a study investigating trends of music and advertisement, Ruth and Spangardt (2017:15) observe that the use of music in advertisement has increased over the years. According to Rösing in (Ruth & Spangardt, 2017) 65% of television and 70% of radio commercials in Germany contained music in the 1970s and early 1980s. This rose to 85% as reported by Leo in (Ruth & Spangardt, 2017) in 1999. This increase, in my view is due to the persuasiveness of songs in advertising. According to Sri Sailesh (2015:1003) advertisement is a persuasive process and has become an important tool in attracting people to products and services. Though the name of song genres has changed, an advertisement could be considered as synonymous to the announcement given in traditional settings to inform community members of an oncoming event. In this case the advertisement is persuading the viewing and listening public to patronise a product or service. While citing an Airtel advert, Sri Sailesh (2015:1003, 1005) notes

Music has become an important part of the marketing tool for attracting people. With the intense usage of television and radio as the means of communicating with consumers, music and jingles have a crucial role to play...it is difficult to get a jingle out of the person’s mind after he hears it several times even if it is not relevant and people can’t just stop humming to it.....one well known example is Airtel music, when the brand name is said, automatically the music in the advertisement comes to our minds

I therefore – on a first and simplified level – want to liken the above submission on the function of songs within advertisement, to the functions of songs in traditional settings. The various song types attract the Dagaaba for their respective responses and action, while an advert attracts consumers to a product or service, a *Bagr* song, for instance alerts adherents and community members on what to do. Similarly, on hearing a *kultaa yielu* people will respond appropriately by joining in the procession from different parts of the community to escort the bride to her matrimonial home.

Also, in churches, as noted by Amuah (2012) traditional elements have been used to compose art music such as hymns for the congregation to commune with God. Hymns are integral part of church service, so is the transitional songs performed during initiation rites to transition from one stage of life to another. The new song genres (Afro Pop, Hip Hop and Hip-life) speak to the new generation about their world with regards to fashion sense, acculturation, their aspiration and love for life (Njoku & Maupeu, 2007). Though different from the traditional songs, in consistency with Agawu's (2016) assertion, these song genres have emerged due to social changes and the noticeable evidence is that traditional songs genres have either been abandoned or replaced.

2.2.1 Play songs

According to Agawu (2016) play songs which are also referred to as recreational songs are composed to be sung while playing to teach rhythms in language as well as ethics and values of a culture. Lullabies, though performed to the baby to fantasise about the future also help mothers release tension by lamenting their plight while playing with their babies. Thus, the lullaby serves as an outlet of emotions that ordinarily cannot be expressed for fear of repercussion. Agawu (2016:138) gives a clarification to this role of song:

In some communities, song is a privileged medium that allows the encoding of sentiments that are not normally permitted in ordinary speech. Indeed, at some carnival festivals, singing an insult, an insinuation, or a damaging secret rather than speaking it often protects performers from normal sanctioning.

This submission reaffirms functions of play songs stated earlier; a policing medium to ensure compliance of norms and as a safety vault which protects and shields social commentators from being attacked by the guilty party.

Dagaaba play songs are *nuru loba* (clapping of hands accompanied by singing) and *suolu yielu* (tale songs). *Nuru loba* are recreational songs, usually accompanied by handclapping and dancing performed by maidens. *Nuru loba* has a slow tempo to enable participants catch a performer who jumps and playfully throws herself at them. Performers employ the call and response technique in this recreational activity. *Suolu yielu* on the other hand is performed during storytelling for recreation, socialisation and knowledge transfer. The songs are performed to retain the attention of listeners and sometimes to advance the plot of the story. Through the songs, composed around the story world, listeners get to learn about

their environment, build their vocabulary as the storyteller employs witty language and communication devices to bring the stories to life.

Play songs also communicate breach of norms to members of the community to be wary of the perpetrators and also warn others to desist from such acts. *Nuru loba* are composed using insinuations or graphic description of events as such serves as social control mechanism. If a community member has committed an offense, it will immediately be used to compose a song to announce to the entire community. Though the person may not be serving a prison term in an enclosed physical structure, the lyrics are the prison. In her study on “Marriage, Power and Performativity: Theorizing Gender Relations in Rural Northern Ghana”, Akurugu (2017:234) observes that women use songs to ‘render public their hidden transcript’, thus their private experiences are performed through songs to the public. Though technically they are not reporting their husbands of maltreatment, the songs are the complaints and in some cases remedy is found. She recounts that “one of the prolific composers and singers I encountered in Serekpere, Adwoama, informed me that one day her estranged husband stopped verbally abusing her because she threatened to compose a song about him”. This threat by Adwoama is proof of what play songs do in the social structure of the Dagaaba. Because the husband was afraid his reputation would be tarnished in the song, he stopped abusing the wife.

The most basic role of play songs is to entertain when the moon comes out. At the end of a tiring day of working on the farm, brewing *pito* and doing domestic chores, the youth gather and through *nuru loba* accompanied by *dalare* and *kaare* (youthful instrumentation and dance) entertain themselves.

Play songs also nurture team building. As a group performance, every participant’s contribution and involvement is needed and participants have to tolerate each other for the success of the performance. It implies that participants of play songs learn to respect and work with people of diverse views. This thus becomes a preparatory ground especially for the maidens who will soon marry to work on their temper, endurance and tolerance to be able to cope in their matrimonial homes.

2.2.2 Work songs

Work songs are songs incorporated into communal labour such as plastering of buildings, clearing of paths and farming activities like harvesting of crops. Domestic chores like grinding and pounding are also accompanied by songs. Occupational songs, as already mentioned, are also performed by hunters to announce an expedition or trace a lost colleague and it provides rhythm and pace to women plastering buildings. The unique thing about work song is that it is generated by the activity and therefore cannot

be performed without the said action. Though work songs perform similar roles as other song genre, they have an additional role of motivating and helping workers keep pace in movement of the work being done, thus pulling everyone along. As participants get drawn into the song, it shifts their attention from exhaustion and thereby completing set target.

Nketia (1966:12) submits that songs also function as a source of livelihood. He observes that on market days in Tamale, Dagbanba praise singers position themselves at strategic locations or move about in the market drumming and singing people's praise names in return for a gift of money, a practice which is endorsed by Dagbanba custom. This is similar to what happens when the *langne* is performed at funerals. It is a tradition for mourners to show appreciation for the performance of the *langkone* and this is done by dropping monies into the palms of the mourners.

Work songs of the Dagaaba are categorised as *neér zu yielu*, (grinding song), *naa kyeené yielu* (herding song), *nabawlé yielu* (hunting song) and *kpétaa yielu* (cooperative songs). The first song type is performed by women while grinding cereals and the remaining by males, that is, shepherd boys and hunters and farmers. According to Hien (2019), *nabawlé yielu* are performed at different phases of a hunting expedition; to announce the commencement of hunting, alert a hunter who is lost to retrace his steps to the group, and to celebrate a catch. The performance is thus strictly by hunters, there is no audience participation. There are different performance spaces for *nabawlé yielu*, the first performance to commence the hunting expedition is done mostly at the compound of the leader of the hunting group or a popular space such as the village square. The second and third performances are done in the bush, however, it should be noted that the second performance only occurs when a hunter gets lost.

Naa kyeené yielu on the other hand is performed by shepherd boys. Similar to *nabawlé yielu* the shepherds, usually between the ages of five (5) to fifteen (15) perform the *nufola* (an instrumental music played by shepherds) at an agreed spot in the community to begin their journey and perform the *wele* (instrumental music) in the bush to locate a lost shepherd. The shepherds also perform to guide their cattle to a spot for grazing (Hien, 2019). Both the *naa kyeené yielu* and *nabawlé yielu* are performed by males since culturally Dagaaba women are not permitted to engage in activities considered as men's work. For this reason, *neér zu yielu* are also performed solely by women when grinding cereals in their homes. The *naa kyeené yielu* in particular serves as a companionship to a cow boy because grazing is sometimes done individually. Since this work, which is often the responsibility of very young males could be lonesome and fearful in the bush. To shake these off, the performances of songs give the

shepherd courage and take away boredom and loneliness. Indeed, these songs serve as a dialogue between the cow boy and the cattle as he sings towards where he wants the cattle to go (Hien, 2019).

Culturally, women's voices are silent among the Dagaaba. Indeed, they live their lives through the men who have instituted rules to consolidate the silence of women. *Ne'ér zu yielu* thus serves as a resource for the Dagaaba woman to communicate without 'overstepping boundaries' Lawrence (2011:206-208) recounts her experience during a field research in Fielmuo:

In July 2008, I became friends with a Dagara woman named Rejoice. She was in Fielmuo [from Wa] to attend a funeral; her husband could not make it, so she came alone. Her mother had been ill, and Rejoice wanted to visit her and make sure she was recuperating well. The morning she was to leave, I woke up, went outside and found Rejoice on the phone with her husband, who was furious. She explained to me that in Dagara culture, a woman marries into her husband's home. This relationship entails the expectation that when she travels [to her home town] she must go and stay with her husband's family. Going to her mother's house violated 'traditional' cultural practices and raised concerns of another sort. When I travelled to Wa the next week, she called me and told me that she had been physically beaten.

Lawrence's encounter with Rejoice is one of several instances where Dagaaba women have been subdued and restrained by culture. Though a lot of conversation has gone on over the years in this regard, the men argue that these cultural restraints are to ensure fidelity of their wives, thus these acts against women are endorsed as social control mechanism within the social structure. According to Lawrence (2011:207) when she engaged in a conversation with regards to the gender discrepancies, a man remarked that her line of reasoning is grounded in her culture, namely American. This implies that the life of the Dagaaba women have been regulated by a certain cultural hegemony. Rejoice's situation therefore provides content for *ne'ér zu yielu*, a resource for Dagaaba women to lament about the unfair treatment they experience in their matrimonial homes. Through these songs, the women are able to communicate to the community members for them to know what goes on in their matrimonial homes. Indeed, through these songs advocacy groups are informed about gender discrepancies for action and redress. *Ne'ér zu yielu* are typically lamentations but there are instances where a woman sings to acknowledge her paternal and maternal lineages through praises thereby affirming her identity to the community members. Deducing from the domineering attitude of their male counterparts and culture that enables suppression and silence, *ne'ér zu yielu* provides avenue for the Dagaaba women to communicate to the males. This is

acknowledged by Nanbigne (2003:30) when he analyses how Dagaaba women manoeuvre around a suppressive and discriminatory environment:

Women however are able to work into the songs, issues that are dear to their hearts or are of social importance to them or the society. They can pour out their woes through these songs, thus purging their emotions, and at the same time giving out pointed messages to listeners.

As noted earlier, work songs are motivational songs; they whip up energy and enthusiasm for tasks to be accomplished as well as giving space for therapeutic engagement. A hunter who may not want to go hunting would discard the idea when he hears the sound of his fellow hunters at the village square. It can also bring back memories of past expedition which in turn may cause nostalgia, motivating clan members to go hunting. In another context, women sing while grinding, plastering or pounding to express pent-up emotions, thus administering therapy.

Work songs also affirm the philosophy of communal living of the Dagaaba. There is the philosophy of *teem* (we, us) which influenced the Dagaaba architecture and table manners. Huts were built to join each other to form a big house of a common compound, so that most chores can be done collectively. A meal is cooked by wives (co-wives or wives of siblings) in turns for the whole family. Food is also dished out and eaten in groups of males and females. Thus, Dagaaba share in joy and sorrow, when there is food, everyone gets to eat, and equally everyone starves when there is none. It is based on the *teem*-philosophy that hunters sing to trace a member who is lost, thus no one goes home till the lost is found. Similarly, it is in the spirit of communal benefit that the hunters sing for other hunters to gather for a hunting expedition.

Repairing huts also call for work songs which help to sustain the rhythm and pace of the work as the women beat the floor to keep in place the concrete made from cow dung and sand. The song therefore enables hard work as no one wants to be left behind; it also takes participants' minds off tediousness.

The concept of song in traditional African society indicates that context and function are the bases upon which performance takes place. Songs are composed and performed in relation to the prevailing condition or circumstances of a community. Play and work songs are multi-functional, provide a source of income, helps reduce tedium of task and enhance ceremonial and ritual performances. Also, songs affirm and promote the beliefs and values of a community.

The literature shows that while work songs of men have different functions as indicative of the activity; work songs performed by women no matter the type of work have similar roles. Thus, songs performed during hunting, grazing, shepherding and cooperative farming by Dagaaba men have specific functions accordingly. On the other hand, songs performed by the women, whether grinding, pounding or mending huts function to negotiate space and voice in a predominantly patriarchal society.

2.3 Introduction to performance theories

Performance manifests variously and so do the perspectives on performance. The meaning of performance therefore depends on the discipline and the traditions within which a particular discourse takes place. In his guide to performance theory, Auslander, (2008:1) posits that any "...idea of performance that is used to make sense of various practices and forms of expression" is a theory. Thus, in discussing performance, it has to be within a specific context and not generalised. He explains further that the concept of performance becomes accurate and better understood when applied to different cases and contexts. Auslander (2008) argues that performance is a paradigm-driven concept and demonstrates this by citing perspectives of various theorists to support his argument. He cites Sigmund Freud, Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and Ferdinand De Saussure as predecessors of performance theory, indicating that their ground-breaking research into psychoanalysis, historical materialism, power struggle and language use set the pace for performance studies in various disciplines.

Auslander (2008:10) posits that the process of therapeutic treatment of nervous disorders employed by Sigmund Freud to establish one's identity is a performance. This is established through the procedure of accessing and interpreting the unconscious through slips of tongue, jokes and dreams during therapy (Auslander, 2008:10). It is argued that Freud's psychoanalytical theory has influenced modern drama and it is also used in the examination of theatrical performances (Auslander, 2008:12). Karl Marx's historical materialism which points out the actions (performance) of humans which lead to historical change such as capitalism, class struggle and alienation influenced Bertolt Brecht's approach to performance theory and practice. Brecht's style of using theatre to advance social change finds expression in historical materialism. The manipulation of power and power struggle in determining moral categories, that is, good, bad and evil is expressed in Friedrich Nietzsche's work, *The Birth of Tragedy*. Citing conflicting forces of power between Apollonian, (the moral order) and Dionysian forces, (the immoral order) and their operations (performance), the effects of power becomes products of history. Nietzsche's (in Auslander, 2008:22) reference to the Dionysian forces, the foundation of classical Greek theatre links his work to dramatic theory. The fourth predecessor, Ferdinand Saussure, looks at language

performance and argues in *Course in General Linguistics* (1959) that language can be understood in terms of relationship and meaning is produced by a word's relationship to other words occurring at a particular time (Auslander, 2008:26). Thus, there is performance between words to generate meaning when one is speaking. His work therefore set the pace for analysis and theories in linguistics.

All the foundational works cited by Auslander (2008) demonstrate that performance has to do with process of disciplines. The analyses recognise that a study on performance cannot rely on a single theory but draws on various theories of performance that are applicable. Therefore, I analyse play and work songs of the Dagaaba within theories such as Schechner's (2003, 2013) performance theory and Fei and Sun's (2013) social performance theory that recognize activities such as hawking, jumping, running, dancing, and teaching as performance. My use of performance is in reference to how Dagaaba songs are executed within the social context. This explanation is derived from the perception that every activity has a mode of application and purpose, hence once that activity has been executed based on that application and purpose, a performance has taken place.

Attention to performance perspectives was initiated by the question "what is involved, when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it?" posed by Kenneth Burke (1945: xv) in his research, *A Grammar of Motives*. He formulated the pentad act, scene, agent, agency and purpose to interrogate the relationship between actors, action and events. These words are not necessarily restricted to the actions or performances of actors in the theatre, but can arguably be applied to every circumstance. Thus Burke (1945) argues that every action or activity has a motive, which is driven by other elements, such as: where or when, who is doing it, and how it is done. Consequently, where we come from or where we are (scene) influences who we are (agents) and what we do (act). For instance, the language a judge uses in the court room is derived from where he is, therefore, he uses legal language to aid the execution of justice. However, this same judge's choice of words will be different when he finds himself in the supermarket. As a literary scholar, Burke's perspective was persuasive language, how appropriate uses of words change the mind-set of listeners. He formulated that the use of persuasive words has a significant effect on the listener. He posited that rhetoric influences change in people's attitude, motives or intentions. For instance, a person doing marketing of products and services will be able to persuade people to patronise the products and services if the marketer has the skills and knowledge in persuasive language. In this case, the use of persuasive language promotes the marketing because the rhetoric has the power to influence behaviour. It means in the performance of either a dialogue or monologue to convey a message, certain skills and knowledge are required. These skills cumulatively result in the

execution [performance] of the task. Thus, Burke's performance perspective is persuasive communication, that is, if language is expressed appropriately, it will yield the desired reaction from listeners. Burke's examination of the performance of speaking and its impact on listeners' behaviour opened up a host of examination of performance in different disciplines which hitherto was focused on the performing arts.

Play and work songs can be considered persuasive communication since the performances encourages listeners to either change their misbehaviour, dance to entertain themselves, rebuild their stamina in work ethics, release their emotions or motivate themselves. Thus, a work song persuades, for instance, a hunter who would have stayed indoors to come out and join his fellow hunters to go on a hunting expedition. Similarly, a play song on deviant behaviour persuades listeners to change their way of life. As stated earlier, Nanbigne (2003:30) further affirms this role of play song as a persuasive communication when he remarks that "because of [play songs] people were wary of misbehaving lest the women make a song about their misdemeanours'. Play and work songs therefore communicate to the Dagaaba and persuade them to shape their life style through hard work and conforming to the norms of the community.

Drewal (1991:3) defines performance "as the practical application of embodied skills and knowledge to the task of taking action in everyday social life". This definition cuts across disciplines, such that a linguist discusses performance within the context of how dialogues or monologues are expressed and their impact on the listener, and the performing artist looks at how artistic expressions are made through voice, body and inanimate objects. The entrepreneur, on the other hand, will base his argument on how product and services fared on the market. Play and work songs form part of the everyday social life of the Dagaaba as these songs accompany various daily activities such as dancing, pounding, grinding, hunting and cattle herding. All these are executed based on the skills and knowledge in the activities and orientation in the composition of songs to accompany these activities.

Victor Turner, known for his symbolic and interpretative anthropology framed social drama. He explains this perspective as "a harmonic or disharmonic social process, arising in conflict situations" (Turner, 1974:37). Turner (1974) identified breach, crisis, redress and reintegration as the process of social drama in his work. Turner's anthropological examination of performance is that every society exists through human interaction guided by norms, but conflict arises when there is a breach in the existing norm. This breach is often activated by deviant behaviour or omission. When sides are taken on a clear case of breach of norm, then crisis sets in. Conflict therefore arises when there are opposing ideas to issues in the society. To register a particular opposing opinion which has generated a conflict, certain actions are taken for

redress. This redress is the social drama, which is, a performance for normalcy to return. If the action for redress to correct the breach is accepted, there would be reintegration.

Turner's performance perspective, like Burke's, is not a theatrical performance. As an anthropologist his examination of performance is the processes developed to ensure a continuity of social interactions. Thus Turner's performance perspective is based on processes of reintegration, which means this performance is instigated by a breach and isolation. Though play and work songs are not performed solely to address a breach in the existing norms for reintegration as framed by Turner, they have similarities. As cited by Akurugu (2017) and Nanbigne (2003) play songs function to stop men from abusing their wives, thus the song corrects this behaviour by pulling back such men who have strayed away from a particular social norm.

In Africa, performance traditions vary due to the diversity in culture, however, a common element is that "performance in Africa is, more often than not, central to the social lives of people, not peripheral as in the narrow sense of staged action" (Drewal, 1991:10). Performance is therefore considered to be part of the everyday life of most Africans. The rites of passage – which includes naming ceremony, puberty, marriage and funeral rites – are fertile grounds for performance. Here, depending on the culture, members of the community perform functional dialogues and songs to usher the new member into the family and/or age group and, in the case of a funeral, provides a passage to the next world. In addition to the rites are ceremonial activities such as festivals and crowning of chiefs and queens. Also, religious rites like pouring of libation to obtain blessings and protection from the gods and ancestors (Mulemi, 2004:216) are occasions for performance. Thus, the African life is laden with performances to give identity, establish a transition, inter-relationship, bid farewell, ensure continuity in leadership and cement a continued relationship with the spirit world.

All these have been routine practices of the African before attention was drawn to the study of performance. However, intentional performance manifests in recreational activities such as storytelling. In these activities, performers and participants are aware that they are in a world of make believe. According to Harding (2004:332-333) "in most [African] societies there is a set format for opening the story which usually gives the listeners a sense of venturing in search of a story until an appropriate one is found (one that is interesting and likely to be well told)". On the academic front in Ghana, Sutherland's research into Akan oral traditions unearthed *Anansegoro* (spider plays), a performance perspective which is based on Akan storytelling traditions. The text, *The Marriage of Anansewa* (1975) is based on this context. In a review of this perspective Jeyifo (2007:25) notes that

Anansem is primarily the body of [Akan] tales about the exploits of Ananse, but the term also embraces the [Akan] storytelling tradition, the conventions of narration and performance through and in which the Ananse stories are relayed across the generation. Anansegoro on the other hand, is the modern art of theatrical performance that Sutherland creatively extrapolated from the more traditional base of Anansem.

In this perspective, Sutherland brings transformation to a traditionally oral performance which, until then, was seen as a routine recreational activity. Asante and Edu (2018:351) adds to the analysis of *Anansegoro* when they submit that “Sutherland transformed the Akan spider tales known as *Anansem* into a new dramatic form called *Anansegoro*. In the [Akan] context, ‘agoro’ defines a body of traditional games including concerts, drumming, dancing, singing and acting”. *Anansegoro* thus widens the scope of performance in Akan oral traditions, it falls within what Conteh-Morgan (1994:7) refers to as “integrative use [Africans] make of the performing arts: music, dance, mime, masquerade and sometimes puppetry.” In *Anansegoro*, Sutherland brings out the strands of performance in Akan storytelling, such as the *mboguw* (kicking aside). The *mboguw* in a way minimises the authority of the storyteller. In traditional storytelling, the story is owned by the storyteller who can manoeuvre to serve the purpose of his narration. However, this privilege of the storyteller can be interrupted through *mboguw* which kicks aside that privilege. Donkor (2007:43) captures it accurately:

In an Mboguw, the audience halts the narration and contributes a song, mimed action or comic playlet. ‘Contributed Mboguw’ serialise the story by breaking it up into segments. They are prompted by some sort of inspiration in the performance situation. They may be reflective of mood or aimed at quickening the pace of the performance or inspiring the general assembly. Indeed, it is not uncommon for some contributions to be made merely from a high-spirited desire to show off.

In addition to *mboguw* as a strand in Akan storytelling tradition are the opening formula, the narration and audience participation. Each of these strands, when in action, reveals the wealth of indigenous knowledge imbedded in Akan storytelling. *Anansegoro* is thus a contingent of performance specific to the Akan ethnic group in Ghana. *Anansegoro* partially addresses this work in the context of play song. *Anansegoro* allows the narrator and participants to create a world for a purpose of learning to be educated and relaxing for entertainment. Similarly, play songs give the performers a license to enter into the lives and homes of community members to either reprimand them for wrong doing or praise them for good citizenship.

2.4 Schechner's performance theory and the *fuwra* (fan)

According to McKenzie et al (2010:2) “while performance has for some time been recognised as both a contested concept and a practice of potential contestation, the sites and stakes of those contests have both multiplied and entered into configuration”. Their remark reemphasises the varied perspectives on performance (Auslander, 2008) due to the different performance traditions. Schechner (2013) argues that performance is the execution of activities; his perspective reiterates the variation in discourses of performance already established by Auslander. Schechner (2013:28) notes that:

In business, sports, and sex, “to perform” is to do something up to standard – to succeed, to excel. In the arts, “to perform” is to put on a show, a play, a dance, a concert. In everyday life “to perform” is to show off, to go to extremes, to underline an action for those who are watching.

Performance therefore becomes any activity in motion, the surgeon performs through surgery and a singer does so through singing. The concept of performance therefore has to be contextualised in a discourse for it to be recognised within the framework of a discussion. Leaning on this backdrop, the development of a theoretical framework for this study is guided by these questions: what is Schechner's fan model of performance perspective? How can it be applied to play and work songs performance of the Dagaaba? The study thus configures Schechner's fan model of performance perspective to analyse play and work songs as performance.

In order to understand what it means to perform, Schechner provides some key terms for comprehension. They are *being*, *doing* and *show doing*, where *being* refers to existence, and *doing* is the activity of all that exists. *Showing doing* refers to performing: “pointing to, underlining, and displaying doing” (Schechner, 2013:41). It can be inferred from the quote that ‘to perform’ means to do something which already exists. Which means that the term performance can refer to the doing of an activity which already exists. According to Schechner (2013:65), most of the activities which we see as spontaneous or original, either what we do or utter, has been done and said before. This statement in my opinion, fits all areas of study – gender, sports, business, the arts as well as all other everyday living activities. Therefore, it is reasonable to agree with Schechner (2013:29) that “performance – of art, rituals of ordinary life – are ‘restored behaviours’, ‘twice-behaved behaviours’”.

In layman's terms, to *re-store* means to fill again with the same thing. In different societies, certain traditions and customs such as puberty rites and festivals are restored periodically or yearly or during an event, such as a funeral or marriage ceremony. Even more simply put, “restore” within this context means

to “do it again”. These activities are “behaviours” which are done over and over again, either consciously or unconsciously. Players or participants of these activities go through rehearsal(s) or a form of training. It also does not have to be conscious to qualify as restored.

Activities such as walking, eating, talking, playing football, dancing and singing are twice behaved. For instance, no one sings for the first time, the person might have been an audience to a singing session and is restoring that activity, singing of songs is therefore accomplished through constant practice. The one activity which characterises these behaviours is ‘rehearsal’ or ‘training’. Some are done in the theatres, others are done in the school, or on the pitch, or existing social conventions. Thus, performance is to fill again with the same thing, which already exists. Though performances vary, the process or components of the activity is not different. This is because to every behaviour, there is a script, and players, and a time to fully embrace the act.

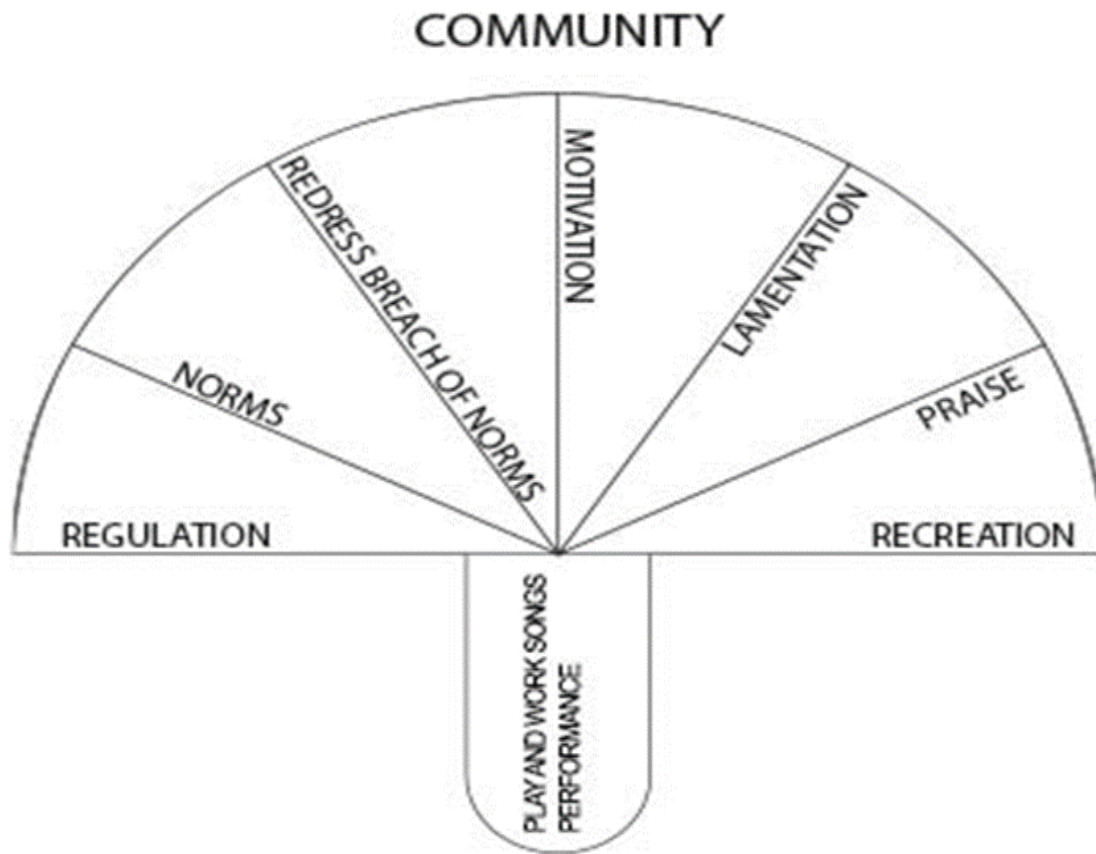
Therefore, when play and work songs are performed, the performers are only returning to “doing” an already existing behaviour because this activity has been going on since time immemorial. Anyone who engages in this activity, is only enacting an act which has been in existence from many generations past. The simplest way to understand twice-behaved or restored behaviour is to look at all behaviours as already existing activities. This is what Schechner (2013) summarizes as “being”. So, a performance exists when there is a “show doing” of a being. If there is no “being”, then there is nothing to perform.

In his introduction to *Performance Theory* (2003: xii), Schechner mentions that performance should be looked at as “a system that can be configured as both a fan and a web”. This re-echoes his “broad spectrum” approach to performance: the fan incorporating every human activity that is performative, while the web deals with the intentionally prepared activity for theatrical endeavour. It is this systematisation that differentiates performance as an action from performance as an outcome. Theatre is an outcome of various activities such as designing of set, costuming, lighting, sound production, directing and acting. As an action, performance covers every day activities ranging from greetings, playing, dancing and display of emotions.

Schechner (2013) further expands the concept of performance when he admits that the discussion of performance can be a bit challenging, due to its wide scope, bounded by cultural and historical descriptions. It is not restricted to the walls of theatre or any form of art. Throughout his book, *Performance Studies* (2013), a universal definition for performance is not provided. This comes as no surprise as “no definition fits all”, in the field of performance studies as established earlier. Schechner’s

fan model¹¹ demonstrates that performance is an activation of any activity in everyday life; it could be ritualisation, play, sports, entertainments, eruption and resolution of crisis, Shamanism, rites and/or ceremonies. Each of these activities becomes a performance when it is set in motion, it does not need to be staged in a theatre auditorium or before an audience. The performance therefore manifests in the action of that activity by an individual. Schechner's fan model is configured in this study as play and work songs which, when performed to, and by the community, upholds regulation, norms, redress breach of norms, motivate people, give people the room to lament, praise and engage in recreation. I therefore theorise that the swinging of the *fuwra* is a performance which releases the attributes listed earlier. See figure 2 below.

¹¹ See Figure 1 in Chapter 1, p. 13.

Figure 2: The *fuwra*

In indigenous communities, *fuwra* (fan) is woven with two materials: *piriime* (grass) and *bera* (twigs). The *fuwra* can serve many different functions. Primarily, *fuwra* is used to bring comfort and what is considered to be protection. The Upper West Region has one rainfall season, resulting in hot weather for most of the year. This weather pattern has often exposed the region to the outbreak of Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM)¹², one of the major causes of deaths in the region. In April 2020, the region recorded 273 cases with 43 deaths when the Upper West Regional Minister, Dr Hafiz Bin Salih was giving an update on the situation. When the heat wave starts, and *fuwra* is used, it brings comfort to the user as it provides the movement of air to cool off the heat. The continuous use of *fuwra* is also considered to aid in containing Cerebrospinal Meningitis (CSM). Similarly, the *fuwra* is used to drive away bugging flies and mosquitoes thereby protecting the communities from related diseases. In addition to comfort and protection, *fuwra* also directs air into the hearth to keep the fire burning for cooking. In most homes, the

¹² See “Climate Change and Cerebrospinal Meningitis in the Ghanaian Meningitis Belt” (Cudjoe & Nabie, 2014) for more information in this regard, available at: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4113853/>.

electrical *fuwra* has however replaced the traditional hand-woven *fuwra* and the gas stove has replaced the hearth cooking¹³.

The *fuwra* above personifies what play and songs do in and to the community. The handle is what enables the swinging, thus the performance. As explained earlier, as the user swings the handle of the *fuwra* to generate air for various purposes, when play and work songs are performed in the community or to the community, certain actions are activated. Depending on the circumstance or situation, these songs reiterate norms to ensure they are not breached, the songs thus regulate the behaviour of community members. And when there are infractions of norms, these songs serve as punitive measures for reintegration. Also play and work songs performance creates avenues for artistic expression in the community when the maidens and young men come out in the night to sing and dance; ensuring recreational activities. The artistic expression of performers is further realised when songs are performed to either praise community members or lament over painful experiences.

Though still functional, my argument is that modernity has pushed items such as the *fuwra* into closets, taking them out of usage. This line of argument is also raised by Eze-Uzomaka and Oloidi (2017:82):

...the form of social evolution is as a result of modernization, which its basic principles can be derived from the idea of progress that emerged in the 18th Century – Age of Enlightenment, with the idea that people themselves could develop and change their society from traditionalism to modernism to mingle effectively with a growing global system. This initiative automatically devalues traditional system and makes the modern styles more valuable.

Their submission indicates that societies' discontinuation of indigenous performances in order to belong to a global system presents a quest for a sense of belonging which leads to the devaluation of indigenous systems in the process. Presently, electrification of most communities has introduced the use of the electrical *fuwra* in Dagaaba homes. The *fuwra* is devalued because its use in the midst of electricity is a sign of retrogression. Thus, the electrical *fuwra* is used as a mark of elevation. Similarly, the emergence of new song genres push indigenous song performances out of existence. In an interview with Jonas Dery Abesig, an Afro pop artist on 9th September 2020, he indicated that “performing Dagaare songs in Afro pop genre shows that the Dagaaba also has the capacity to compose such song genre”. This support the

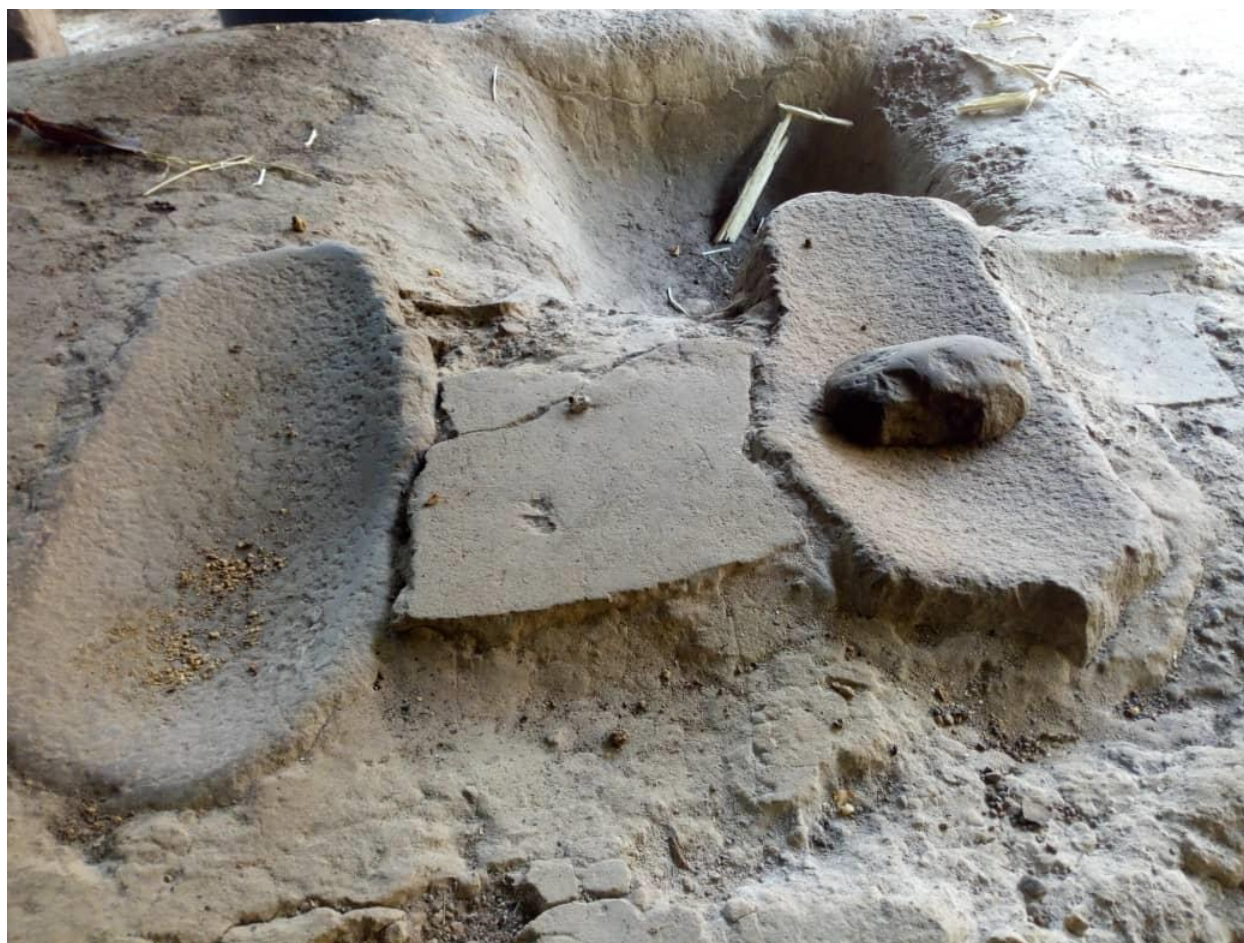
¹³ During data collection, most of the youth participating in the study could recognize *fuwra* as an item used in generating air, but their only personal experience is with the electrical one.

notion of a belonging ideology; he believes singing within the Afro pop genre places the Dagaaba in the same league as the originators of the genre, marking an elevation from indigenous to modern.

Cai (2018:180) notes how formal employment opportunities in urban centres stimulated rural-urban migration of the youth of Sabah in East Malaysia to seek waged labour. Though urbanisation brought transformation and employment opportunities, thus a monetised economy, traditional rice cultivation was terminated. Thus, urbanisation pushed other activities out of action. She continues that “many indigenous youths do not believe in the significance of their ritual traditions and have no interest in acquiring knowledge about how they are conducted. There is a real possibility that the indigenous ritual practices will be lost in their vernacular forms in the future” (ibid: 182).

The picture below, *neér* (the grinding stone), is traditionally one of the main platforms for work songs (*neér zu yielu*).

Figure 3: Neér (grinding stone)



As already discussed, Dagaaba women use this space to restore their voices which traditionally are shut. This space therefore gives women the opportunity to express their emotions in songs while grinding cereals. However, the introduction of the grinding machine has pushed the *neër* out of usage and consequently *neër zu yielu*. As the picture depicts, this *neër* has not been in use for a very long time which implies that there has not been *neër zu yielu* in this space for a while.

Eze-Amaka and Alodi's concern about devalued traditional system and Cai's apprehension about the loss of vernacular forms in the future aligns with the framework of this study, that the *fuwra* has been devalued and put out of action due to modernity.

2.5 Social performance theory

Further to Schechner's interpretation of performance is the advancement of social performance studies. Fei and Sun (2013) have conceptualized social performance to mean individual roles and tasks in a society. According to them, the way and manner these tasks are executed can impact others. For instance, the actions of a driver have an impact on pedestrians and passengers, similarly the action of the producer on the consumer. Their argument is that since these social performances have impact on specific individuals, there is the need to analyse these actions to eliminate the bad ones and improve on those that fall short of expectations. The standard for evaluation and analysis is what they term social discipline, a regulation to check performance of tasks (Fei and Sun, 2013).

Carlson (2004:70) notes that "everyone at some time or another is conscious of 'playing a role' socially, and recent sociological theorists [...] have paid a good deal of attention to this sort of social performance". The teacher plays a role in the classroom when teaching, the role ends when he goes home. If the teacher does not play his role well, it has an impact on the students, the teaching is what Fei and Sun refers to as social performance. The standard of evaluation laid down by monitoring and evaluation team from the inspectorate division of education is the social discipline for a teacher. When the teacher falls short in performance at the end of an evaluation, he is sanctioned to help keep the quality of teaching. Thus, it does not have to be in a theatrical context, whatever the role, it becomes a performance when executed. Though Fei and Sun's (2013) aspect of performance studies is on urban professional performances such as doctors, teachers, lawyers and government officials, the study emphasises social discipline. Their argument is that the presence of quality control of social performances through monitoring, supervision and inspection, make social performers adhere to standard of practice and behaviour to ensure quality of products and services.

The ideology of social performance studies is synonymous to what play and work songs do among the Dagaaba community. As it pertains in communities, the Dagaaba have values and social norms that they adhere to in order to maintain the social structure. The role each and every Dagao plays in his specific designation is the social performance. For instance, every clan among the Dagaaba has taboos, the *e ba* (crocodile) is the totem of the *métoolé* clan, it is therefore a taboo to kill or eat the meat. Upholding this taboo with the knowledge that a breach will bring untold misery to the clan is the social performance. The sanction that comes with flouting the rule regarding the taboo is a social discipline for every member of the *métoolé* clan. Just as Fei and Sun suggest, that social performers have to be analysed in order to improve their performance due to the impact they have on individuals, performance of play and work songs serve as one of the regulatory mechanisms in the Dagaaba community.

2.6 Verbal Art as Performance and factors that drive Performance

The concept of verbal art is noted to have been invented as an attempt to find a term that captures the essence of folklore without ambiguity or less representation. Bascom (1955:246) explains that the concept addressed the difficulties that existed with what he refers to as “paradoxical terms”. He argues that

The concept of verbal art avoids all these difficulties, and has the further advantage of emphasizing the essential features which distinguish the folktale, myth, proverb, and related forms. It places them squarely alongside the graphic and plastic arts, music and dance, and literature, as forms of aesthetic expression, while at the same time emphasizing that they differ from the other arts in that their medium of expression is the spoken word (Bascom, 1955:246).

Bascom’s (1955) submission gives a background to the concept of verbal art which was intended to classify folklore into literary forms and customs and beliefs. These classifications, I believe, helps in specificity when referring to folklore. The classification brought out strands in folklore which gives appropriate reference; thus, when using verbal art in a discussion, though a folklore, it will not be misunderstood, for instance, as belief system. Verbal art should therefore be viewed as a concept which has given a clearer understanding of the various aspects of folklore.

Having classified folklore and explained verbal art as a careful expression sourced from metaphor, parallelism and narrative manipulation, (Sherzer & Webster, 2018:1) play and work songs thus fall into the category of verbal art. This is supported by Woodbury (in Turpin & Henderson, 2015:90) who argue that “in comparison to speech, we may say that song is an artistic use of language, ‘song’ is part of a

broader use of language sometimes referred to as ‘oral literature’, ethnopoeitics’ and ‘verbal arts’. Play and work songs are renditions of intentionally and artistically crafted language, imageries and other literary devices, based on social dynamics in a group of people. Like most verbal art, these songs communicate to a specific group of people when performed.

Bauman (1977) builds on the development of the concept of verbal art, with the background that “it is, of course, possible to move from artistic text, identified in formal or other terms, to performance, by simply looking at how such texts are rendered, in action terms” (Bauman, 1977:291). Rudy (2002:5) in recognition of Bauman’s work admits, based on a cross-disciplinary citation study, that, verbal art has diffused into other disciplines. It should be noted that when verbal art is not performed, it is equivalent to non-verbal folklore such as carvings, musical instruments and ritual beliefs, the value of verbal art rest in its performance. In his analysis of verbal art as performance Bauman (1977) employs frames of communication, communication devices and keying in performance which provides the audience a structure within which to interpret and appreciate the text. He identifies communication frames such as insinuation, joking, imitation, translation, and quotation.

Insinuation as a communication frame is well utilised in a *neër zu yielu* performance. This frame offers Dagaaba women the authority to communicate their intentions to whoever they want to address and a shelter from reprimand. Since the words are concealed and not directed at anyone, the songs are performed without rebuke and the performer gets to send the message to the intended recipient. The most common insinuations in *neër zu yielu* performance are often directed at unfair treatment in one’s matrimonial home, injustice or a rival. *Nuru loba* tend to employ joking and imitation as a communication frame since it is a recreational song genre. In this performance, clans/lineage, life experiences and even personal traits are imitated of and joked about without giving offense, because both performers and onlookers understand the social and cultural dynamics of the performance.

The use of communication devices such as special formulae, special code, paralinguistic, parallelism and figurative speech as outlined by Bauman (1977) emphasises the stylised nature of verbal art performance. All the mentioned devices are used in *neër zu yielu* and *nuru loba* with the exception of special formulae. Paralinguistic and parallelism such as *ooo*, *aaaa*, *eeeei*, *woe woi woi*, *iii iii* are heavily employed in *neër zu yielu* to aid in expressing the appropriate emotions of the performer. In addition to their aesthetic effect, they also capture the attention of listeners. Figurative language is used in manipulating the narratives in *neër zu yielu* and *nuru loba*. The performer is telling a story through a song so these devices give life to the text. In her examination of text and performance in Africa, Barber (2005:264) notes, that

“the text is the permanent artefact, hand-written or printed, while the performance is the unique, never-to-be repeated realization or concretization of the text, a realization that brings the text to life”.

It is general knowledge that the artist – and for that matter, the oral performer – is influenced by his or her environment during performance, either as a solo or group performance. According to Okpewho (1992:42) different factors can also influence the creativity of oral artists and these include “factors such as age and energy of the performer, the nature of the occasion (death or merriment), and the type of setting (cult enclave or open square)”. This means that for a performance to take place there should be a balance in both the tangible and intangible elements. The intangible element in this case is the talent of the performer and the tangible being the factors mentioned by Okpewho (1992:42). Okpewho’s examination of the physical factors which affect performance speaks to this study since play and work songs like most performances rely on motivation, setting, expertise in the art and experience.

2.7 Conclusion

It has been demonstrated that play and work songs are performed in accompaniment of activities. The difference between performance of Dagaaba play and work songs and other songs in the same song worlds as noted by Noss (2004:257) “depends on factors such as physical environments, social and political structures, religious beliefs, and dominant occupations”. So, whereas the Ga, Fante and Ewe found at the coastal part of Ghana perform work songs to accompany mending of fishing nets or pulling the canoe to shore, the Dagaaba sing while hunting, grazing their cattle and grinding, or pounding millet.

Play and work songs are resources which enable the narratives of the Dagaaba’s socio-cultural life. The *langkone* sings *langne* to reveal the identity of a deceased, acknowledges his contributions to his family and the community and also commensurate with the bereaved. Indeed, the *langne* becomes a mirror through which the gathering gets to view the life history of the deceased and his kinsmen. Through the *langne*, community members are also reminded of the norms and values that guide their behaviour so as not to stray away. In so doing, the social structure of the Dagaaba is sustained. Women also employ *ne’er zu yielu* and *nuru loba* to either negotiate for space in a patriarchal society or register their displeasure about the social structure. These songs are further used to uphold the social structure through conformity as well as protest against misdemeanours for social cohesion.

It has been recognised that performance manifest in every sphere of life and discipline and therefore has to be theorised within activities and disciplines. From the various perspectives discussed, it has been established that performance traditions vary and should be examined in specific contexts. Within this

frame, play and work songs were identified as social and verbal art performance as stipulated by Fei and Sun and Bauman respectively.

Play and work songs are also theorised as *fuwra* as an adaptation of Schechner's fan model of performance to support the argument that performance is not always staged. This is evident in the various performances of play and work songs that are not staged but manifest while telling tales, dancing, hunting, shepherding and grinding cereals. These performances serve as social control mechanism, provide avenue for knowledge transfer and socialisation, communal living, companionship and therapy to the Dagaaba community.

The next chapter details how the data for this study was collected and what informed the sampling choice. Framing my work within performance as an action, a qualitative research methodology was employed to aid the establishment of my theoretical framework.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND FIELDWORK

3.1 Introduction

The study is divided into collection of primary and secondary data. In chapter two (2), the foundation was laid for the secondary data, demonstrated through reviewed literature, which informed the discussion of the theoretical framework. Schechner's configured fan model was established as the theoretical framework of the study. The main objective of the study is to find out the vibrancy of play and work songs performances among the Dagaaba in the north western region of Ghana. My argument is that modernity has limited spaces and taken away opportunities for these performances.

The successful execution of this research was, therefore, dependent on the collection of primary data. The reason is that, since the topic under study is a relatively new area, I had to go to the doorsteps of the informants to elicit the necessary information from them to answer the various research questions and realise the objectives stated for this study. I visited the communities of Lawra and Fielmuo to conduct my fieldwork.

This chapter focuses on the primary data collection process and how the approach speaks to the reviewed literature and the theoretical framework. The chapter elaborates on the research method, the justification for selecting it, the tools used for the data collection and data management. Challenges encountered in the application of the research approach, as well as steps taken to mitigate them are also discussed.

3.2 Research methodology

This study employs a qualitative research design. My choice of this design stems from qualitative research's capacity to put forward knowledge that explains contextual phenomena in detail (Mason, 2001:1). An investigation into the vitality of play and work song performances required access to people who are considered as repositories of knowledge in these performances. Owu-Ewie (2008:111) explains qualitative research as an organised and thorough use of interviews, observations and documents to gain knowledge of a phenomenon in its natural state, and interpreting the data collected to draw a conclusion. Denzin and Lincoln (in Owu-Ewie, 2008) point out that qualitative research is multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter and that it seeks answers to questions by examining various social settings and individuals who inhabit these settings. This means qualitative researchers study phenomena in their natural settings and can make use of case studies, personal

experience, introspective study, life stories, interviews, observations, historical accounts, interaction, and visual texts (among others) that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in individuals' lives. The adoption of this research methodology is necessary due to the nature of the research questions. The *how* and *what* questions require detailed study and probing. Relying on this, I lived among community members of Lawra and Fielmuo to be able to observe and ask questions about what occurs and what does not with regards to performances in order to address the research questions.

The strength of a qualitative research methodology rests in the authenticity of information as data are collected in a natural setting (Berg, 2004). Since setting influence behaviour, the natural setting in qualitative methodology offers the real reactions of subjects during the study thereby providing ample information to support what has been heard and seen. Also, qualitative research is a flexible process which gives the researcher the prospect of modifying the research design whenever situations demand in the course of data collection (Owu-Ewie, 2008).

In spite of these strengths, some weaknesses have been associated with a qualitative methodology. It has been recognised to rely on small population (Babbie, 2004). However, this weakness does not rule out the fact that the small population provides a lead to a phenomenon. Thus, though Lawra and Fielmuo do not represent the entire Dagaaba community, the perceived change identified in chapter one cuts across the entire ethnic population. Therefore, using a sample of the said population does not take away the representativeness of the data collected. Also, qualitative method is criticised as not being reliable (Silverman, 2000, Babbie, 2004). This criticism is derived from the fact that people would normally give different interpretations to the same situation. However, one cannot deny the fact that this is a social reality which can equally occur in the quantitative method. I also believe the process of ethical clearance which allows the Research Ethics Committee: Social, Behavioural and Education Research of Stellenbosch University to vet and approve instruments for data collection lessens ambiguity which may lead to multiple interpretations. With this measure in place and the sampling strategy adopted to recruit samples from all the stakeholders in the community, the data collected for this research represent the situation as identified. The research approach is ethnography, thus ethnographic research methods such as interviews, focus group discussions and observation were used to collect data for this study.

3.3 Research approach: Ethnography

Ethnography is the art and science used to describe a group or culture (Fetterman, 1998). Harris (1968) also defines ethnography as a qualitative design in which the researcher describes and interprets the

shared and learned patterns of values, behaviours, beliefs, and language of a culture-sharing group. Ethnography focuses on an entire cultural group (Creswell, 2007:68). Agar (1980) asserts that ethnography is a way of studying a culture-sharing group as well as the final, written product of that research. As a process, ethnography involves extended observations of the group, most often through participant observation, in which the researcher is immersed in the day to day lives of the people and observes and interviews the group participants. This approach allows researchers to study the meaning of a behaviour, language, and interaction among members of a culture-sharing group (Creswell, 2007:68-69). Similarly, Spradley (1980:3) defines ethnography as the “work describing culture” with the central aim of understanding “another way of life from the native point of view”. Chatman (1992:3) on the other hand defines ethnography as a method that allows the researcher to get an insider’s view through observation and participation in social settings that reveal reality as lived by members of those settings.

Angrosino (2007) notes that ethnographers search for predictable patterns in the lived human experiences by carefully observing and participating in the lives of those under study. Ethnography collects data in multiple ways for triangulation over an extended period of time. It is personalised, since the researcher is both observer and participant in the lives of the people (Angrosino, 2007).

Walcot (1999) points out that gathering these types of information typically needed in ethnography involves going to the research site, respecting the daily lives of individuals at the site, and collecting a wide variety of field materials. Adhering to this, I acknowledged the way of life of the people of Lawra and Fielmuo by following the necessary protocols to see the chiefs, *Tengan dem* and the rest of the participants. I also joined community members to attend funerals and, in some cases, share a pot of pito with them. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) organise types of ethnographic data into observations, tests and measures, surveys, interviews, content analysis, elicitation methods, audiovisual methods, spatial mapping, and network research. However, for the purpose of this research, the instruments of data collection were interviews, focus group discussions (FGD) and observations.

3.4 Data collection methods and instruments

This study collected data on trends of play and work song performances from the Dagaaba of Lawra and Fielmuo. As these communities provide a complex and interesting ethnographic landscape where they engage in various traditional economic activities and domestic chores to sustain their livelihoods, play and work songs presumably occupy a central place in these activities. As such, the needed data had to be collected using different data collection instruments. The complex and interesting ethnographic

landscape of the two communities rest in the manifestation of combinations of indigenous settlements, contemporary settlements, traditional, Christian and Islamic faiths and cultural interactions due to commercial activities.

3.4.1 Interviews

As stated in the first chapter (section 1.6 *Methodology and research design*), the chiefs, traditional priests (*Tengan dem*) and members of the traditional council were purposively sampled for in-depth interviews to gather information on play and work song performances. It was presumed that these individuals have experienced and observed the trend of performances of these arts forms and therefore have reliable information.

Observing all established protocol, I entered the communities led by my two contact persons – the late Mr. George Yasamè Sulley (in Lawra) and Mr. Thomas Danikuu (in Fielmuo) – to begin the data collecting process. In consultation with Naa Puowele Karbo III, the paramount chief of Lawra, the late Naa Dr. Francis Danikuu, chief of Fielmuo, the council of elders and my two contact persons, I prepared an interview schedule for each group of participants. This schedule was used as a notification to ensure everyone's availability and participation. With this, I had a daily itinerary of who to meet to engage in conversations directed by the interview guide. The aim of these interviews was to find out from participants the trend of play and work song performances and their opinions of the new development in performance culture. The discussions revealed among others how technology as alternative to manual work and source of entertainments have displaced play and work song performances.

Mathers et al (1999) submit that interviewing is an important data gathering technique involving verbal communication between the researcher and the subject. This feature, along with my decision to do in-person interviews – and not telephonic or electronic – aided my data collection, as the approach created an enabling environment for most of my respondents to speak freely. The verbal communication equally empowered both literate and non-literate participants in making contributions to the discussion since it placed everyone in a familiar context. For instance, the *Tengan dem* as part of their responsibility as earth priests, are consulted by community members to offer directions to help them stay in tune with rules and regulations governing the township to ensure balance in their respective towns. Consultation is therefore familiar to them as they are accustomed to people visiting to seek directions from them to make decisions. My visits to the *Tengan dem* and the questions posed to them were thus placed in a similar context, making them comfortable to respond to my verbal enquiries. This familiarity is supported by Dornyei

(2007) who posits that interviews are a natural and socially acceptable way of collecting data as it can be used in various situations covering a variety of topics. My interview with the *Tengan dem* and the rest of the participants was therefore within accepted norm of seeking for information in Lawra and Fielmuo. By identifying with the socially acceptable approach to gaining access to information, the respondents were forth coming with information needed to answer the research questions. Alshenqeeti (2014:40), in acknowledging the efficiency of interviewing, encourages the use of interviewing as a tool for social research as it facilitates obtaining direct explanations for human actions through a comprehensive speech interaction.

Bhatarcherjee (2012:78) notes that interviews are a more personalised form of data collection than questionnaires. What I deduce from this view is the ownership of content that interviews give to respondents. Unlike questionnaires with prescribed answers from which respondents select, thus stripping them off ownership, interviews give opportunity to participants to construct their opinion in the way they so wish. It thus becomes personal information from them, making the participants authors of the data.

Bhatarcherjee (2012) further argues that the most typical form of interviewing is personal or face-to-face interviewing, where the interviewer works directly with the respondent to ask questions and record their responses. I had face-to-face interviews with all participants in an informal setting. In Lawra, due to the dispersed nature of communities which form the paramountcy and the distances between them, Naa Puowele Karbo III set aside a room in the palace (which is usually used for meetings) for me to interview the chiefs, queen mothers and to have the focus group discussion with the youth. However, I visited the *Tengan sob* in his house for the interview. Fielmuo on the other hand is not a paramount area, thus a single community. I therefore visited respondents in their homes for the interviews. These interactions and visits developed into a relationship with the respondents to the extent that I now enjoy certain courtesies like a member of the Lawra community. For instance, when Mr. George Yasamé Sulley, my contact person in Lawra died, Naa Puowele Karbo III informed me and has been giving updates on when the funeral (which has been suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic) would be performed.

Angrosino (2007) also adds that interviewing offers an opportunity for the researcher to direct a conversation to collect information. Though I made the interaction with my respondents as conversational as possible to establish a rapport, I did not lose sight of the purpose of the study. With that in mind, I steered the dialogue towards gaining insight into the state of play and work song performances in Lawra and Fielmuo. This strategy is in line with Kvale (1996:174) and Schostak (2006), who both observe that an interview is a conversation with the aim to gather descriptions of the lifeworld

of the interviewee and/or in-depth information about a certain topic or subject; and through which a phenomenon could be interpreted in terms of the meaning interviewees bring to it. My respondents have both participated in or observed play and work song performances and thus have the capacity to provide information on the vitality of these indigenous art forms.

Neuman (2012:312) argues that the field interview is a joint production between the researcher and the respondents. With the help of the interview schedule (which determined who to interview, where and when), and using the interview guide (which included broad questions and discussion points), I posed questions about work and play songs to the participants and recorded the conversations which has been analysed in line with the research questions and objectives. Most of my respondents were older, and the chiefs, per their status, speak slowly and take time to explain their points. I therefore spent a minimum of thirty (30) minutes and a maximum of an hour per respondent between 8am and 2pm. The visits and conversations developed into a relationship with my participants (as stated earlier) who provided me with the realities of play and work song performances in the field (Dean et al. 1969). Out of a hundred (100) sample size that I decided on, I interviewed twenty-two (22) participants in Lawra and twelve (12) in Fielmuo. All interviews were recorded. The remaining sample constituted participants for the focus group discussion – twenty-eight (28) in Lawra and thirty-eight (38) in Fielmuo. Further explanation on this is provided in section 3.5.4 (sample size selection). I also supplemented the interview method of data collection with focus group discussion.

3.4.2 Focus group discussions

Bhattacharjee (2012:78) notes that a variation on the personal interview is a group interview, also called a focus group. Focus group discussion (FGD) is a qualitative research technique in which one informally studies a group-discussion (Churchill, 1983:179-184). The use of this tool enables forthrightness in a dialogue where opinions are presented and ideas shared. Bhattacharjee (2012:78) further notes that in this technique, a small group of respondents are interviewed together in a common location.

The interviewer in FGD is essentially a facilitator, whose job is to lead the discussion and ensure that every person has an opportunity to respond. FGD offered the opportunity for me to ask questions from people with varied opinions and interpretations of the subject under discussion and these presented rich data for analysis. This outcome is reiterated by Nyumba et al (2018:20) who hold the view that FGD is frequently used as a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of social issues. The method aims to obtain data from a purposely selected group of individuals rather than a statistically representative

sample of a broader population. Marshall and Rossman (2006) also add that besides one-on-one interviews, FGD is also popular due to its attribute of providing varied views which has the ability to look at issues from every angle before drawing conclusions. I specifically used FGD to gain information from the youth of Lawra and Fielmuo during my fieldwork.

Adopting Bhattacharjee's (2012) criterion, I grouped the youth from the matronymic clans into younger males, adult males, younger females and adult females. The younger groups were between the ages of twenty (20) to thirty (30) and the adults between the ages of thirty-one (31) to forty-five (45). These groups were further put into a set of a group membership of eight (8). The smaller number made it easier for everyone to express himself and herself adequately and also for me to facilitate the discussion. The reason for using this method is to gain a deeper knowledge of the disappearance of play and work song performances among the Dagaaba. Thus, the group interview sessions with the youths from the matronymic clans in Lawra and Fielmuo provided insight into the phenomenon. A clan is often made up of thousands of members from different households. The choice of the matronymic clan, which is seven (7) clans was manageable, that is, easier to get eight (8) adults and younger participants from, as compared to the over fifteen (15) patriarchal clans. It would have been challenging to recruit from such a large membership without some people feeling excluded. I depended on the clan because it is the most accurate means to ensure representation of a public's view since the clans make up a community.

FGD provided an opportunity for me to observe the non-verbal cues exhibited by the informants during the interaction period. Instances where individuals nodded were picked as approval or agreement to one's contribution while shaking of the head was a sign of disagreement or disapproval of an expression. These non-verbal cues aid in probing for further deliberation. There were four (4) FGDs held in Lawra and five (5) in Fielmuo due to the groupings of eight (8) I constituted from the sample population. In both communities, the FGDs were conducted after I had concluded the interviews. In Lawra, as indicated earlier the paramount chief, Naa Puowele Karbo III provided a room in the palace for both the interviews and FGDs. Interviews in Fielmuo on the other hand, were held in homes of participants but the FGDs with the youth were done at a meeting ground, a shed, where similar meetings are often held. All FGDs were recorded.

3.4.3 Participant observation

Baker (2006:171) notes that as an ethnographic research method, observation has a long history. She argues that the value of observation is that it permits researchers to study people in their native

environment in order to understand things from their perspective. Similarly, Gorman and Clayton (2005:40) define observation as a data collection method that involves the systematic recording of observable phenomena or behaviour in a natural setting. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) further note that during observation, a researcher should record aspects such as portraits of the informant, the physical setting, particular events and activities, and one's own reactions. This links with the notion that observation is a special skill that requires addressing issues such as the potential deception of people being observed, impression management, and the potential marginality of the researcher in a strange setting as posited by Atkinson and Hammersley (1994).

Ciesielska et al (2018:33) are of the view that observation is one of the most important research methods in social sciences, it offers the researcher the capacity to watch, interpret, assess, evaluate and draw conclusions on what has been seen. This helps the researcher to access rich data for the research. Ciesielska et al (2018:34) continue that observation is one of the most diverse research methods because it manifests as participant observation, non-participant observation and indirect observation. Becker and Geer (1970:133) define participant observation as either a covert or overt activity in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over a length of time.

I scheduled to use a period of six (6) months, three (3) months in each community, for my observation. Within this time frame, I was supposed to employ participant observation in the field to perceive the various performances of play and work songs, traditional economic activities engaged in by women and men and how they engineer musical performances. I was also to observe the dynamics of the performances, the songs that are sang, the emotions that are aroused during performances and the significance of these performances to the Dagaaba community. I intended to observe play and work song performances in their natural settings in the selected communities, but this was not possible for two reasons, namely (1) factors impeding performance and (2) the Covid-19 pandemic (which necessitated a lockdown in Ghana and other countries in the first half of 2020 to curtail the spread of the virus) cut short my period of observation. In the end I spent three (3) months in Lawra but one and a half (1½) months in Fielmuo.

Though the intended participation was not fully achieved due to reasons already stated, aligning with Becker and Geer (1970:133) I will say a considerable level of participant observation was done in the field. I participated in the daily life of the people of Lawra and Fielmuo by living among them; four and a half (4½) months cumulatively, interacting with them such as engaging in conversations while sharing

a pot of *pito* with the people and attending funerals. Sharing of *pito*, traditionally is a primary means of engaging in conversation and sharing ideas. As pots are bought in turns, people consciously and deliberately sip the *pito* slowly at intervals to allow the conversation to go on, sometimes deep into the night, depending on the time of gathering. Again, I engaged in conversations with the Catholic Women Association of Fielmuo during their meeting after church service to know why the performance of play song has shifted to the church. These participations enhanced the data because they provided validation of the disappearance of indigenous performance.

3.4.4 Data Management

I cultivated a habit from the beginning of my data collection to carefully manage the data collected. I made sure that I backed up on my computer and on external drive all recorded interviews, face-to-face and focus group discussions. The management of data was further augmented by backed-up data on my computer in Drop Box, to prevent loss of data due to device failure. In addition, my computer is password-protected and thus cannot be accessed by unauthorised persons.

Furthermore, I adhered to the ethics of research throughout the study. Wiles (2013) submits that ethical literacy should not just be at the beginning when a research committee gives approval to the researcher, but ought to run through the entire research process. In this regard I respected and observed established community ethics and issues of informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality from data collection through analysis to storage. I also created and named files which made it easier for me to access records from the two communities during the transcription.

Also, from the beginning of the data collection process, I made it a habit to play back recordings after each interview and focus group discussion session to make notes. This practice made me familiar with the data and this enabled me to identify relevant points raised in the discussion which had bearings on the research objectives. I transcribed the interviews and focus group discussions personally, thus deepening the familiarity with the data linking the research questions and objectives.

3.5 Sampling

Sampling is the statistical process of selecting a representative subset, referred to as a sample, of a population of interest for the purposes of making observations and statistical inferences about that population (Bhattacharjee, 2012: 65; Nayeem & Huma, 2017:3). It is a technique or procedure employed by a researcher to systematically select a relatively smaller number of representative items or individuals

from a predefined population to serve as subjects or data source for observation or experimentation as per objectives of his or her study (Sharma, 2017:749). Sampling makes research more accurate and economical. It is the sampling method which actually determines the generalisability of research findings. A sampling strategy ensures appropriate data collection at each level relevant to one's analysis. To determine the viability of play and work song performances, I sampled two communities, Lawra and Fielmuo to infer about the trend of indigenous performances of the Dagaaba.

3.5.1 Sampling techniques

I used the purposive sampling method and the simple random sampling techniques to select Lawra and Fielmuo for the study. Sharma (2017:751) argues that the strength of purposive sampling lies in the fact that it can provide researchers with the justification to make generalisations from the sample that is being studied; whether such generalisations are theoretical, analytic and/or logical in nature. The justification in generalising the state of play and work song performances in Lawra and Fielmuo as a phenomenon among the Dagaaba is backed by (1) the context of the performances and (2) the spaces for performances that are similar in other Dagaaba communities. Thus, what pertains in the selected communities would in all probability be found across the remaining Dagaaba population. Nayeem and Huma (2017:8) note that purposive sampling enables the researcher to choose participants based on his/her own judgement, keeping in mind the purpose of the study. In my judgement (and from experience), the chiefs, *Tengan dem*, and the traditional council of the selected communities are repositories of indigenous knowledge and have the capacity to provide in-depth information on the trend of indigenous performances. The youth on the other hand serve as pointers of change; they can reflect the outcome of social change which has had an impact on play and work song performances. Nayeem and Huma (2017:8) further observe that purposive sampling selects cases with a specific purpose in mind. Lawra and Fielmuo were selected out of the numerous Dagaaba communities due to their features which seemingly has the tendency to provide stimulus for the abandonment of indigenous performances.

In relation to the simple random sampling, Sharma (2017:750) argues that each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected as a subject. In this respect, with the exception of the chiefs, *Tengan dem* and members of the traditional councils whose choices were determined by their birth and lineage, every member of the matronymic clan in Lawra and Fielmuo had the chance of being selected as a participant. Sharma (2017) further indicates that one of the best things about simple random sampling is the ease of assembling the sample. This was evident in that every Dagao belongs to a matronymic clan, thus the choice of using it as a basis for sampling was effortless. Simple random sampling is also

considered as a fair way of selecting a sample from a given population since every member is given equal opportunity of being selected. Similarly, Sharma (2017) is of the view that the simple random sampling technique is an unbiased random selection and a representative sample which allows for conclusions to be drawn from the results of the study.

Indeed, one cannot doubt the importance of the simple random technique in this study. It will close the gap which purposive sampling technique will create, that is, the argument that it is bias. Thus, since the study used the simple random approach to complement the purposive sampling technique, it provides a balance where data collected can be analysed and interpreted to reflect the reality in relation to play and work song performances among the Dagaaba.

With these two sampling techniques, informants were selected to constitute the sample for this study. As indicated earlier chiefs, *Tengan dem*, members of the traditional council, and the youth were selected to participate in this study. This was intended to make the sample representative so that data collected from this study would be reliable. Also, it is believed that these people have the needed information that would respond to the various research questions of the study. Secondly, these techniques were used for the research because they are less costly, more readily accessible, and more convenient and select only those individuals that are relevant to the research design (Nayeem and Human, 2017).

3.5.2 Selected communities

As stated briefly in chapter one (1), Lawra and Fielmuo were chosen because of my proficiency in the language of these communities, but I will expand further on the reasons for my selection in this section. I selected the communities of Lawra and Fielmuo due to their characteristic capacity to determine the impact of modernity as well as answer the research questions. Lawra is a corruption of the word *o-rá*, (abundance). This was established in an interview on 12 December 2019 with the immediate past regent and senior member of the Lawra Traditional Council, Elder Charles Terle Karbo. According to him, the name of the community is derived from the phrase “*á bondire o-rá*” (there’s abundance of food). He explained that this group of Dagaaba migrants, led by Kontol, migrated from across the Black Volta in search for fertile land for farming. After much scouting, they settled at Tovuur, presently a suburb of urbanised Lawra. At the end of the farming season, the first settlers got a bumper harvest from their first cultivation, hence the expression “*á bondire o-rá*”. The people of Lawra speak the Dagaare dialect Bodomo (in Doggu, 2015) refers to as Northern Dagaare. The town was an administrative headquarter for the British colonial government and presently serves as a district capital of the Lawra Municipal

Assembly¹⁴. The history of Lawra as one of the oldest administrative centres since the colonial era opened the town to politics, trade and commercial activities, thereby attracting people of diverse cultures to the town, a manure for acculturation. According to the Ghana Statistical Service (2014:17), the 2010 population and housing census placed the population of the district at 54,889 and out of this 26,346 are males and 26,543 females. As indicated in chapter one (1), the Dagaaba constitutes 56% of the population of Upper West Region (Abdul-Korah, 2011:392) and 3% of the national population (Doggu, 2015:19).

Lawra, like the rest of the communities of north western Ghana, experiences a single rainy season in a year. Farmers, both men and women, capitalise on this rain pattern to cultivate crops such as yams, a variety of beans, ground nut, millet, sorghum, and vegetables such as okro (also referred to as okra), pepper and tomatoes, among others. Shea nut grows wild in this community and remains an important economic crop for the production of shea butter for both local consumption and export. The single rainy season in the northern region allows for a single farming season as compared to the southern part of Ghana which has double maxima of rainfall. Due to this limitation, farmers are forced to migrate down south during the dry season. This movement, as observed by the chief of Lawra, Naa Puowele Karbo III, in an interview on 9 December 2019, has brought about acculturation in Lawra. He cited *naming* as one example of this phenomenon. The chief noted that culturally Dagaaba names are derived from statements to illustrate circumstances during the birth of a child or the mood of the parents at the birth. There are names such as *Bélang eré* (co-operation), *Aaa-bangbio* (who knows tomorrow) *Puteér* (intention) and *Kanyir* (patience). He bemoaned the fact that due to migration to the south, particularly Akan¹⁵ speaking areas, some parents have adopted a naming pattern foreign to the people of Lawra. In their culture, the Akan have *kra din* (a soul name), that reference the day one is born. Thus, a male child born on a Sunday is Kwesi and a female Akosua. It is uncharacteristic for a Dagao to have a 'day name' however it is now common to hear a name like Adwoama (Adwoa's mother), a combination of Akan, (*Adwoa*: a Monday female child) and Dagaare (*ma*: mother) in Lawra these days.

¹⁴ The Municipal Assembly concept in Ghana is a local governance structure which depends on the population of the people living in a particular geographical area. The Municipal Assembly status is given to an area if the population is over 40, 000 and it is headed by the Municipal Chief Executive who is the direct representative of the president of the Republic of Ghana. The Municipal Assembly is made up of Assembly Members (Local Legislators) who represent various electoral areas and work for the development of these electoral areas. Lawra is one of these municipalities in the Upper West Region of Ghana.

¹⁵ The Akan is the largest ethnic group in Ghana. They are found in eleven (11) out of the sixteen (16) regions and constitute almost 45% of the Ghanaian population. They occupy the middle and forest belt of the country stretching to the west. There are many sub-groups of Akan - Asante, Fante, Akuapem, Akyem, Kwahu, Akwamu, Nzema, Bono, Ahafo, Aowin, Sehwi. The most famous Akan grouping Ghana is the Asante whose political head is the Asantehene.

The changing face of Lawra is not only caused by its status as a multi-settler community and migration. The central government's decentralisation policy, formal employment and education, as well as trading have urbanised the town. As a district capital there are both government and private institutions to facilitate the administration of the area. Lawra boasts a police station, hospital, bank, post office and a fire service station in addition to various units¹⁶ within the Municipal Assembly. Being a farming community, Lawra also houses institutions such as the Forestry Commission and the Ministry of Food and Agriculture which monitor agricultural practices and forest conservation. Additionally, there are a nursing training college, a senior high school and several basic schools to provide literacy and skills to members of the community and its surroundings. These characteristics in addition to a big weekly market – which attracts traders from surrounding towns, villages and even Burkina Faso – have turned the once rural community to an urban one. Lawra is uniquely known for the making of *gyil*, the main musical instrument of the Dagaaba for local and international distribution.

Lawra is a paramountcy with divisional and sub chiefs constituting the traditional council headed by the paramount chief, Naa Puowele Karbo III. The chief is also supported by the *Tengan sob*, who (as indicated earlier in chapter one) serves as a politico-religious leader. The community is also accountable to the central government through the Municipal Assembly. Socially, the people of Lawra also practice the patrilineal system of inheritance. Data available (Ghana Statistical Service, 2014:35) indicates that the majority of the people are Christians (61%) with the remaining population being practitioners of traditional religion (26.3%) and Islam (6.6%).

Unlike Lawra which is a paramountcy of Dagaaba communities, Fielmuo is a divisional chiefdom under a Sissala paramountcy, Zini. The Sissala is a different ethnic group noted in literature (Lentz, 2001) as the allodial landowners. Though the community members are Dagaaba, the name of the town, Fielmuo is Sissale, the language of the Sissala. In an interview with Mr. Yiribo Danikuu, son of the first chief of Fielmuo, on 2 March 2020, he attributed this to repeated mistakes made by his father, Naa Danikuu Ouremwin. Errors, he lamented, have led to years of dispute over the legitimacy of the Dagaaba in Fielmuo.

However, the account of the Sissala gives a contrary narrative. They argue that the Dagaaba are migrants who were asked to *fielmuo* (to rest a while) when they reached the present day Fielmuo while fleeing from the tyranny of De-nyuu, a chief in neighbouring Burkina Faso. Their argument is that if the Dagaaba

¹⁶ The other units include the Education Service, Ghana Immigration Service, Urban and Feeder Roads Department, Rural Enterprises Development and Non-Governmental Agencies.

were the owners of the land, the name would have been in Dagaare. The name of the town and other documents of legitimacy have been the strongest points for the Sissala in pursuing this contested land case, which is presently before the High Court at Wa, the regional capital. In a report compiled by Joseph Ziem and Edward Gyebi in the Savannah News on 30 April 2014, the National Coordinator of the West Africa Network for Peace-Building (WANEP-Ghana), Mr. Isaac Bayor, indicated that the dispute has led to dwindling trust between the Dagaaba and Sissala of Fielmuo and Nimoro respectively. Similarly, a Ghana News Agency reported on 24 November 2014 that the then Upper West Regional Minister, Alhaji Amidu Sulemana, urged the people of Nemoro (Sissala) and Fielmuo (Dagaaba) to co-exist. He made this statement when the Acting President of the Buwal Traditional Council, Kuoro Barcheh Nlowie Baninye II, chief of Niatoh paid a courtesy call on him. This was in reaction to the protracted land dispute between the two communities.

In one of several petitions written to the president of Ghana, the youth of Nemoro and Buwal, two Sissala communities surrounding Fielmuo presented a petition during a demonstration to the District Coordinating Director, Mr. Daniel Akwesu on 23 June 2016. In their petition, they quoted from a circular to support their argument that the Dagaaba are settlers. In this circular, issued on 16 April 1958, the Local Government in an effort to control migrants in Ghana issued a circular No. MLG 4900109SF530 titled “recognition of headsmen of stranger communities”. Among people registered were Zaato Moshie, Issaka Grushie, Issah Waala and Danikuu Dargati. It is interesting to note that through colonial times up to the early part of independence, names of ethnic groups of people of the northern part of Ghana were used as their surnames and also as identification. In this instance, four ethnic groups – Moshie, Grushie, Waala and Dagaaba (corrupted as Dargati by the colonialist) were identified as migrants in the area being disputed. It is revealing from the names mentioned that none is a Sissala. Which imply that in 1958 the four ethnic groups mentioned, including the Dagaaba, were among the stranger communities regularised by the local government of Ghana. There seems to be credibility in the story of the Sissala as the name “Danikuu”, which is the name of the first settler farmer from Burkina Faso whose descendants are now the ruling family in Fielmuo is cited in the circular directing migrants to be registered. In a similar contested land issue between the Dagaaba of Nandom and the Sissala of Lambusie Lentz (2001:2) in her research on *Contested boundaries: decentralisation and land conflicts in northwestern Ghana* notes that:

In order to understand the roots of the issue of land ownership which the district conflict raked up one has to go back into the nineteenth century. What came to be the Lawra District in colonial times was then an agricultural and, in some senses, ethnic frontier. When small groups of Sissala-speaking farmers first settled in the area, is difficult to ascertain.

There is agreement, however, that in many parts of the district the expansionist Dagara-speaking agriculturalists who arrived on the scene probably from the eighteenth century onwards had come to terms with Sissala first-comers. They did so by ethnic assimilation (thus becoming members of the first-comer community), the purchase of land and earth shrines from the Sissala or their forceful expulsion. In any case the Dagara transformed themselves into allodial landowners, in full control of the land and the earth shrines.

Lentz's (2001) submission adds credence to the account of the Sissala that the Dagaaba came to meet them in the north western part of Ghana. It has also been established earlier in chapter one (1) that the origin of the Dagaaba is a contested subject as oral and other historical accounts point to the fact that they migrated from various places to their present location. A possibility that they met the Sissala on their arrival.

On their part, the Dagaaba do not dispute the fact that they migrated from Burkina Faso. According to the Dagaaba migration was a phenomenon in the olden days among most ethnic groups either fleeing war, tyranny and famine or searching for fertile lands for agricultural purposes. In the case of the Dagaaba of Fielmuo, the founder, Warime migrated from Nyigbo in Burkina Faso (due to reasons already stated) and found an uninhabited land, settled and later brought the rest of his family. Danikuu Ouremwin, a descendant of Warime befriended Zaato, a Sissala who used to visit from a neighbouring settlement. However, if this Zaato is the one captured in the registration of migrants, then he could not have been a Sissala but a Moshie, making him a migrant just like Warime. A misunderstanding led to the death of a family member of Danikuu Ouremwin, but the delay in getting a permit from the colonial administration in Lawra for the burial resulted in the decomposition of the body of the deceased. According to Yiribo Danikuu, Zaato stopped visiting his friend till the corpse was buried. On his visit after the burial he said to Danikuu Ouremwin “*sesan base fielmuo*” (now you can rest a while) to commiserate with him for the stress in travelling the long distance to get the permit for burial and the most difficult part of living with a decomposed body. The first error Danikuu Ouremwin made, according to the account by the Dagaaba is adopting the phrase *fielmuo* as the name of the settlement in recognition of his friendship with Zaato. Secondly when the colonial administration gave the paramountcy to Danikuu Ouremwin, he turned it down on the grounds that his friend, Zaato, was the eldest and therefore should be given that status. Although this act cost the Dagaaba a paramountcy, Danikuu Ouremwin did so in a typical Dagao fashion, adhering to the social structure. In Dagaaba culture, seniority is upheld in every transaction, a younger person cannot assume a position when the elder is available, it will mean dishonour and disrespect. He

can only do so when the elder passes it over but Zaato did not and so Zini became the paramountcy instead of Fielmuo.

Fielmuo is in the Sissala West District and was selected due to the presumed dominant Sissala culture. Fielmuo is more or less like an island because it is surrounded by Sissala communities and as documented by UNESCO (2008) such dominant cultures often overshadow the minority ones leading to the latter embracing the dominant cultures. In his reaction to this, the chief, the late Naa Dr. Francis Danikuu on 2 March 2020 lamented that the Dagao's (referring to the people of Fielmuo) nature of embracing other cultures is what has cost the town its legitimacy. He noted that embracing the Sissala phrase *fielmuo* instead of the Dagaare *gan voor* (sleep and rest), which is the original name of the community is a manifestation of the impact of dominant culture. In addition, the community was chosen because of a vibrant market which attracts people from neighbouring country Burkina Faso, Sissala communities in Ghana and other ethnic groups in the area. Fielmuo observes the same culture and demonstrates similar religious, social and political features as other Dagaaba communities. The town is governed by the central government through the Sissala West District Assembly, the Zini Traditional Council and their chief the late Naa Dr. Francis Danikuu who died a few weeks after my interview with him. Similar to other Dagaaba communities, the chief is supported in his governance by the *Tegan sob*, Mr. Lèè Kuunyaa.

traditional council could provide the history and origin of the communities as well as the function of play and work songs in the social structure. They could also offer information on how relevant these performances were and their current state. The *Tengan dem* on their part, could narrate how social change, particularly education and Christianity, have influenced the perception and belief system of the Dagaaba consequently also indigenous performances.

In his submission on 3 March 2020, Mr. Lèè Kuunyaa, the *Tengan sob* of Fielmuo traced the abandonment of indigenous performances to teachers. He lamented that teachers from the onset of formal education in the community made the enthusiastic pupils who were eager to learn new things to believe that indigenous practices and performances distract learning in the classroom. It is common knowledge that pupils respect and uphold opinions of teachers. Therefore, it is not surprising that these pupils who were being trained in a Catholic school would obviously embrace a different religious orientation and way of life foreign to the people of Fielmuo.

Mr. Lèè Kuunyaa's contribution to the impact of modernity on indigenous performances supported an earlier submission made on 10 December 2019 by the chief of Birfoh, Naa Debomo Gandaa who indicated that they have lost control, not in leadership but the social orientation of their subjects and children as they leave home to go to school and work in different environments. The youth, on whose doorsteps much of the blame were put also presented their account of why they no longer perform the songs and alternatives that have assumed similar functions of play and work songs performances.

3.5.4 Sample size selection

Sample size determination is the technique of electing the number of observations to include in a sample. It is an important feature of any study or investigation in which the aim is to make inferences about the population from a sample (Singh & Masuka, 2014:6). They further point out that sample size should be carefully fixed so that it will be adequate to draw valid and generalised conclusions from. The fixation of the adequate sample size requires specific information about the problems under investigation in the population under study, as well as the sub classifications of the sample required for analysis, variation, precision, availability and cost of investigation (Singh & Masuka, 2014:6). Similarly, sample size depends on the nature of the analysis to be performed, the desired precision of the estimates one wishes to achieve, the kind and number of comparisons that will be made, the number of variables that have to be examined simultaneously and how heterogeneous the sampled population is. These factors also influence the sample design and data collection procedures (Salant & Dillman, 1994).

Asika (1991) observes that whether a population is finite or infinite, the process of drawing a sample from that population can be arduous, expensive and time consuming. Consequently, sampling is made for reasons such as the impossibility of taking a complete and comprehensive study of the population, the similarity of the population, the cheaper nature of studying a sample rather than the entire population among others. These factors therefore necessitate determination of a sample size. Shively (2011:62), however, argues that in the case of non-probability sampling, especially when the goal of the research is qualitative rather than quantitative, a researcher may decide not to pre-specify a target sample size, but to instead continue collecting data, stopping only once his time or budget is exhausted, or he feels confident that the data necessary to conduct the research have been collected in sufficient quantity.

I could not pre-specify my target sample due to the difference in the two selected communities. For instance, while Lawra is a paramountcy and thus has paramount, divisional and sub chiefs, Fielmuo is not a paramountcy and therefore has only a chief. Fielmuo also has seven (7) matronymic clans while Lawra has four (4). Thus, it would not have been accurate for me to pre-specify my sample size. Realities in the field during data collection eventually determined the sample size.

After my consultation with Naa Puowele Karbo III, it became possible for me to determine the sample size in Lawra which gave me the opportunity to have a well-planned interaction activity with the participants. Secondly, it enabled me to collect sufficient data in relation to the subject under study. In addition, I benefitted from the determined sample size as it enabled me to draw valid and reliable information from the respondents which could be analysed and generalised at the end of the study. Finally, important inferences were drawn from the information provided by the participants, thus it is important to determine the sample size.

After taking the variations of the two communities into consideration, I arrived at fifty (50) informants each from Lawra and Fielmuo making a total of hundred (100) participants for the study. These people were recruited from the target population that had been outlined earlier. As indicated previously, the difference in the composition of chiefdom in Lawra and Fielmuo resulted in a bit of variation in the composition of the fifty (50) participants. In Lawra out of the fifty (50) participants, there was a paramount chief, the *Tengan sob*, eight (8) council of elders, three (3) divisional chiefs, five (5) sub-chiefs, four (4) queen mothers and twenty-eight (28) youths selected from the four (4) matronymic clans. Participants in Fielmuo were made up of the chief, *Tengan sob*, nine (9) elders, the only surviving wife of the first chief of Fielmuo, and thirty-eight (38) youths from the seven (7) matronymic clans. The justification for this sample stems from the fact that these people represent all the stakeholders who have

some information on play and work song performances, the trend of performance and the impact of modernity on performance in the area of study. In addition, since I made use of in-depth interviews as part of the data collection process, increasing the sample size would have been a difficult task and costly for me. I believe that the 50-sample size which had a representation of key informants in each community is enough for the needed data for this study.

3.6 Challenges and mitigation

As indicated earlier, the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic was a major challenge to this research. Originally, I had earmarked November 2019 to April 2020 for the duration of data collection, thus three months in each community. But the pandemic halted my research midway in Fielmuo. The government of Ghana, in an attempt to curb the spread of the virus declared a lockdown in major commercial cities and a nationwide ban on social gatherings on 15 March 2020. This directive forced me to discontinue with the data collection in Fielmuo. I must reiterate, though, that the discontinuation did not affect the approach, rather the duration. I had already completed the interview and FGDs, the remaining six weeks were to be used to observe play and work song performances in Fielmuo. Though I had scheduled to do the observation after completing the interviews and FGDs, I did not lose sight of the objective to observe activities that should stimulate performances on my way to scheduled interviews or FGDs. These opportunistic observations led to findings of alternative platforms of performance such as meetings of identifiable women groups at church.

Another unexpected challenge was finance. When I conceived this research, I knew of the potential financial implication, but I had the conviction I could access the University of Ghana's Carnegie Fund to facilitate the execution of the research. However, it dawned on me when I made my intentions known that it was an erroneous conception. According to Prof. Yaa Ntiama-Baidu the project director of the University of Ghana Carnegie project, the fund could only be accessed by University of Ghana registered postgraduate students. This was a major setback but I readjusted my expenditure and sourced funding from personal resources and an annual allowance from the Ghana government to public university teachers. In addition to these sources, I initiated a network which cut down my expenditure on the field. An interaction with the former Member of Parliament for the Lawra constituency, Mr. Anthony Karbo who is also from the royal family led me to the late Mr. George Yasamê Sulley, my contact person. Through the latter's ingenuity, the Lawra Municipal Assembly housed me in their guest house for the entire period.

3.7 Summary and conclusion

This chapter operationalised qualitative research as a methodology that guides the study. The chapter further focused on the primary data collection process and discussed ethnography as a research approach and its related data collection methods such as interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation that was used during my fieldwork. Motivation for my choice of sampling method was provided, as well as an overview of sampling techniques, the population of the study, and the determination of sample size. I also discussed my data management, as well as challenges encountered during my fieldwork.

The chapter therefore served as final orientation for the second half of this dissertation, which focuses on the analysis of the collected data and discussions of findings. The following chapter (chapter 4) discusses the role of traditional performances in the social structure, and the social organisation and political institutions of the Dagaaba.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE ROLE OF TRADITIONAL PERFORMANCES IN THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF THE DAGAABA

Research regarding traditional performances of the Dagaaba have been varied. While some were concerned with the textual and tonal interpretations of the *gyil* played at traditional functions (Woma, 2012; Vercelli, 2006), others made critical enquiry into the changing role of female performers (Sutherland-Addy et al, 2005). A few scholars, in support of UNESCO's drive to safeguard indigenous arts from extinction, have documented song texts, see for instance (Bodomo & Mora (2002). The majority of the studies, however, have been on the functions of traditional performances among the Dagaaba (Hien, 2019; Dankwa, 2018; Kuupuo, 2005; Kuwabong, 2004; Alenuma, 2002).

In the previous chapter, I discussed my research methodology and approach and the methods I used in collecting primary data for this study, as well as the justification for the choices. In this chapter, I examine how traditional performance(s) function in the social structure of the Dagaaba by answering the research question: what is the role of traditional performances, such as play and work songs, in upholding the social structure of the Dagaaba community? My discussions will rely both on a continued literature review – which in many cases can be considered an historical contextualisation – and findings from my fieldwork in Lawra and Fielmuo.

4.1 Social organisation and political institutions

The Dagaaba has been described as a stateless or acephalous society (Lentz, 2019; Goody, 1962), but Doggu (2015) and Yelapaala (1992, 1983) see this as an incorrect depiction. According to Yelapaala (1983), this representation was due primarily to the criteria western anthropologists used in their classification, namely evidence of elements of a structure of government. Lentz (2019) for instance argues that the Dagaaba had no institutionalised chieftaincy, only a particular social organisation. Since there was no visible hierarchical structure and central elements of a modern western state in the existing political organisation of the Dagaaba, they were classified as stateless. Contrary to this “inappropriate” categorisation (Doggu, 2015; Yelapaala, 1992, 1983) the Dagaaba had a consistent, non-centralised system of governance before the arrival of the colonialist. In support of the classification of non-centralised systems in West Africa, Yelapaala (1983) sees the Dagaaba as dispersed territorially-defined communities rather than stateless. Making arguments against the statelessness of the Dagaaba, Yelapaala (1983:362) cites instances where the word *naa* has been used to justify the existence of chiefs before the

establishment of institutionalised chieftaincy by the British. He submits that folktales are usually created out of what exist in one's surroundings and since there are characters of *naa* (chief) and *bader* (trickster) in most Dagaaba folktales, it means these positions existed before colonialism. He also adds that one of the clans of the Dagaaba is named *Naayiile*, (people of the chief's house) and this social organisation also existed in pre-colonial time. He further supports his argument with a folktale about Bayong, a chief of Ulo, who built a wall around his community to ward off slave raiders before the arrival of the British, which again pre-dates institutionalised chieftaincy and a confirmation that the Dagaaba had chiefs.

Lentz (2019), however, argues that the existence of chiefs before its institutionalisation by the colonial administration is contested. She indicates that those who often support that line of thought do so either to legitimise their position as royals, or equate the Dagaaba to other societies who had the chieftaincy institution. According to Lenz (2019) some non-royals feel embarrassed to be described as a society that had no chiefs and as such prefers the narrative that there were chiefs. But there are other Dagaaba who pride themselves in the political organisation that existed which kept them together as a group before the arrival of the British. The contestation of chieftaincy among the Dagaaba is further strengthened by the account given by my respondent, Mr. Yiribo Danikuu, one of the sons of the first chief of Fielmuo during data collection. As captured in chapter three (3), he blamed the prolonged dispute over the legitimacy of the Dagaaba between the Sissala of Zini and Fielmuo on his father's refusal to accept the chieftaincy title when it was offered by the colonial administrators. Yiribo's account implies that there was no chieftaincy in Fielmuo before the arrival of the British colonial government.

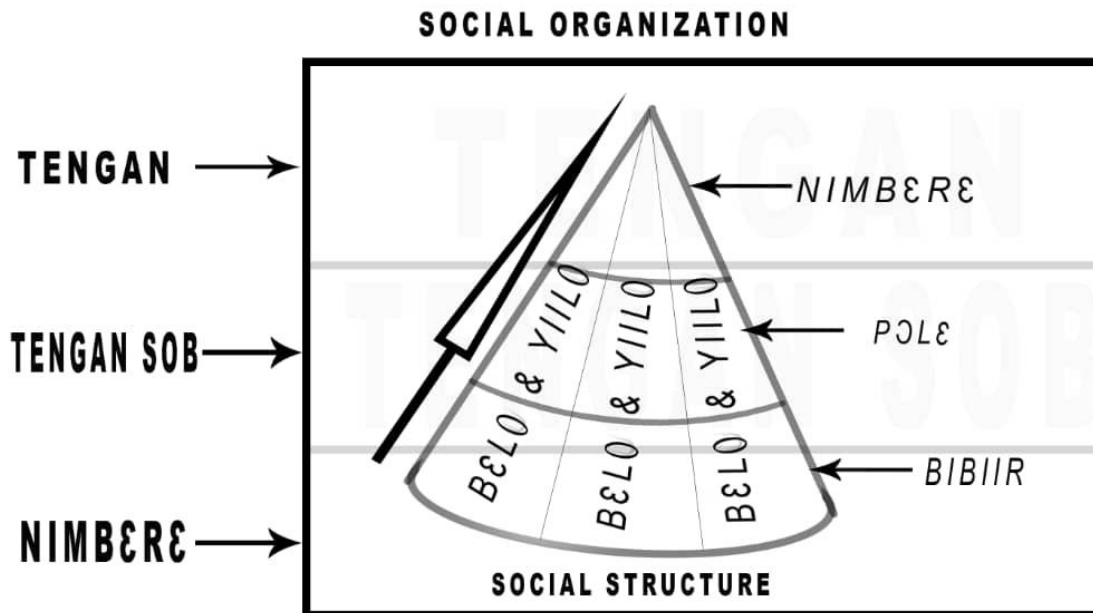
The statelessness or otherwise of the Dagaaba notwithstanding, there is evidence that the Dagaaba are territorially-defined communities, who, in spite of a possible absence of state structures had a system of administration in place which kept them together as a people. In his description, Yelapaala (1983) notes the Dagaaba had a coherent political system which was obscure to the outsider. The difficulty in perceiving the political organisation of the Dagaaba, in my view, lies in the absence of a central figure to issue directives. As a territorially-defined society, each *teng* was autonomous of the other. There was nothing like the paramount chief of the Dagaaba as is the cases for the Dagbon and Asante (ethnic groups in Ghana), thus Fielmuo was autonomous of Lawra and so on. The basic political institution of the Dagaaba consisted of *nimbéré*, who were heads of different lineages within the territorial area. These *nimbéré* formed the central authority and dealt with issues of general community interest. Each of these lineages, however, had their own systems of administration independent of the other.

Though they are generally described as a non-centralised state, in my opinion the Dagaaba had a complex political organisation where they engaged in both decentralised and centralised administrations. I see the operation of a decentralised system where each lineage within a *teng* is autonomous of the other and thus applies its rules and sanctions to its members accordingly. The centralised system manifests in the composition of the *nimbéré* who deliberated on issues concerning the general good of the community as equals but where issues of the *teng* and *tengan* arise, the *Tengan sob*¹⁷ had the final authority (Alenuma, 2002; Yelapaala, 1983). At deliberations, even though each of the *nimbéré* has his lineage's interest at heart, the general good of the *teng* becomes supreme. However, as representatives, the *nimbéré* deliberate with the concerns and interests of their respective lineages in focus and thus a level of decentralisation before consensus is reached. The complexity of the political organisation thus lies in the application of a combination of systems in the administration of a *teng* (Yelapaala, 1983).

The social organisations of the Dagaaba, that is, the various *yiilo* and *bélo*¹⁸, enabled the initial political institution to operate before chieftaincy was institutionalised. (Dery et al, 2020; Hein, 2019; Doggu, 2015) As discussed earlier the *nimbéré* who form the central administration, thus political office of the *teng*, are derived from the social organisations within the social structure of the Dagaaba. This is because the social structure consists of the *bibiir* (children) at the bottom who will automatically grow to be the *polé* (plural, youth) to take over from the *nimbéré* (elders). It is from this social structure that eligible candidates become the *Tengan sob*, who, until the institution of chieftaincy, led the social institution with the *tengan* as the supreme head and the *nimbéré* as the basic entry point of the social institution. The social structure thus feeds the social institution with personnel. The figure below gives an illustration of the basic group composition of the Dagaaba before the institutionalisation of chieftaincy hence the absence of the *naa*.

¹⁷ The *tengan* is the earth shrine of the Dagaaba and *Tengan sob* its priest. They are discussed in detail in subsections 4.1.4 and 4.1.5 respectively.

¹⁸ *Yiilo* is lineage and *bélo* is metronymic clan of the Dagaaba. They are discussed in detail in subsections 4.1.2 and 4.1.3.

Figure 5: Basic group composition of the Dagaaba (the author's creation)

In a Dagaaba community, children born on the same day become *taabé* (age mates/peers) in the social structure, but will belong to different social organisations due to the diversity in clans and descent groups. To illustrate, I am at the same level in the social structure with Beyuo because we are age mates, but while I belong to the *Berfuoré* clan, he is a *Bekuone*, and my matronymic clan is *Kpogda* and his is *Somé*. Thus, each of us belongs to two different social organisations in the social structure. It is from these groups in the social structure that the *nimbéré* are formed. The social structure of the Dagaaba is sustained by age and personality of individuals (Yelpaala, 1983).

The implication is that one moves upwards in the structure automatically as one grows, but attainment of a position, for instance as the *yir-nikpéé* (head of a lineage), is determined by an individual's personality traits (Hien, 2019; Yelpaala, 1983). These attributes are imbedded in the norms and values of the community which are passed on through social orientations. A known drunk, for instance, even though he moves up in the social structure by age with his *taabé*, no matter how old, cannot be made a *yir-nikpéé*. Thus, in addition to the age, a Dagao has to be responsible, hardworking, knowledgeable in the culture and tradition of the society and committed to the values of the lineage to become a leader. According to Yelpaala (1983) the *tengan*, *Tengan sob*, *naa* and clanship form the basic social institutions of the Dagaaba. Hien (2019) on the other hand asserts that the *naa* is a foreign position that has been

embraced, an assertion which is corroborated by Lentz (2019). As mentioned earlier, these conflicting positions notwithstanding, the *naa* has become not just part of the social institutions but the head in Dagaaba communities. This was observed while preparing for data collection, in both Lawra and Fielmuo. In both communities, when I asked for the protocol to follow before community entry, I was directed to see the *naa* who is recognised as the head of the community, not the *Tengan sob*. Both Lawra and Fielmuo have embraced institutionalised chieftaincy and the *naa* in their respective communities is now the central authority, not the *nimbéré*. The *naa* also takes directives from the central government in the administration of his community.

The following subsections discuss in more detail how the Dagaaba social institutions are organised. I adhere to Yelapaala's (1983) identification of basic social institutions – as mentioned above – but rather use kinship as departure point – as posited by Hien (2019) – when discussing clanship, both referring to both *yiilo* (patri-clans) and *bélo* (matri-clans). I then discuss the *tengan*, *Tengan sob* and *naa*, and in addition, I also discuss the *pog naa* (queen mother), a more recent institution.

4.1.1 Kinship system

According to Hien (2019), the Dagaaba construct their kinship system from the patri-clans and matri-clans. These are referred to as *yiilo* and *bélo* respectively (Dery et al; 2020, Hien, 2019; Doggu, 2015). The Dagaaba are therefore socially organised under a dual clan system from both father and mother (Dery et al, 2020). Nukunya (2003) asserts that kinship, which is the basis for the organisation of many social groups and relationships, enable one to appreciate traditional societies. Thus, it is one's knowledge of the kinship system that provides an insight into the legitimacy, for instance, of the kin ties of a Dagao. Though kinship is described as relationships derived from blood, marriage or adoption, the Dagaaba in some instances overrule blood relationship, because the legitimacy of one's kin ties lies primarily in a union through the payment of a bride wealth (Doggu, 2015). If a man has not paid the bride wealth of a lady and has a child with her, he cannot lay claims of ownership on the child from that relationship. In this case the child, who by blood should have belonged to the father's kin, would belong to the mother's kin.

This was confirmed during my interview with my contact person in Fielmuo, Mr. Thomas Danikuu, who was born outside of a union. Though he knows the man who fathered him, he belongs to the *Naayiile*, lineage/clan of his mother instead of the *Kusiele*, the father's lineage/clan. He has been raised by the mother's lineage/clan and lives with them because his birth in Dagaaba culture is illegitimate; a bride

wealth was not paid before his birth. Giving further clarification on this, Mr. Yiribo Danikuu, the son of the first chief of Fielmuo (who is also a maternal uncle of Mr. Thomas Danikuu), indicated that if the man who impregnates a woman without the payment of a bride wealth shows commitment towards a union and steps forth to regularise it, the child would be given to him. However, I gathered that most of these situations are often products of a “one-night stand”, there is often no relationship. In an interview on 4 March 2020 with Mr. Yirbaar Kuunaaeguo, one of the elders in Fielmuo, he explained that while schooling, an affair with a lady led to pregnancy and the father went ahead to pay the bride wealth with the argument that he did not want his blood to get lost. Though the family succeeded in getting the child into their lineage/clan, the marriage did not last because there was no relationship between him and the lady. Knowledge of the Dagaaba kinship system therefore puts its construction in perspective.

Nukunya (2003) captures the concept of kinship as follows:

The kinship system prescribes statuses and roles to people who are in particular relationships. It determines the rule, duties and obligations of individuals and groups in all aspects of life in which these individuals and groups interact. Thus it is the kinship system, for instance, which determines where the couple will live after marriage, how property will be transmitted, who succeeds whom and even those who should worship at a particular shrines.

From Nukunya’s submission, kinship establishes one’s identity, responsibilities, rights and entitlements. Relying on my earlier point for illustration, a child born out of an illegitimate union lacks association with his father’s family and so cannot go there to perform duties, contest for any position or demand for anything because he does not belong there. On the other hand, a legitimate child has access to everything in his father’s house and can ascend to positions when they become available in the family. In spite of influences from modernity, the social-cultural pattern of the Dagaaba has not changed (Hien, 2019; Doggu, 2015) since they still rely on them for identification and legitimacy. This assertion was corroborated during my fieldwork, I observed during the female youth FGD, participants who were teenage mothers. They have dropped out of school and are made to marry the young men who impregnated them because (1) the girls’ family do not want the stigma of a ‘*ze yir bie*’ (child born out of wedlock) and (2) the young men’s families do not want to lose their kin.

4.1.2 *Yiilo* (lineage/clan)

This is a patri-clan whose formation is derived from members who can trace their roots to a common male ancestor (Dery et al, 2020; Hien, 2019, Doggu, 2015; Goody, 1962). *Yiilo* is from the word, *yir*

(house, family), it is thus the primary source of identity formation of the Dagaaba. When introducing a Dagao, attention is often paid to the *yiilo* because from that the gathering would be able to relate with the person appropriately. Members of each *yiilo* are seen as siblings, thus among the Dagaaba, a brother does not necessarily mean someone with whom you share the same parents. People from the same patri-clan also share the same totem and praise songs (Tuurey, 1982) and have responsibilities and commitments towards each other (Doggu, 2015). In addition, they enjoy common acquisition and are culpable of common prohibitions (Dery et al, 2020) as such a revelation of one's *yiilo* in a gathering of the Dagaaba is necessary. One of such prohibitions is that members of a *yiilo* cannot marry because it is considered as incest to engage in sexual relationship since they descended from the same ancestor. Thus though I am not from Lawra, I cannot marry a *Berfuore* from that community or any other community for that matter.

I benefited greatly from this during data collection because members of my *yiilo*, the *Berfuore* saw my research as a collective responsibility. When I introduced myself to my contact person in Lawra, the late Mr. George Yasame Sulley, he identified himself as a brother because he is of the same lineage/clan and pointed out the rest of my “brothers” and “sisters”, this made it mandatory for them to assist one of their own. The late Mr. George Yasame Sulley, for instance personally drove me to Tabier, a village closer to the Ghana-Burkina Faso border to get a house where members still use the *neer* (grinding stone). Members of my lineage/clan would have felt guilty if I did not get the needed data for the study due to the Dagaaba's principle of shared benefits and sanctions. This further reiterates my position as an insider within the study as mentioned in chapter 1 (section 1.8).

As the name depicts, it is this lineage/clan that provides shelter to a Dagao as it indicates where an individual comes from. It is further responsible for decisions concerning inheritance of immovable properties such as lands and buildings. Who to participate in functions, rites and rituals of the family is also the responsibility of the *yiilo*, thus it ensures adherence and exclusions. In this regard, certain functions of the Dagaaba, such as digging of grave for burial and participation in the sharing of meat at the final funeral rite, are not opened to the public due to prohibitions.

The *yiilo* is headed by a *yir-nikpée* (clan head) who has the responsibility to maintain the rules and customs. This position is usually held by the oldest man of the oldest generation (Dery et al, 2020). He is assisted by the *yir-nimbéré* (family elders) to make decisions through family meetings, discussions and informal consensus (Dery et al, 2020). Some of the *yiilo* of the Dagaaba are Békuoné, Béninyiné, Berfuoré, Berwuolé, Bimbigle, Bowaale, Dikpiélé, Gané, Gbaané, Hayaré, Kusiele, Métuolé, Naayiile,

Nabéglé, Sapeele and Zemuule. These lineage/clan cut across speakers of Northern Dagaare, that explains why I found my “brothers” and “sisters” in Lawra even though I am from Fielmuo.

The *yiilo* is expected to raise members who are knowledgeable in the traditions and cultural practices of the Dagaaba to ensure continuity. For this reason, every member of the clan is mandated to participate in traditional performances such as marriage and funeral rites. The former ensures continuity of the lineage and the latter a relationship between the living and the dead. In this regard the *yiilo* expected every male, until Catholicism was introduced, (priests of the Catholic Church do not marry), to marry. To guarantee this, it is a tradition that the father pays the dowry of the son. I also believe this was put in place to ensure that no one uses inability to afford bride wealth as an excuse not to marry. With the exception of a member of a *yiilo*, who is a Catholic priest, every male is mandated to marry. The marriage places a man in a category of responsible men, people who would be called upon to deliberate and mediate on issues concerning the community. To avoid being taunted as irresponsible, every male answers the traditional call of marriage. In my interviews and during focus group discussion, except for the youth who were still in school, comments and reactions from the men established that they were either married or are widowers.

In its mandate to nurture clan members to be knowledgeable in the culture and traditions for continuity, the role of the *yiilo* is prominent during funeral performance. The belief that the dead continues to have a relationship with the living is expressed through funeral rites to facilitate it. The Dagaaba express great commitment and effort in bidding farewell to the dead. A member of a *yiilo* is required to participate in this collective rite to ensure that everything, such as digging of the grave to serve as shelter for the dead and contributing resources for the performance of the funeral, required to create a cordial relationship between the living and the dead is honoured. One’s absence, thus non-participation could lead to an incomplete or invalid performance which could cost the entire *yiilo*. In a society where benefits and sanctions are shared, no one would want to be the source of hardship for the group. The *yiilo* thus necessitates participation of every traditional performance that brings group cohesion. This lies in the principle of reciprocity, members of the lineage/clan rely on each other for the execution of tasks and responsibilities. Thus, the support from each other in time of need binds and strengthens the lineage/clan. My observation at a funeral, during the fieldwork showed total commitment to this reciprocity. Mourners, especially clan members, spent the night, in the open, no matter the weather conditions, keeping the bereaved company, and ‘guarding’ the corpse. In a conversation with a mourner (a member of the same clan of the deceased) who had travelled across the border from Burkina Faso to attend the funeral, she

explained that she had also enjoyed similar support when she was bereaved. Details of how lineage/clan participate in funeral rites is discussed in chapter 5 (section 5.1.4).

4.1.3 *Bélo* (descent group)

This is a group which is traced exclusively through females (Hien, 2019; Yelapaala, 1983). In their analysis of the etymology of the name *bélo* which means deceit or an imitation, Dery et al (2020) argue that this relationship is not “real” as depicted in the name. Members are not related by blood though they see themselves as relatives, but unlike the *yiilo* they can intermarry. According to Dery et al (2020), this group’s genealogy cannot be traced since its formation is based on myth. Their argument finds basis in Dabire (in Hien, 2019) who indicates that the descent group was formed out of names given to daughters of the first woman on earth. Hien (2019), however provides another etymology of *bélo*. He submits that the name is derived from *bél* (to look or observe) and was said to be an exclamation, *maa me suome dog* (this baby is mine), by the first woman, implying that the baby resembles her and belongs to her after giving birth to her daughter. Thus, it is believed that the first descent group *Somé* is a short form of *suom*.

The etymology notwithstanding, literature on *bélo* (Dery et al, 2020; Hien, 2019; Doggu, 2015; Yelapaala, 1983) all point to the same description, a descent group whose origin is based on a mythology has no monitoring and regulatory significance like the *yiilo*. Though members relate with one another and will support each other, there is no defined leadership as found in the *yiilo*, for this reason its organisation and survival has been the solidarity of members. There are seven (7) descent groups namely *Somé*, *Dabire*, *Somda*, *Kpogda*, *Kambire*, *Meda* and *Hien*. However, I observed during data collection that the Lawra community have compressed all the ‘*da*’, that is *Dabire*, *Somda*, *Kpogda* and *Meda* as one group making the descent group in Lawra four (4) instead of the seven (7) found in Fielmuo and most Dagaaba communities. The function of the *bélo* is the recognition of the role of the woman in the social organisation of the Dagaaba, one’s *bélo* is derived from a mother. I am a *Kpogda* because of my mother.

4.1.4 *Tengan*

In the Dagaaba worldview, there is a supernatural force which controls the productivity and fertility of the land and this is what is referred to as *tengan* (earth/land shrine) (Yelapaala, 1983). Hien (2019:14) refers to the *tengan* as the spirit of the village territory who judges the living on earth. It is the belief that the *tengan*, as a supernatural force, has the power to bless the adherent and to punish those who violate norms. Each *teng* thus has a *tengan* signified by an idol usually placed in a grove where sacrifices are offered intermittently to ensure a balanced relationship between members of the community and the

supernatural force (Yelpaala, 1983). According to Dery et al (2020), the *tengan* united the various clans in a *teng* under the *Tengan sob* who is the mediator between the living and the spirit world.

As a supernatural force the Dagaaba accorded the *tengan* with the necessary reverence and abided by all the rules and regulations associated with land use. This worldview of the Dagaaba has, however, been influenced by Christianity. The majority of the Dagaaba who got converted to Catholicism and recently also other religious denominations have withdrawn from practices and activities with regards to the *tengan* because they believe in God as the creator and owner of the universe. In my interview with the chief of Birifoh, Naa Debomo Gandaa, who is a traditional practitioner on 10 December 2021, he bemoaned how the youth have left the “ways of our forefathers”. Similarly, Mr. Lèè Kuunyaa, the *Tengan sob* of Fielmuo also mentioned in my interview with him how Catholicism influenced the belief system of the Dagaaba. It is also the belief of the Christians that it is God who blesses them with produce from the earth.

Presently there is division of opinions among the Dagaaba with regards to the existence and role of the *tengan* in their lives. For instance, in Lawra, while practitioners of traditional religion, who are in the minority, (26%) compared to 61% of Christians (as captured in chapter 3, section 3.5.2) still revere and adhere to its demands, the educated and those who have converted to Christianity think otherwise. For instance, one of my participants in Lawra, a member of the Jehovah Witness church, quoted Bible verses in his responses to questions regarding indigenous performances to support why his congregation do not engage in indigenous performances. This example also supports the comments of Mr. Lèè Kuunyaa, the *Tengan sob* of Fielmuo, who said that the missionaries referred to indigenous performance as *setaana*, (satanic) a remark he believes changed the mindset of the Dagaaba. Thus, the new education from church and classroom has diminished the once imposing figure of the *tengan*. As indicated earlier the Dagaaba initially embraced the *tengan* as their benefactor and protector, as such occupied an important position in the minds, however, the change in their belief system and education has equally changed the Dagaaba’s mindset regarding the *tengan*. Presently the chiefs, and the *Tengan dem*, per their roles in the society to uphold the traditional practices and few community members per the data available are adherents of the *tengan*.

4.1.5 *Tengan sob*

He is the priest of the *tengan*. The etymology of *Tengan sob* (owner of the land) makes him the political head of a *teng*. (Dery et al, 2020; Hien, 2019; Doggu, 2015; Abdul-Korah, 2011). Yelpaala (1983)

submits that this position is held by a family or household which founded a *teng*. This thus supports the literature that the *Tengan sob* is the political head of the Dagaaba since the one who founds a community, leads it. As the founder, the *Tengan sob* had to be approached for permission before one could dwell in the *teng*. However, this function has fallen away with the emergence of the Town and Country Planning Department of the district assemblies and estate developers. The district assemblies are now responsible for issuing permits for people to build houses or set up businesses, thus one cannot build – even on his own land – when this authorisation has not been given. Also, people mostly rely on estate developers to either buy lands or houses from, they do not come into contact with the *Tengan sob* anymore.

Tengan sob has therefore become a hereditary position held by male members of the family which founded the said settlement. As the priest, it is his responsibility to see to the adherence of rules and regulations set at the founding of the *teng* and the use of the land. He performs yearly thanksgiving offering to the *tengan* to show appreciation and in case of any abominable act, performs purification rites to cleanse the *teng*. Until recently, his primary and most significant function was land administration as indicated earlier. There was even a rite (*něb-zie*) he performed before showing boundaries of land to a settler. According to Hien (2019) this ritual was done to appease the spirit of the land. Dabire (in Hien, 2019:60-61) gives an account of the procedure;

Whoever requests a piece of land for economic need, begins by giving a symbolic offering to the *Tengan sob*; a white hen and a four-legged animal ‘*duw sěbla*’, usually a young ram. *Tengan sob* makes the sacrifice to the spirit of the land with the hen, then leads the postulants into unoccupied ground. His back turned to the already occupied plots, he indicates with a gesture of the hand the part to occupy. It is the rite of *něb-zie* which consists of a march ahead of the *Tengan sob* followed by his assessors, the land seekers end the queue. While walking he indicates the landmarks of what he concedes. Boundaries are often trees, crevices, mountains, streams or land already developed.

This description of the process of land application, allocation and acquisition demonstrates the authority the *Tengan sob* had and his role in land administration among the Dagaaba. The *Tengan sob*’s role as the priest of the *tengan* and mediator between spirits and the living manifest in the provision of the items for sacrifice by the applicant and the performance of the rite. However, this rite is rarely performed due to reasons pointed out earlier. It is mostly practitioners of traditional religion who still adhere to most of these practices.

As the custodian of the land, it was the responsibility of the *Tengan sob* to establish and validate boundaries when there were disputes (Yelpaala, 1983). But as indicated earlier, change has resulted in

the loss of most of the authority of the *Tengan sob*. The Land Commission now has the authority to register lands belonging to both state and individuals as such plots acquired has to be authenticated by the commission which thus has the prerogative to determine the rightful owner of any disputed land. If the commission is unable to, then redress is sought in the court of law.

With the change that has taken place, most of the political authorities of the *Tengan sob* have faded but in discussing the social organisation of the Dagaaba one cannot ignore the role he played in unifying the diverse clans of the Dagaaba before the institutionalisation of most of his functions. What remains is his religious authority which he exerts and demonstrates during traditional ceremonies such as the *Kob bené* and *Kukur-bagr* festivals in Lawra and Fielmuo respectively. He still performs his role as the priest and also does consultation for community members who belief in the *tengan*. In my interviews with Mr. Delle Mwaarekuu and Mr. Lëë Kuunyaa, the *Tengan dem* of Lawra and Fielmuo respectively, they submitted that they no longer play political roles. If they did, they would have been present in the composition of the traditional councils of the two communities. They confirmed, however, that their religious functions remain intact for adherents of traditional practices and occasions such as festivals where they need to perform certain religious rites.

4.1.6 *Naa*

As already discussed in section 4.1, the position of the *naa* in the social organisation of the Dagaaba is a contested one. The predominant argument put forth is that the *naa* is new among the Dagaaba (Hien, 2019; Lentz, 2019), a post that was instituted by the British colonial administration to facilitate the system of indirect rule (Yelpaala, 1983).

According to Lentz (2019), most Dagaaba recall the position of the *naa* with repulsion, with the exception of families who benefited during the colonial rule. This is because the *naa* were seen as sell outs, enabling the colonial administration to succeed with their mission. During the colonial rule, the chiefs were responsible (among other things) for collecting taxes from their subjects for onward transfer to the administrator in Tamale who in turn sent it to the governor in Accra. Apart from the challenges in raising the monies, defaulters were severely punished. The Dagaaba were therefore no fans of the *naa* and by extension, the chieftaincy institution because of the role of the *naa* in the perpetration of these acts. Unfamiliar with central governance, the Dagaaba struggled to cope with the centralised power and authority vested in him by the colonial administration to often force community members to provide free labour to the household of the *naa* (Yelpaala, 1983). Though it is not strange for the Dagaaba to provide

free labour, as it was one of the means by which they assisted each other to cultivate large acres of land, the approach of being forced to serve was a flashback of slavery. It is recorded that one Babatu, a slave raider, terrorised the Dagaaba (Lentz, 1993) before the arrival of the British. A respondent in Fielmuo also narrated how his great grandfather fled Burkina Faso to settle in Ghana because of Denyuu, a tyrant *naa*.

The *naa* was instituted and empowered by the colonial administration but they also indulged in excesses at the time, enabled by the colonial police (Yelpaala, 1983). But when Ghana attained independence, the *naa* lost much of this power especially as many of the functions such as administration, security, legislation and justice have been taken over by the central government. It is now the responsibility of the Ghana Police Service to oversee security matters in Ghana. For this reason, there are police stations in both Lawra and Fielmuo to ensure the safety of community members. The parliament of Ghana also enacts laws to regulate and guide actions and behaviours while the judicial service deals with litigations and every legal issue.

Though the *naa* was instituted by the British and now found in the social institution of the Dagaaba, there have been limitations to his power and authority. This happened after Ghana's attainment of independence and the adoption of democratic governance. A submission by the Tabier *naa*, Saabom Sogyang III during my interview with him corroborated the limitations of the power and authority of the *naa*. He indicated that often the police or human rights advocates come to the aid of deviants in their communities, who, if not for change in the system of governance of a *teng*, should have faced sanctions prescribed by tradition. In his view the powers of the traditional institutions have been stripped off due to democratic governance. Thus, the *naa*, though a central authority in his *teng*, takes instructions from the central government through the district administration, the police and other government agencies.

This was evident while I was collecting data. In 2020, at the rise of the Covid-19 pandemic, the president of Ghana, Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo in an effort to contain the spread of the virus declared nationwide restrictions such as a ban on social gatherings and closure of schools. This was adhered to and enforced by all traditional heads including Naa Puowele Karbo III of Lawra. I observed that preparations were far advanced for the funeral of Mr. George Yasamé Sulley, (my contact person in Lawra) a member of the traditional council but it was called off. Presently the power and authority the *naa* exerts in the community is largely from personal attributes. These qualities are what endear him to community members for them to accord him the Dagaaba's traditional respect where an elder is not bypassed. For instance, traditionally the *naa* is the one to be approached for resolution of any disagreement

or conflict between community members. However, with the roles of the police and the judicial service, most prefer to go there rather than the palace. But a *naa* who has won the confidence of his subjects due to his personal attributes still gets community members affording him that protocol.

The *naa* aids in traditional performances through the observance of annual festivals and funeral rites. Festivals are celebrated to either commemorate the exploits of a community to validate their identity or as a thanksgiving for a good harvest. It is the responsibility of the *naa* to continuously celebrate festivals to keep memories of who they are as a group and how far they have come. Being an occasion to exhibit exploits and identity, every traditional performance associated with the Dagaaba, with the exception of marriage and funeral rites are showcased at festivals. Though the *naa* cannot force people to participate, group solidarity and loyalty to a good personality at the helm of affairs of the community ensures involvement in the celebrations of the *Kɔ bené* and *Kukur-bagr*. The *naa* in Lawra and Fielmuo per tradition are the hosts of their community's festivals; the *Kɔ bené* and *Kukur-bagr*, as such, they ensure that the festivals are organised annually, except for a directive from the central government stating otherwise. The *naa* from the study communities perform similar roles with regards to traditional matters such as family disputes, marital settlement, and disagreement in payment of dowry. However, Naa Puowele Karbo III has his divisional and sub-chiefs who help in the periphery communities, he is only brought into the picture when these chiefs are unable to solve the problem. According to the late Naa Dr. Francis Danikuu, though the police and judicial service have taken over most of their functions, community members still prefer the alternative dispute resolution often headed by the chief. He explained that cost of legal fees, should a dispute be processed to court, discourages community members from going to the police with disputes. What the *naa* does not do is to preside over criminal matters, such as murder and rape. The *naa* attends funerals in his capacity as a leader of a community and often as an invited guest. Even when he is bereaved, community members who come to the funeral accord him the respect as a chief in mourning. The difference in the roles of the Lawra *naa* and that of Fielmuo lies in the rank. Naa Puowele Karbo III being a paramount chief may delegate some of his divisional or sub-chiefs to attend funerals on his behalf. However, the late Naa Dr. Francis Danikuu delegated his elders, something he did often because he resided outside the community due to his career as a faculty member of the University for Development Studies, Tamale.

4.1.7 Pog naa

The *pog naa* (queen mother) is an even more recent addition to the status role in the social institution of the Dagaaba than the *naa*. As mentioned before, traditionally women were not included in decision

making in matters concerning a *teng* due to the patriarchal nature of the Dagaaba. Although this seems to be shifting, I did observe during data collection that not every Dagaaba community has embraced this new status. I noted that Fielmuo for instance has no *pog naa*. On the other hand, Lawra which is a paramountcy and one of the early communities to have embraced the chieftaincy institution have *pognamine* (queen mothers). I therefore had the privilege of interviewing four (4) of them. They are Fuunaayel Karbo I (Lawra *pog naa*), Maamuora Sando I, (Nayaari *pog naa*), Tengzuyele Dogkudomo I (Lyssah *pog naa*) and Enpaaemwin Tang I (Gbengbee *pog naa*). Their titles (the first) bear evidence that they are the maiden occupants of the stool, a confirmation of the newness of the concept among the Dagaaba.

Despite not every community having a *pog naa*, their presence in the social institution now demonstrates the change the Dagaaba have embraced. In my interview with them, the *pognamine* explained that their primary role is to represent the voices of women which have been absent in a social organisation that has been predominantly male oriented. A situation which made most issues concerning women (for instance, the high cost of bride wealth) not deliberated on. According to the *pognamine* the root of maltreatment of Dagaaba women in their marital homes has been the high cost of bride wealth. The men considered women as commodities they purchased and therefore their properties which can be handled the way they deem fit. Unfortunately, tradition, which has been designed and managed by the men, makes it difficult for a woman to return to her father's house even when maltreated. In Dagaaba tradition, a wife can only come back to her father's house after the bride wealth has been returned to the husband. A condition which is often impossible to meet because the bride wealth revolves, a brother of the bride gets to use it to pay for his bride. Thus, in a family where males outnumber females, a daughter who is being maltreated cannot be 'saved' because the family might not have enough cows left. According to the *pognamine*, another reason for not returning the bride wealth is as a social control measure, to ensure that other women are not encouraged to return to their fathers' houses at the least provocation. In Fielmuo, I encountered a participant whose brothers did not allow her to return to the father's house when she left her matrimonial home. According to her, the brothers argued that she would be a bad influence on their wives should they allow her in. She is presently living on her own outside of the family home, this further attests to the change that has swept through Dagaaba land.

In communities where *pog naa* exists, her role is to compliment the *naa* to some extent, in the governing of the *teng*. She liaises between the traditional council and the women in matters affecting women of the community and functions as an intermediary between the women and the traditional council. Like

children who usually make their requests through mothers to their fathers, women now channel their concerns and grievances through the *pog naa*. I gathered from my interview with Tenzuylele Dogkudomo I (Lyssah *pog naa*) that forums are often held to deliberate on issues concerning women and their daughters. This is not to say that the sons are left out, but the social structure of the Dagaaba already caters for the males, hence the need to create a better space for the females through negotiations with the system. The outcome of the deliberations is then presented to the traditional council for discussion and redress. Where they lack the expertise, the *pognamine* extend invitations to professionals/specialists to provide information and education on issues such as domestic and human rights, abuse and income generating ventures to empower the women.

Traditionally among the Dagaaba, marriage is the pride of every woman who has not vowed to stay single as the nuns of the Catholic Church do. In fact, any maiden who shows disinterest would be tagged with several unprintable names. The interest in marriage is to ensure procreation and subsequent increase in the lineage. For this reason, mothers – some of whom are the *pognamine* – aid the *yiilo* to ensure that marriage rites are performed. Though traditionally women are not involved in marriage negotiations, mothers nurture and train their daughters to be suitable for a family to desire her for a wife. In this regard, the *pognamine*, representing women, are active participants in the traditional performance of marriage rites. Similarly, as representatives of women, they contribute immensely during funeral performances by brewing *pito* and cooking to serve the mourners. Primarily women are composers of songs used in the accompaniment of most of the traditional dances.

4.2 Social control mechanisms of the Dagaaba

The quest to meet diverse human needs and desires at any given time would have resulted in chaos in communities if there were no systems in place for monitoring actions and behaviours. According to Nukunya (2003), groups (communities) work hard to build a reputation and will do everything to guard it from being smeared; thus, in every group, there are often processes of socialisation, persuasions and sanctions to ensure that members conform to standards that set them apart as a group. Socialisation of values and norms of a society usually starts from childhood to guarantee that the individual is equipped with the knowledge which would enable adherence. This socialisation results in a bond between an individual and the society that offers it; it becomes like an umbilical cord which attaches the individual to the group and through which the person gets nourished with knowledge systems to function as a community member. As long as the cord is in place and the individual relies on and feeds through it, conformity of group's norms and values is guaranteed. Hirschi (in Costello & Laub 2020) asserts that an

individual becomes a delinquent when his bond to his society is weak or broken. Thus, one conforms based on the existence and strength of a bond. Bartol & Bartol (2011:5) add to this point of view when they submit that weakness in ties to conventional order or normative standards stimulates an individual to be delinquent and commit crimes. Thus, social controls can therefore be considered laws, rules and regulations put in place as measures to safeguard the reputation of a group and keep members in line not to deviate from the norms.

Social control theory advanced by Hirschi in (Costello & Laub, 2020), Bartol & Bartol (2011) and Pratt et al (2011) asserts that socialisation, persuasion and sanctions are not enough for conformity. Rather the bond that individuals form during the process of socialisation determines whether they would conform or not. Among these are attachment and commitment. According to this social control theory, when individuals develop affection for others or institutions, they become emotionally connected and sensitive to others' opinions and as such would not do anything contrary. (Pratt et al, 2011:58). Thus, a psychological attachment to an individual or institution can lead to loyalty, which manifest, for instance, in a relationship between a mentor and a mentee or an alumna and her alma mater. Though a lot of people pass through an institution, there are varying relationships due to the type of bond each alumnus formed while there. An attachment to an institution would lead an individual to uphold the values even as an alumna. On the other hand, one who did not form this bond would not make any effort to protect the integrity of the institution, there is no connection.

Pratt et al (2011) add further that commitment to long term goals motivates people to conform to rules and regulations of a group. For instance, in ascension to a stool, each member of the royal lineage qualifies, but a candidate's character would disqualify him. Someone who has been involved in a treasonous act, a thief, rapist or murderer cannot ascend the throne. Therefore, any member of the royal household who has the goal of becoming a chief would conform to social order and restrain himself from deviant behaviour to enable accomplishment. Thus, one's commitment to achieving a goal becomes a motivating factor to conform but not necessarily the socialisation he received.

The Dagaaba like most societies have some mechanisms in place to guide members so as not to put the group in disrepute as they navigate to achieve their life goals. There are therefore some prohibitions and actions which serve as checks among the Dagaaba, which I will briefly discuss.

4.2.1 *Kyiuro* (Taboos)

In my interview with participants in Lawra and Fielmuo, it was established that one of the ways by which the Dagaaba society achieved balance among members and between the living and spirits was the institution of prohibitions, *kyiuro*. According to Adu-Gyamfi (2011), *kyiuro* are systems of forbidden acts that community members adhere to. On his part, the late Mr. George Yasamé Sulley added that these systems, controlled stratification. It does not matter who you are, once you belong to the said community you are under obligation to adhere to laid down rules and regulations of the Dagaaba. This I observed during my interaction with Naa Puowele Karbo III; though a paramount chief, he is not excused from *kyiuro* of the Kusiele, his *yiilo*, neither does he overrule ritual directives from the *Tengan sob*. Adamu, (2019) in his contribution to the discussion on *kyiuro* indicated that they are unwritten social rules that guide human behaviour. It has also been identified by social control theories (Costello & Laub, 2020; Sampson & Laub, 1993) that the bond between an individual and social relations enables conformity. This is based on either emotional attachment or commitment, thus one's bond with a society would promote adherence to *kyiuro*.

Among the Dagaaba, there are *kyiuro* against incest, murder, and sexual intercourse in the bush. It has been discussed earlier that the *tengan* is a spiritual entity from which produce are obtained for sustenance, therefore it must be accorded reverence. Any form of denigration with reference to the land is sacrilegious and attracts banishment from the community (Doggu, 2015). It is therefore a *kyiuro* to have sexual intercourse in the bush as it is believed that this act is a defilement of the land which could initiate a succession of calamities such as unexplained deaths, drought, poor harvest and famine. Whenever communities experience unusual occurrences, (like the afore mentioned) a visit is made to the *Tengan sob* to consult and determine the cause and the responsible culprit. An exposé may lead to a sacrifice, cleansing, or banishment, depending on the prescribed sanction.

There is also a *kyiuro* called *Takɔ daa*, in honour of the *tengan*, a prohibition connected to the land (Kuupuo, 2005). This, is a day set aside for people not to engage in any activity related to agriculture. It is believed that calamity will befall anyone who flouts this prohibition (the *Takɔ daa* will be discussed again in detail in chapter 5). There is a similar prohibition among the Fante, Nzema and Ga, communities along the coastal belt of Ghana whose source of livelihood is fishing. They also believe that the sea is a god/supernatural being who can improve their economic status (Kingsley et al, 2019). Based on this belief, there are prohibitions in these fishing communities to ensure that members do not offend the sea which they believe will attract punishment. Among several taboos surrounding the occupation, there is

a restraint on fishing on Tuesdays, a day they believe the sea god needs to rest from the disturbances caused by the fishing activities. Thus, the *Tako daa* of the Dagaaba is one among several belief systems of cultures in Ghana. Though these practices may be seen as superstitious to non-believers in traditional beliefs, the no fishing among the fishing folks helps in rebreeding of fishes while the *Tako daa* allows the land to regenerate. There has been accounts of how farmers who flouted the *Tako daa* suffered one misfortune or another with regards to their crops (Kuupuo, 2005).

There is also *kyiuro* to honour the sanctity of marriage. To control promiscuity, married women are not permitted to be flirtatious with other men. It is believed that any woman who commits adultery and fails to confess (for the necessary rite to be performed) will die. Also, if a wife engages in sex with another man and cooks for the husband, the husband will die. Though I do not subscribe to adultery, this is an example of how tradition perpetuates discrimination against women among the Dagaaba. It would have been fair if this *kyiuro* was for both the wife and husband. When I probed, Mr. Lèè Kuunyaa, the *Tengan sob* of Fielmuo, explained that it has to do with the dowry; since it is the man who marries the woman, he thus has the backing of tradition to protect and secure his union. Also, notable: this is a society that practiced polygamous marriage and therefore the man had the right to as many women as he desired. It was the advent of Christianity which preached against polygamous marriage.

To instil the value of responsibility towards parents in community members, there are different *kyiuro* for sons and daughters, again a manifestation of a society that has gender prescribed roles. These prohibitions are embedded in the performance of funerals and maintenance of tombs. While it is the responsibility of sons to honour their parents with a befitting burial, the repair of the tombs is the work of daughters. A befitting burial facilitates a smooth transition from the world of the living to that of the dead. It is therefore an obligation to give a suitable funeral to one's parent. One of the rituals to demonstrate one's respect for parents is to kill a cow and share the meat with the *yiilo*. Failure to do this excludes an individual from participating in the rite of sharing meat during a funeral ceremony of another. It is believed that if an individual does not honour his father but participates in the honour being bestowed on another, the spirit of the dead will kill him. When I probed, instances were cited in Fielmuo of people who presumably died as a result of flouting this prohibition, as to whether they were coincidence or not, cannot be proven. But as a social control mechanism with such assumed dire consequences, no one would want to disobey.

The Dagaaba believe in life after death and as such give reverence to the dead. For this reason, tombs of the departed are often repaired to keep them in good shape, thus maintaining the shelter of the departed.

The maintenance of the tombs are also an expression of the relationship between the dead and the living. It is therefore not a public exercise; it is a private affair which demonstrates one's respect for the dead. The Dagaaba's value system encourages communal living but it abhors irresponsible life. The communal life could have permitted anyone to repair a dilapidated tomb, but this could have encouraged those responsible for doing it to shirk their responsibility. An unrepaired tomb is considered evidence of irresponsible behaviour of daughters of a deceased and a dent to a family's name. This was corroborated during my data collection in Fielmuo when I passed by a burial ground. There was an elderly woman who was renovating a tomb and I wished to assist because it was a tedious exercise; gathering cow dung, sand, fetching of water and mixing them into mortar. She showed appreciation for my intentions but when I answered her that I have never done it before, she explained I could not help her. According to her, I can honour another in respect of tomb repairs only after I have done that of my parent. It is believed that helping with tomb repairs of another indicates a desire in a relationship with the dead and this could facilitate a death in my family.

Incest, murder, sex in the bush, *Tako daa*, adultery and relationship with the dead are general *kyiir* which cuts across most Dagaaba communities but there are ones expressed through totems by the various clans. Thus, as a Dagao I am obligated to observe the broad *kyiir* of the Dagaaba but as a member of the *Berfuoré* clan, there are additional prohibitions I need to adhere to.

4.2.2 Dumé (Totems)

The origin of *dumé* (totems) of the Dagaaba is shrouded in mystery. Literature points to how animals and vegetation at various points came to the rescue of the Dagaaba when the lives of members of various clans were threatened (Dery, et al, 2020; Adamu, 2019; Hien, 2019; Doggu, 2015; Aalangdong et al, 2010; Yelapaala, 1983). In their discussions of *dumé*, Dery et al (2020) trace the beginning of the Dagaaba's emotional attachment to either animals or vegetation to the period of *bong* (slave raid). According to their account, animals or shrubs provided an escape for clan members when they were being chased by slave raiders. Thus, in reverence, members of that clan is forbidden to kill or destroy that particular animal or vegetation. They are considered as non-human relatives (Dery et al, 2020).

Conservationists on the other hand go beyond the mystical explanation to embrace the prohibition as it helps in protecting wildlife. They observe that these preventions are indigenous forms of conservation (Adamu, 2019; Aalangdong et al, 2010; Ntiamoa-Baidu, 2000). It is noted that during hunting, clans would prevent other clan members from killing its totems and to prevent totem animals from being killed,

hunting expeditions were organised by clans (Tengan, 1994). From the list of totems, most of them are wildlife that are getting extinct hence the interest of conservationists in the prohibitions.

Table 1 list a few of the clans and their *dumé* and the reasons for prohibition as discussed by Dery et al (2020) and Aalangdong (2010).

Table 1: Selected clans, their *dumé* and the reason for prohibition

Clan	Totem	Reason for prohibition
Gane	Leopard	Attacked and killed a slave raider chasing a member leading to an escape.
Bimbige	Vulture	The body of a member who died while escaping from a slave raider was found days later when they saw vultures circling in the sky. Thus the vultures led them to their relative.
Berfuole	Squirrel and <i>Ganzuwe</i> (a clustered plant)	While the squirrel burrowed an opening for them to escape from a hole they were buried in while running from slave raiders, the “ <i>ganzuwe</i> ’ provided a hide out for them in a similar situation. As such squirrels are not killed neither is the wood from the “ <i>ganzuwe</i> ’ burnt.
Kusiele	Wild cat	Covered the footprints of members escaping from slave raisers, making it impossible

		for them to be traced by the raiders.
Benyiine	Porcupine	Elders of this clan hid from slave raiders in a cave and by divine providence a porcupine laid across the entrance to the cave which stopped the slave raiders from entering.

If a member of a clan kills or destroys any of the non-human relatives by accident, it has to be reported for a ritual to be performed else there would be calamity. It is also believed that when any of these animals enters a household it is a sign of either a departure of a member to the next world, or an addition of a member through birth. In both communities, participants' responses showed that they still hold onto the belief but change in circumstances has necessitated a relax of the prohibitions. According to Mr. Thomas Danikuu, the *Kusiele* clan had fresh water fish as a totem, clan members were prohibited from eating it. Initially it was possible to adhere to the prohibition, but when migration, schooling and work sent indigenes outside their communities, where they could not get the *kal* (*dawadawa*, a protein spice used as an alternative for fish or meat), they were permitted to eat. Mr. Thomas Danikuu emphasised however, that members could eat it outside of the community because of the need but are not permitted to eat it in Dagaaba land. Also, expansion of communities, that is, clearing of forest for estate development has made most of these totemic animals to move farther from human habitat.

4.2.3 *Langne* (Dirges)

Langne as a verbal art form is explained as elegiac poetry or lament by Boadi (2013). In his analysis of the dirge, Boadi (2013) traces its origin from the Latin word *dirigere* which means to lead or direct. Dirges are used to express one's feelings in moments of grief. Thus, a dirge is a song of sorrow performed at funerals, an action that cuts across cultures. However, the nature, organisation, purpose and performance of a dirge differ among cultures. Hien (2019:89) asserts that *langne* implies to gather together to mourn which further supports the communal nature of the Dagaaba's life. Based on the verbal eloquence associated with its performance, Doggu (2015:135) describes the *langne* as the apex of Dagaaba oral culture. Like most verbal art performance, to compose a *langne* requires knowledge of

indigenous systems of a society, as well as the history and genealogy of the deceased and his lineage. Dankwa (2018:210) captures the essence of the *langne* among the Dagaaba as follows

The performance of the *langne* involves a very delicate verbal activity conducted through music, and it utilizes texts on subjects relevant to the death at hand. Its texts may focus on the deceased, surviving lineage, and moral issues among others. The *langne* is not only meant to mourn or praise the dead, but also criticisms and condemnations are allowed, even expected in the rendition. Therefore one of its primary functions is to offer public commentary on personal, social and ritual matters pertinent to the funeral. The text may suggest a cause or assign blame for the death, predict, chastise, insinuate, and may involve the deceased, the lineage, and individuals or whoever, always to restate and reaffirm norms of the Dagaaba way of life. The *langne*, thus reflects the society's social conscience on the death that has occurred.

Primarily, a funeral is to bid farewell and pave the way for a smooth transition to the next world. However, the *langne* gives an account of the deceased and the family's output in the community, the good, bad and ugly; nothing is censored. The existence of *langne* during funerals, which is a public performance, therefore acts as social control measure within the community. *Langne* remains a key element in a funeral performance of the Dagaaba as such it continuous to be performed as discussed in chapter two (2). At a funeral attended in Fielmuo, mourners and clan members took turns as they arrived at the funeral ground and performed the *langne*.

4.2.4 Songs

As discussed already in chapter two (2), the use of songs as a social control mechanism is widely documented (Hien, 2019; Dankwa, 2018; John, 2017; Akurugu, 2017; Musiyiwa, 2013, Nanbigne, 2003). As captured in chapter two (2) in Akurugu's (2017) study, a composer indicated how the estranged husband stopped his verbal abuse when she threatened to compose a song out of his behaviour. The premise upon which I argue that play and work songs contribute to upholding the social structure therefore lies in community members' knowledge of their efficacy in unveiling behaviour and their strive to guard their reputation and that of their kinsmen. The fear of constantly hearing one's name, actions or family in lyrics serves as a check in behaviour in communities. The Dagaaba use *nuru loba* (plays songs) and *neer zu yielu* (work song) as part of social control. Though women are not specifically mentioned in the discussion of the social structure (Hien, 2019; Yelapaala, 1983), they are found at every level; as girls among the *bibiir*, maidens in the *pole*, and women whose male counterparts are the *nimberε*. If not for the performance of *neer zu yielu* women who are wives of the *nimberε* and mothers of the *bibiir* and *pole*

arguably would have lost their sanity, and their dependants, the children and husbands would have suffered the consequences. The impact of a matriarch who is absent or unable to function goes beyond the immediate family; it affects the clan as well. As pointed out earlier there is a principle of collective responsibility, shared benefit and sanctions of the Dagaaba. Findings regarding the songs will be discussed in detail in chapter five (5) and six (6).

4.3 Conclusion

Traditional performances express the intentions of the Dagaaba either to initiate a process of lineage expansion and growth, usher a group member to the afterlife or entertain each other for group solidarity. These performances, no matter the intentions are organised by a group of people, guided by norms and categorised to ensure appropriate execution of tasks. The social structure can be likened to a production plant which supplies the various organisations of the Dagaaba with personnel to contribute to the general good of the community. As a plant, the social structure requires nutrients for nourishment to constantly produce and supply quality personnel else there would be malfunctioning in the various social organisations. Social control mechanisms are the nourishing agents for the sustenance of the social structure of the Dagaaba. The rules and regulations are designed to ensure adherence to norms of the groups to guarantee social cohesion. Observance of these norms is aided by the bond an individual has with the group he belongs to, and as long as this bond is not broken, adherence is assured.

The *bibiir* who occupy the basic level of the Dagaaba social organisational structure are responsible for household chores like fetching of water and certain basic farm tasks such as warding off birds from pecking at crops. I observed that it is the duty of the male children to trap termites through a composition of cow dung and dry grass for domestic birds while the girls fetched water. This has been the practice from the past, but in some households where children are not at home, (due to schooling or work), the adults performed these tasks. This engagement by the *bibiir* reduces the workload of the adults which enables the adults function effectively at their designations. It is the *bibiir* that guarantee the survival of the group as they move up the ladder of the structure. Assigning roles to the *bibiir* therefore prepares them for their future and the next level in the community structure.

Next in line are the *pole* who gets groomed to be handed the baton of the *nimberε* to assume leadership roles of the group. In view of this, they are mentored by the adults, often through delegation of roles to equip them with the needed knowledge and skills and also ascertain their capability and readiness to assume leadership roles in the group. The apex of the structure is occupied by the *nimberε*, who are the

administrators of the organisation. It is their responsibility to ensure the training of group members to guarantee conformity to norms. It is the execution of these roles – training members to be knowledgeable of the dos and don'ts of the group – that validates sanctions for violating established rules.

These sanctions can be expressed through the performance of *langne* at funerals where the *langkone* relies on deviant behaviour as content for his composition, though those who adhere to social norms are also praised. To avoid these sanctions at funerals which are public ceremonies, kinsmen are cautious not to fall foul of the norm. Play and work songs can serve a similar function as the *langne* where composers, based on happenings in the community, compose songs as checks to ensure that those who have fallen out of line are brought back in line to ensure social cohesion.

Kyiiro instituted by the *nimberε* constitutes a major social control mechanism of the Dagaaba community which ensures compliance of group actions. The *kyiiro* prohibiting adultery guarantees the sanctity of marriage among the Dagaaba, since no woman would want to go through a shameful public ritual of cleansing which not only disgraces her but her kinsmen. The *kyiiro* which ensures that children honour their parents and uphold a balanced relationship between the living and the dead also contributes to environmental cleanliness as cemeteries are often well kept. Prohibition against indiscriminate sexual activities ensures that vulnerable maidens who are often taken advantage of are protected. Similar to the *kyiiro*, totems of the various clans further serve as social control mechanism. Restrictions in hunting for animals and destruction of vegetation ensure conservation.

Though these taboos exist, it is the *nimberε* who spoke about them with much reverence during my interviews with them; most of the youth on the other hand, during FGDs were oblivious of their totems, an indication that they may break these taboos unknowingly. For instance, the prohibitions of eating meat of certain animals. Eateries in urban towns where the youth school and work may cook with some of these meats. This also corroborates the submission of the youth during FGD, it may not be their intentions to flout a totem but circumstances, like living outside their communities. The taboos the youth had much knowledge of were adultery, incest, indiscriminate sex and not honouring the dead. This is because these are core to marriage and funeral, performances that have not experienced change due to their irreplaceable nature. Details of performances and their vitality or otherwise are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

INDIGENOUS PERFORMANCES AND MODERNITY

This chapter interrogates the perception of performances as means of public discourses through which the Dagaaba express their beliefs, history, worldview, and way of life. The examination of these performance practices is based on a continued literature study (Dankwa, 2018; Kuwabong, 2004; Kuupuo, 2005; Alenuma, 2002; Bodomo & Mora, 2002), as well as my experiences in the two communities selected for my fieldwork. The analysis is done to confirm or refute the extent to which external factors have influenced indigenous performance practices. This chapter therefore specifically speaks to the questions, how has modernity influenced the Dagaaba community of north western Ghana and what is the impact of modernity on play and work song performances of the Dagaaba community?

The first part of this chapter will discuss the indigenous performances still prevalent within Dagaaba communities, while the second part will investigate the influence of modernity on these performances.

5.1 Indigenous performances of the Dagaaba

Most societies construct and express their philosophy, beliefs, norms and world view through tangible and intangible means. While designs of fabrics, architecture, arts, crafts and symbols constitute some of the tangible resources, language, stories, riddles, games, dances and songs are a number of the intangible materials employed by societies to establish their identity. When these tangible and intangible resources are processed, the product can become a performance which is indigenous to that group. The Dagaaba register their presence through various performances to affirm their history and cultural narratives, ceremonies and a channel for grieving and a passage to the hereafter (Dankwa, 2018). The functional role of these performances is to ensure that the community and social groups' beliefs and values are maintained and affirmed. These performances can therefore be considered important educational tools for social affirmation. They confirm the sacredness of traditional institutions by reminding community members of their roles and responsibilities and the demands of the gods and ancestors (Kuwabong, 2004). Indigenous performances also answer the call for preservation of community identity. In addition, they are commemorative as they remind community members of their history and exploits.

Indigenous performances – whether viewed as a social past time, diversionary activity, or for education – is essentially a medium of communication. Its purpose is to communicate in an entertaining way the values of the Dagaaba and to affirm or renew their confidence in themselves as a society. Thus, these

performances become a mirror reflecting the way of life of a people (Naaeke, 2005). I argue that indigenous performance of the Dagaaba are organised in recognition of the environment as a shared space (Kuwabong, 2004), as a respite pathway (Kuupuo, 2005), and as a means to build and strengthen lineage and ancestor veneration (Alenuma, 2002). There are also performances to offer a passage to the afterlife (Dankwa, 2018), to demonstrate social competence and community solidarity (Bodomo & Mora, 2002) and performances as accompaniment of activities (Hien, 2019).

5.1.1 Recognition of the environment as a shared space

The Dagaaba's main economic backbone is farming, thus the earth is considered a sacred entity since it gives life through provision of crops for sustenance. The trees on the land also supply herbs for medicine to treat ailments, and the sand and wood are used as building materials for the provision of shelter. It is in upholding the sacredness of the earth that the Dagaaba has the *Tengan sob*, a spiritual cum political head who oversees the land, its use and distribution. There are regulations to ensure that the earth and the environment are not denigrated and also performances in recognition of the value of the earth and the Dagaaba's relationship with it. In his work, "Bagre: A Dagaaba celebration of environmental balance between humans and non-humans", Kuwabong (2004:5) posits that the performance of the *Bagr* ritual demonstrates the belief of the people with regards to their environment. He states that

...the Dagaaba strongly believe and reverence the 'Earth' (physical environment) as sacred and divine; that they are born from the earth, live on and through it, will be buried in it; and that they will join the ancestors who, though invisible, are nonetheless located in the environment with their spiritual beings. This is well articulated in Bagre narrative, and shows that as our Mother, we owe our life to Earth. It is from her breast that the milk of sustenance is drawn, whether it is water, food, soil, wood, or herbal medicine, and it is to her womb that we shall return in death.

From his submission, Kuwabong articulates the Dagaaba's recognition of the earth as a source of life and livelihood and a habitat of a dual world, the living and the dead. The organisation of periodic performances is born out of this belief, to ensure that there is balance in the relationship between the inhabitants. As a shared space, there are environmental ethics that should be adhered to and this manifest through the *Bagr* ritual. The *Bagr* constitutes a period of solitude to commune with the supernatural being, ritual performance to either appease or give thanks, and initiation into the religion. It therefore functioned as environmental protection and conservation of Dagaaba lands when prohibitions and taboos were adhered to.

In my interviews with the *Tengan dem* of Lawra and Fielmuo it was, however, revealed that conversion to Catholicism, Islam and other religious denominations has shifted the belief system of the Dagaaba leading to a reduction in the number of traditional belief practitioners and subsequently also the number of related performances. The *Tengan dem* argued that the Dagaaba adhered to the demands of traditional religion when there was no alternative religion. This submission of the *Tengan dem* was corroborated by my observation in the communities. The majority of community members are Catholics who knowledgeably and confidently discussed Christian festivals and Christian performances, but had little knowledge of the *Bagr*. Furthermore, with the exception of the chiefs and the *Tengan dem*, most of my respondents were people who professed being Christians as such could not provide information on the *Bagr*. Though the *Bagr* is presently performed mainly by practitioners of traditional religions, thus not the entire Dagaaba population, it constitutes one of the indigenous performances of the community. As indicated in chapter three (3) (section 3.5.2) and reiterated in chapter four (4) (section 4.1.4), traditional religion practitioners constitute 26% of the population in Lawra as compared to 61% of Christians and 13% Muslims. Fielmuo also had a greater population of the citizens being Christians, 70.4 %, 14.4% traditional practitioners and 13.6% Muslims. Few of my participants identified themselves as practitioners of traditional religion during focus group discussions.

5.1.2 Respite pathway

Another ritual which I consider as performance that is linked to the environment is *Takɔ daa*, a day dedicated to the earth. Leaning on the backdrop of Schechner's (2013, 2003) performance theory on which my theoretical framework – an execution of an action is based, I consider *Takɔ daa* as performance. The Dagaaba, based on their belief, are mandated not to engage in any agricultural activity on a particular day, not doing anything in this context becomes an activity hence a performance. Kuukure (1985:63) refers to it as 'the-day-of-no-hoeing'. Farming being their main occupation, the Dagaaba till the earth everyday which has its toll on the farmer, land and its inhabitants. The inhabitants of the land, according to Dagaaba belief, has already been established by Kuwabong (2004) as the living and the dead. *Takɔ daa* is thus a prohibition connected to the land use as well as a respite pathway for the Dagaaba (Kuupuo, 2005). As a veneration of the land which is believed to be a spiritual entity that enables their main economic activities, a day is set aside in Dagaaba communities to maintain order and harmony between farmers and the spirit world. On this day, there is no farming activity, no opening of the granary to supply grains and cereals and no burial.

It is believed that if *Takɔ daa* is not honoured, there would be disruption in the relationship between humans and the spirit world. For this reason, offenders were severely punished, which was a fine of twenty-thousand (20,000) cowries¹⁹ and a cow for pacification to restore balance. Also, *Takɔ daa* serves as a respite pathway for the community members to rest for rejuvenation to guarantee quality work on their farms and other economic activities. However, according to Kuupuo (2005) and confirmation from respondents, this performance is fizzling out, it is rarely heard of or adhered to by the majority of the Dagaaba. Kuupuo (2005) submits that this performance was highly honoured in the pre-Christian and pre-Islamic epochs; however, the change in the belief system of the Dagaaba has affected their performance culture. This was already alluded to in the previous section in relation to the *Bagr*. Similarly, even though *Takɔ daa* exists, it seems primarily adhered to by elderly practitioners of traditional religion, raising concerns about its continued existence.

The divisional and sub chiefs of the Lawra traditional area made similar submissions. They recounted how indigenous performances in their jurisdictions have suffered setbacks due to the adoption of practices of dominant cultures. Naa Volkur Nyuor Tang, (chief of Eremon), Naa Bo-ib Bongkang Nyozie II, (chief of Tampie) and Naa Kpintaatobo Da-ur II, (chief of Baazing) revealed that they have banned the organising of music concerts in their traditional areas in an attempt to salvage the situation and ensure that the youth do not forget significant indigenous performances. They believe that the music concerts offer alternative sources of entertainment to the youth and strengthen the youth's reluctance to engage in indigenous performances of the Dagaaba.

I gathered from the youth that they feel coerced to stay away from modern performances, which they believe have financial and career prospects. They remarked that the indigenous performances are confined to their cultures but they also belong to a global society and have to stay relevant and functional within this society. In my opinion since there is no ban on movement, the youth could attend concerts in towns where there are no restrictions. The ban, in my view is alienating the youth from their homelands; they would prefer to stay in communities that are open to alternative performances. I would rather suggest they embrace co-existence, that is, to allow the youth to engage in what modernity has brought, but also encourage them to appreciate their indigenous performances. The chiefs can do this by allowing the

¹⁹ Cowries are shells. They are for both non-monetary and monetary uses in Dagaaba communities. They are used to adorn royal regalia as well as costumes for traditional dances. The traditional religion practitioners also use cowries in their ritual performances, such as divination. The cowries are also meant for quasi-commercial uses (Yiridoe, 1995:19), they are used as 'payments' at funerals where these cowries are thrown at the *paala* (the funeral stand for laying the dead). Of significance is the payment of bride wealth, cowries are the "money" used to complete the payment of bride wealth.

music concerts in their jurisdiction and also organise festivals of indigenous performances. This, I believe will endear the youth to indigenous performances rather than banning music concerts.

5.1.3 Lineage and ancestor veneration

The Dagaaba likewise organise performances to build and strengthen their lineages and also stay in touch with departed members of the family. According to Alenuma (2002:9) performances that have stood the test of time in Dagaaba communities are marriage rites because through it procreation and subsequent increase in the lineage is assured. The performance of marriage rites is in two stages, the *kyaro*, (payment of the bride wealth), which is a cock, guinea fowl and thirteen thousand (13,000) cowries; and the *dɔ*, (the dowry); the presentation of cows (two or three, depending on the community) to conclude the marriage rite. The groom and his family are usually given enough time to conclude the second stage, however, if it delays, the bride would be made to return to her paternal home. Though there are variations in the *kyaro* and *dɔ* among the Dagaaba, in Fielmuo and Lawra, the groom is expected to offer an equivalent of what was presented for the bride's mother, thus the two stages have remained in spite of social change.

In addition, the marriage rite is tied to the fertility and fidelity of the bride, that is, a ritual is performed to ask for blessings of the womb and also to restrain the bride from committing adultery. The belief in this ritual is what has made the Dagaaba to adhere to this performance to prevent adverse occurrence in the life of the bride in future. The ritual is not a public performance, it is an indoor activity between the groom's and bride's family and strictly done by the paternal male members of the two families. For this reason, even though marriages were contracted in Lawra and Fielmuo while I was there I could not have participated in the process. However, my enquiries and experience established that women who were known to have committed adultery were made to go through a ritual of cleansing and purification.

At a funeral before the COVID-19 restrictions, I witnessed this ritual of cleansing. The ritual involves slaughtering a goat on the feet of the offender, the blood thus cleanses the woman of the infidelity. The brothers of the deceased then whip the woman as punishment for disrespecting the sanctity of marriage. The public performance serves as deterrent to other women. The belief is that the spirit of the dead husband will continue to haunt the family if the ritual is not performed, also the woman would not be allowed to play her role as a widow. A lady had separated from the husband, but tradition still made her a wife because the family did not return the dowry. She was made to go through this ritual to be able to mourn the dead because it was presumed that she might have engaged in sexual activities while separated from the husband. I was told that in the past a woman who committed adultery was stripped naked as

part of the cleansing but that has been taken out, the woman keeps her clothes on due to modernity. These rituals are still performed, according to the *Tengan sob* of Fielmuo, it is done to protect the sanctity of marriage. On his part, the *Tengan sob* of Lawra explained that because fidelity is linked to the performance of the marriage rites, ritual for cleansing continues as long as women commit adultery.

Alenuma (2002) continues that the Dagaaba belief in life after death, thus the dead, if the person lived a responsible life, becomes an ancestor who intercedes on behalf of the family. To keep the relationship between the living and the dead, there are performances which includes periodic sacrifices which is referred to as feeding the dead and repair of the tomb are done to give honour and show respect to the ancestors. A special meal, which should be without salt, and a domestic animal, depending on what one can afford, either a cow, sheep, goat or fowl is slaughtered and placed at a designated place (similar to shrines) in the household where images have been made to represent the said ancestors. This belief has also been influenced; while Christians believe in Mary, the mother of Christ (Catholics), Jesus Christ and saints to intercede, the Muslims, according to Alhaji Ismael Karbo, an elder of the Lawra traditional council, the *Wali* (pious) *tawassul* (intercedes) for the Muslims. The repair of tombs had to do with using a mixture of sand and cow dung to plaster and smoothen the tombs to keep the grave properly covered. However, the majority of community members in Lawra and Fielmuo now use the tomb stone which does not require repairs. The few who still bury without the tomb stone are those who repair the tombs.

5.1.4 Rite of passage

Before a Dagao becomes an ancestor, a befitting funeral of his status must be performed. Funerals are organised to prepare a passage for the dead to travel to the afterlife and to allow the bereaved to grieve properly to come to terms with the separation (Dankwa, 2018). As part of ensuring a safe and smooth passage, cowries are thrown at the *paala*, (a raised platform for laying the dead) meant for the dead to use in paying to be ferried to the afterlife. Also, the *gyil* is played at various phases for performances by different groups of people; the *kuor-wuofa* (inception of the funeral) by kinsmen and *kuor-yaar* (conclusion of the funeral) by the *simaan-dem* (neighbours). As indicated in chapter two (2), the *kuor-wuofa* announces the death through wailing, lamentation as the first stage of the funeral performance followed by the *lobri*, an ominous tune from the *gyil* which emphasises the death as well as sending signals of the death to farther households and communities.

As indicated in chapter two (2), it is after these announcements that mourners join the kinsmen to file past the body, mourn and pay their last respect, thus a transition to the *kuor-biné*. The wailing and dances are gender based and according to one's relation to the deceased. Mourners who are related paternally

wail as *woi nsaa*, *woi nsaa* and the maternal relations, *woi mma*, *woi mma*. People who have no blood ties mourn thus *iiiiii*, *iiiiii*. Any new mourner who arrives at the funeral ground goes through a routine of *uor a kuor* which entails wailing and pacing, using the appropriate sound. All these are done to establish the separation of the dead from the living and to offer a smooth transition to his or her new home in afterlife. According to Dankwa (2018), the effects of the words of the *langkone* are augmented by the tunes of the *gyil* which stimulates mourning. In his view, the *gyil* speaks to the mourners as the variation in the tune either intensifies their dancing or wailing in expressing grief.

Funeral performance varies between one (1) to two (2) days, and the burial is on the final day. It is interesting to note that in spite of social change, the Dagaaba funeral performance has not experienced much change. Dankwa's argument reaffirms Alenuma's (2002:14) statement that the seeming complex and elaborate nature of funeral rites notwithstanding, the Dagaaba have protected it from change and continued with its performance due to its therapeutic worth. Alenuma emphasises that funeral performance plays a vital role in the lives of the Dagaaba because it helps the living deal with the loss and separation and also affirms the status of the dead in the afterlife. It is believed that when a proper funeral is not performed for the dead to the afterlife, he becomes homeless since he neither belongs to the world of the living nor that of the dead. Such spirit, it is believed, begins to torment the living. Thus, funeral performance has remained due to its function in creating homes for the dead and also a therapy for the living to deal with their loss. However, I observed during data collection that the duration of funeral performance has experienced a change, according to community members, funeral performances initially lasted three (3) or more days for the very old people, but modernity and now the advent of COVID-19 has reduced the duration of funeral performance.

5.1.5 Social competence and community solidarity

Bodomo and Mora (2002) have identified indigenous performance of the Dagaaba as an avenue for the exhibition of social competence and community solidarity. According to Mora (Bodomo and Moro, 2002:5) an indigene remarked the following in an interview: “*kaneè bièng wábong báwáá páálong bièng áá*” (if a child doesn't know how to dance *báwáá* s/he cannot possibly be a child from our town). Skills in indigenous performance are seen as features of social and cultural identity, it is therefore expected that a Dagao has appreciable skills in performances. With this expectation, it was a common practice for children to watch and dance *béwaa* at the peripheries during adults' recreational performances to perfect the art of dancing. A child who has playfully performed along adults' performances grows to carry on either like the adults or better, thus becomes a mark of social competence. Recreational performances

such as *kaare*, *nuru loba* and *kpankpol* (a dummy *gyil*) provided platforms for practices of dances and songs which form part of most cultural activities. With the *kpankpol*, a male recreational activity that assist in learning how to play the *gyil* young men practiced how to play the *gyil* while the maidens composed *nuru loba* and danced *kaare*. These recreational performances served as rehearsal grounds for competence in dance steps and the playing of the *gyil*. As indicated earlier, at funeral ceremonies, family members and neighbours perform *bené* and *langne* at various stages. These performances demonstrate one's character and social competence as a Dagao. If an individual is unable to perform, then it is an indication that the person did not participate in recreational performances (which is out of character) or alternatively, was not born in the community.

While interacting with the male youths of Fielmuo in a focus group discussion, lack of social competence was evident in some of their responses. They had neither an idea of nor skill in a basic performance, *kpankpol*. According to them they did not see this practice growing up, which means people no longer engage in this performance. The absence of *kpankpol* has left most of the young men without skills in playing the *gyil*, the main instrument in most ceremonies especially funerals. Though it is mostly argued that playing the *gyil* is a gift, like the piano, it can also be learnt through practice. In my interview with Naa Puowele Karbo III, he indicated that it would be a sacrilege for a funeral to be performed without playing the *gyil*. So, in recognition of the decline in performances that aid in such skills, he has decreed for chiefs within his traditional area to set up performing troupes to represent their localities to perform at the annual *kɔb bené* festival of Lawra. To ensure compliance, he has instituted a heavy fine for chiefs who flout the decree. In addition to social competence performance builds and sustains community solidarity. Most of the indigenous performances are group activities which require interdependence as such as often as community members come together for one performance or the other it strengthens the unity in the community. However, as indicated earlier it seems as if most of these performances are drastically declining.

5.1.6 Accompaniment of activities

It has been established that most activities of the Dagaaba are accompanied by music (Hien, 2019; Lawrence, 2011; Bodomo & Mora, 2002). There are therefore various song genres which are performed at various stages in the daily lives of the Dagaaba. While the *gyil* accompanies dancing and mourning of the dead, *langne* accompanies the *gyil* to intensify grieving. Similarly, *nuru loba* accompanies dance steps at women's and maidens' recreational activities to entertain themselves. *Suolu yielu* also accompanies storytelling to either advance the plot or sustain attention. Equally, hunters, shepherds and

women perform songs as accompaniment to their work to either rally colleagues, locate a lost hunter or express emotions. Though these varied songs exist in accompanying activities, the interest of this study is on songs which accompany recreation and work identified and discussed earlier in chapter two (2).

5.2 Vitality of Play and Work songs of the Dagaaba

It has already been established that most occasions and activities of the Dagaaba are marked by singing. Ritual, recreational and occupational activities of the Dagaaba are never complete without singing. Due to the integral role of songs in the social-cultural systems of the Dagaaba, there were abundant preparatory grounds for indigenes to engage in informal training in verbal art to be perfect in its performance. It was after such practice that a Dagao could be confident to perform on formal occasions such as funerals and religious rites. Thus, these spaces were nurseries where talents and skills in the various verbal arts were nursed and groomed. Spaces for activities such as grinding, plastering, hunting and playing were major platforms for the performances of songs. The continued existence of these platforms guaranteed the continuity of performances of the various song types in the Dagaaba community. The question is, have these preparatory grounds survived the test of time? As the passing of time in most instances equal change, change has impacted on the form, content, space and consequently also the frequency of performances in general and indigenous songs in particular.

Nketia (1974:4-20), over four decades ago enumerated factors responsible for changes to traditional African music while discussing the diversity and changing phase of traditional music of Africa. According to him, history, cultural interaction and contact with external cultures have shaped the musical practice in Africa. These factors of change Nketia (1974) refers to have also manifested in the Dagaaba community with regards to the performance of traditional arts. As indicated earlier, Dagaaba women rose above tradition which restricted them from singing praise songs by converting them to work songs (Sutherland-Addy, Mudiare & Nanbigne, 2005). This is a significant change in verbal art performance, since traditionally most activities and roles in the Dagaaba community are ascribed by gender. The change of performer, from male to female in this art form may be an influence from gender sensitisation through formal education and advocacy programmes which on a broader scale fall under cultural interaction and contact with external cultures, as Nketia (1974) discussed. It is laudable that the Dagaaba women have been innovative and progressive; however, the shift in song type, that is, praise song to work song has the potential to affect the text of the original song as well as the space and occasion for performance. Again, this change in the song genre has not helped in the continuity of work songs as the occasion for and space for their performances are declining while praise songs still thrives at funerals.

With regards to work songs as identified in chapter two (2), they are driven by activities such as hunting, cattle herding, grinding and hut repairs. It will be discussed in detail in sub-section 5.3 how social change has displaced these occupations, but as indicated earlier, funeral rites enable the performance of *langne* which embraces praise songs.

Furthermore, the emergence of contemporary song genre such as Afro pop, Afro-dance hall, High life and Hiplife has been embraced by Dagaaba artists. Artists such as Wiyaala, Samini, Lebkaar Justine, Madstone Nandome Virm, Jonas Dery Abesig and Marcel Siewobr who sing in one or more of the contemporary song genres confirms evidence of cultural interaction and contact with external cultures. Whereas Abesig composes mainly in Dagaare and sometimes French, MDee sings in English and Twi and has songs such as “Me ne woa”, “Thinking about you”, “In love with my bestie” and “Under three”. The question is, how has this trend of employing contemporary song genre affected the continuous performances of play and work songs.

An observation has been made with regards to this social change. Younge (2011:3) captures vividly concerns of a student of San Diego State University on a summer study-abroad programme:

I was told a lot about culture shock upon arrival in Ghana.
Yes, I admit I had a shock but it was not the kind driven by differences in cultures. Strangely, it was the similarities between our cultures and the transplantation of America in Ghana that shocked the hell out of me – the electronic media, DJs, the incredibly numerous churches and the mode of dressing among the young and the old. I find these intriguing. What hope do you have for the survival of your cultures and traditional music – especially since they are orally transmitted.....?

The equation of cultures by this student which hitherto were parallel illustrates the state of indigenous art and performance in Ghana. The comment also supports a submission made by the youth of Fielmuo during focus group discussion that, they find themselves in a global system of which they have no control over and thus must act to fit into the structure. They have no control over technological advancement that has resulted in digitisation, neither do they have control over religion and formal education. Through the inheritance of formal education from either the missionaries or colonialists, Ghana has attempted institutionalisation of her traditional music to some extent, for archiving and continuity in performance (Younge, 2011). Songs taught in schools are mostly English hymns from the influence of missionaries and some songs which have been translated into Dagaare. What then becomes of play and work song performances as the preparatory grounds for creation and performance are gradually vanishing?

The Dagaaba, until the advent of social change adhered to indigenous instructions and practices, however, due to formal education, industrialisation, urbanisation, assimilation of external cultures, and migration to other communities, the Dagaaba have lost much of their indigenous life. In an interview with Kuur Belaar Sentu, a participant from Fielmuo, he revealed that the older generation might have envisaged this development at the onset of the 21st century. He submitted that before formal education, industrialisation and migration, the Dagaaba rarely left their communities thus were very indigenous but with conscious and unconscious assimilation of cultures, the lifestyle of the Dagaaba changed. Mr Sentu added that since little could be done to stop the wave of change, it became a practice among the Dagaaba, for instance for a male child in a household to be left out of school enrolment or migration to other communities in order to learn and continue the ways of the Dagaaba. The intention was for the person to become *yir-sob* (the head of the family) in future to perpetuate the culture of the Dagaaba. Thus there was a conscious effort not to lose their ways of life and put in place measures to safeguard it. Though efforts were made, change was inevitable, shepherding, for instance, was the work done by Dagaaba boys but due to formal education which was backed by law; most boys were sent to school. The Education Act of 1961 brought about the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE), making basic education compulsory for every child in Ghana (EPA, 2010). Therefore, shepherding which was a major occupation for Dagaaba boys was transferred to a nomadic ethnic group, the Fulani. Hence songs that were sung by the Dagaaba as work songs during shepherding are rarely performed presently. Similarly, group hunting which used to be an occupation of the youth is losing its place. Apart from schooling, the youth gets formal employment outside of their communities, also expansion of villages has depleted forest which makes it challenging for the few who remain in the communities to go hunting.

It is common knowledge that occupations are categorised – formal and informal, skilled and unskilled. With such categorisation in this era of industrialisation, most families are doing everything to move from the informal to formal or unskilled to skilled because the formal or skilled occupation attracts a higher salary and most importantly occupy a high social status. Dorgbadzi (2014:42) reveals that while conducting her PhD study on storytelling, a parent stormed a storytelling session and whisked away her child with the remark “if she [indicating Dorgbadzi] had stayed at storytelling sessions would she have been here today collecting this data”. This angry mother’s analysis is that indigenous knowledge transmission and indigenous performance are not academic. With such a mind-set which is passed on to the younger generation, why will they engage in indigenous activities? The focus of this research is to determine whether indigenous performances of the Dagaaba is vibrant, particularly where is the rightful place of verbal art performances?

In a forward to Bauman's (1977: ix) *Verbal art as performance*, Roger Shuy describes verbal art as artistic action and artistic event. An artistic action is when an activity is set apart from the usual for emphasis to draw attention to an issue or subject matter; however, an artistic action can progress to an artistic event. Play and work songs are artistic actions because the composers of these songs carefully select words and weave it to set the songs apart from other songs to suit the purpose for the composition. The Dagaaba, in keeping with the tradition of verbal art perform play and work songs as artistic action for social control. The remaining sub-sections discuss where, and conditions which influence performances in Dagaaba communities and the change that has occurred which has subsequently affected the frequency of performance.

5.2.1 Avenue for performances

Responses from participants during focus group discussions revealed that play songs were typically performed in the evenings at the end of the day's chores when the moon was out, at the village square, or courtyards of homes, or any available space in the community. According to them, this was the period when there was no electricity and community members depended heavily on indigenous performances in the evenings for socialisation and entertainment. The long dark night was shortened by community engagement in activities, and the darkness and natural illumination from the moon provided avenue for performances.

However, according to Mr. Kuur Belaar Sentu, a retired employee of the Volta River Authority, (generator of electricity in Ghana), this changed when the Upper West Region was connected to the national grid in mid-2000. With electrification of communities, people acquired home appliances such as television sets and sound systems. These items provided alternatives to indigenous performance. As a novelty, community members preferred to stay indoors to watch television programmes rather than going out to perform. Also, the radio stations, in a quest to build their listener capacity, used songs and other indigenous art familiar to community members as content for their programmes. This also shifted the Dagaaba from being performers to listeners. The avenues for performances of play songs, the village square and courtyards have, as a result of these developments become desolate.

In addition, the grinding stone, hut repairs, cattle grazing and hunting provided avenues for the performances of work songs. These activities needed accompaniment, rhythm and motivation to execute and the songs provided them. However, the Dagaaba no longer engage in these activities. Discussions and interviews revealed (among others) how technology as alternative to manual work and source of

entertainment have displaced play and work songs performances. There have been innovations in execution of work, inventions and formal education and employment. The invention of the grinding machine has replaced the use of the grinding stone so has the skill and evolution in building taken over repairs of huts. Schooling has removed boys from cattle grazing into the classrooms and formal employments have taken away young men to urban centres to be employed hence no hunting. These inventions and change in socialisation and occupation have thus displaced avenues for the performances of play and work songs.

5.2.2 Social variations

Though electrification and inventions have provided alternatives, thus reduced the vitality of play and work songs performances, another factor which seemingly impacted on the vitality of performances is the change in social identity of the Dagaaba. It is a reality that not every home in the communities under study has been connected to the national grid, a situation which could have created avenues for performances. However, the perception of change, in other words, how community members respond to what goes on around them has dimmed this glimmer of hope. The general observation I made during data collection is that one's lifestyle is considered a mark of progress or regression. So, for instance, a household that lives in "*kyénse yir*" (a house roofed by roofing sheet), other than in the indigenous architecture of mud houses with concrete roofing made of sand and cow dung, indicates progress. With this perception, community members shy away from lifestyles and activities that will tag them as out-dated. For this reason, members of a household without electricity who could have engaged in play song performances in the evenings do not do so. Thus, change in social consciousness of the Dagaaba with regards to indigenous life, which is now equated to backwardness, has reduced the vitality of indigenous performances.

In conversation with the youth, I gathered that both tradition and modernity require some responsibilities from them, however, realities make it challenging. For instance, traditionally, it is required of them to have appreciable knowledge of indigenous performances as a mark of identity and to be able to function in ceremonies such as funerals. This was emphasised by the chiefs and elders during interviews with them. However, as observed and reiterated during interviews, schooling and formal employments which in some cases not available in their communities have deprived the youth of the opportunity to participate in performances. The dilemma of the youth is that they are caught in the middle of a seemingly irreconcilable situation, and to find a solution most of them abandon the traditional to embrace the

modern which they argue is the alternative that has come to stay and can be seen as another social development.

5.2.3 Economic variations

With the exception of funeral celebrations where tradition permitted mourners to show appreciation to the *langkone*, performances in Dagaaba communities were done with no expectations for monetary gains. This was confirmed by the youth's submission during focus group discussion that indigenous performances have no financial and career prospect. Community members engaged in these indigenous arts as part of social orientation, social consciousness and acts of solidarity. For instance, when cooperative farming was organised, it was to help each other cultivate large farms to be able to take care of families with the recognition that the region has a single farming season. All the host needed to do was to cook and provide enough *pito*, thus no cash payment. Similarly, a talented composer could sing to draw the attention of community members to join in his or her new composition for entertainment, not paying attention to any monetary gains. It was for sheer pride to exhibit one's talent for the benefit of the community which eventually leads to collective performances of such songs. However, the advent of monetised economy has changed the value of communal ownership in such a way that talented youth now compose songs individually for record labels to market and promote their arts.

The perception of communal ownership of arts has been replaced with the knowledge that one can earn a living by being an artist. More so, there is an awareness of intellectual property, the rights and benefits one has over his or her concept, content and creativity. All these have influenced individuals to guard creativity and performance from the public domain. Indeed, as observed during data collection, the practice where community members gather to playfully compose songs about situations and personalities for collective benefit is no more. Rather, an individual will quietly do so on his own to earn a living and digitalisation has facilitated this.

5.3 Modernity

Modernity has been variously interpreted, but generally it is understood as a historical landmark indicating a transition from one period to another (Linehas, 2009; Giddens, 1999; Trainer, 1998; Gyekye, 1997; Habermas & Ben-Habib, 1981). This perception is well articulated in Linehan's (2009:157) submission:

It is simply not possible to say when precisely modernity begins, but it is widely accepted that a highly articulated version of modernity emerged in

Europe from the fifteenth century onward when three key developments combined to usher in a new social order. These three developments were: the expansion of scientific and humanist knowledge, the rise of capitalism, and the growth of strong centralized states.modernity involved extensive contact and mixing between world cultures, the creation of new geographic divisions of labour, the constitution of new spatial relationships and profound transformations of nature and the environments

Linehan's account indicates that one cannot give the exact time modernity began but it can be positioned at when the way of perceiving, doing and explaining things changed. Prior to the fifteenth century, the dominance of the church over learning and life was very pronounced (Brockett & Hildy, 2007), thus less attention was paid to humanism, the concern for humanity and earthly life. Thus, the quest for deeper understanding of life and the worth of humanity leading to scientific enquiries and determination of occurrences meant a new wave, a change, thus a move away from the old to modern. The departure from doing things the 'old way' to applying causal effect to explain things, a deeper understanding of economics and consolidation of states for strength and power and contacts with people outside of one's locality ushered in modernity.

Modernity is also noted as a product of social evolution which led to change in society (Eze-Uzomaka & Ololdi, 2017; Seveliyev, 2013). This point resonates what has been captured earlier, a historical period which depicts significant developments in various aspects of life, from the way things are perceived and done consequently leading to a new social order. Thus, the shift from the old way of doing things brought about restructuring of institutions, innovations and inventions to accommodate the transition. In the case of the Dagaaba community, it can be inferred that the establishment of the chieftaincy institution by the colonial administration, which replaced the political role of the *Tengan sob* ushered in modernity among the Dagaaba.

Gyekye (1997:269) also explains modernity as a complex phenomenon. He argues that elements of tradition have been inherited and appropriated from previous generations in Europe and non-European sources for assimilation in the modern era, hence a complexity of elements. He continues that for elements of previous generations to have been recognised as appropriate to be inherited and assimilated into the era in his opinion meant that those elements were in themselves modern. Thus, modernity is a combination of appropriated traditional elements of previous and new generations. Gyekye's argument is in line with the evolution theory which is discussed in Savelyev's analysis of interpretations of modernity. The appropriation of traditional elements finds expression in the Dagaaba way of living; being oriented in the traditional way of life, such as the principle of shared benefits and sanctions and

the orientation in either formal education or church or mosques. These orientations lead to a Dagaaba of complex identity.

Savelyev (2013:1674) identifies modernity as a multidimensional phenomenon which requires a systematic application of theories to understand. In defence of this position, he applies five (5) segments of sociological discourse to analyse modernity. These are evolution, civilisational approach, modernity as a “project”, temporal conceptualisation of modernity and efficiency theories. In his illustration, he argues that most of the theories interrelate but differ in their interpretations of modernity.

In the dimension of evolution, proponents recognise modernity as a progression from agrarian society to an urbanised, industrialised one with changes in social institutions, structure and cultural life (Savelyev, 2013:1675). This dimension is a basic element of modernity which cuts across theories no matter how it is interpreted hence their interrelatedness. For instance, the civilisational approach cannot be analysed without reference to how a society was before its attainment of civilised status, thus evolution must take place for a manifestation of change. It is logical to argue from the evolution theorists’ perspective that every society at a point in its existence reinvent to cope with either geographical or environmental situations, therefore evolution is universal. The difference may be the scale or rate at which various societies evolve considering the diversity in geographical locations, environmental conditions and contacts with other cultures. For instance, it is a historical fact that the Renaissance began in Italy because of its strategic location, as a major terminus of trade routes to Asia and Africa, contact with and absorption of external cultures was faster than the rest of Europe (Brockett & Hildy, 2007). Thus, change occurs in societies either as an internal effort to reinvent itself or a result from contact with external cultures. In this regard, the birth of industries which stimulated migration to other parts of the country, thus contact with external cultures brought change to the Dagaaba community.

Advocates of the civilisational approach interprets modernity not as a universal change that occurred in societies but a phenomenon specific to a society at a point in time in history. They submit that it is a lifestyle which emerged in Europe in the seventeenth century and got absorbed by other societies, thus other societies got civilised through their contact with Europe. Critical of the civilisational approach, Savelyev (2013:1673) analyses that by his definition, Giddens (1990) implies that modernity is a localised phenomenon, something of the *West* versus the *Rest*, that is, a concept which began in Europe and spread to the rest of the world. I do not see anything wrong with this, as I illustrated earlier with the Renaissance, modernity could not have begun at the same time across the globe. The reality is that at a

point in history social organisations in societies changed as a result of internal reinvention, contacts with other cultures due to trade and exchange of ideas. These exchanges are what gave birth to modernity.

Another interpretation given to modernity is that it is a “project”, a social and cultural achievement of mankind (Savelyev, 2013:1677). This analysis articulates attainment of set targets with regards to progressing from one stage to the next. Savelyev (2013:1677) explains that modernity is approached as a ‘project’ of human accomplishment. Thus, a society is seen as modern if certain features representative of modernity are observed. Attaining this status therefore becomes a project for societies and individuals to undertake in order to be recognised as such. This is synonymous to what happened in Ghana during the government’s decentralisation process. There were laid down criteria for communities desiring to be selected to become district or regional capitals. It thus became a project for chiefs, opinion leaders and influential members of communities to release lands or buildings to be used as offices to meet the criteria for selection. The completion of such projects became accomplishments of the said community. These attainments, often in the form of access roads, potable water, health facilities, administrative buildings, residential accommodation and schools invariably upgraded communities from rural to urban. When neighbouring communities see this attainment, it also becomes a project for them to accomplish.

Government policies as well as the individual’s quest to fit into the period therefore became a pursuit for the Dagaaba, a project to achieve. This notion links with my observation earlier (section 5.2.2) on how social variations influenced the vitality of play and work songs. Similarly, the government’s policy of rural development and decentralisation – which saw electrification and urbanisation of most Dagaaba communities – took away avenues for performances (see also section 5.2.1).

The fourth segment, which Savelyev (2013:1682) refers to as the temporal theories of changes, discusses modernity as a specific time frame where its basic attributes is the ability of a said society to exhibit profound levels of change and innovativeness. This segment is thus era based and a society’s ‘modernity’ is measured by correlating its present with the past and seeing the contemporary as non-permanent. If the contemporary is non-permanent, then modernity according to Savelyev (2013:1683) cannot also be seen as permanent but a continuous process. This analysis manifests in fashion, something that is temporal as new styles, based on innovativeness come to take over the previous designs and styles. During the colonial era, people of the Gold Coast embraced the fashion sense of the Europeans as a mark of elevation, this was observed especially among the “been tos” (those who have travelled to Europe) and the clerks who worked with the Europeans. Women who discarded the wearing of cloths to put on gowns and gloves were regarded as *nwurabafoɔ* (an expression in Akan), the closest translation is

‘ladies’, but the expression connotes ‘modern women’. It was then a trend, for instance, to see women heating combs in fire (today’s hot combs) to straighten their hair to look like that of the Europeans. Since it was a temporal modernity it no longer exists, and although tonging is done presently, it is with permed not natural hair.

The final segment of Savelyev’s (2013) interpretation of modernity discusses the theory of efficiency. This is similar to the evolution theory, but here efficiency is considered not equally achievable for all society. The level of efficiency differs from society to society due to cultural and normative differences. This segment also has some similarities with the temporal theory of changes since it has innovation as a premise to achieve efficiency. Modern here implies the best, most advanced, a society prudent to constant change, propels a need to be ahead and gain a competitive advantage. Competitiveness is seen as a driving tool towards efficiency. Hence for a society to remain modern it needs to be competitive, and to stay competitive, it needs to be constantly advancing, thus creating a never-ending modernisation. When a society continuously holds on to the drive to stay competitive it will attain efficiency. If a society’s level of competitiveness is high, productivity will also be high, which has a linear correlation with the society’s efficiency. Savelyev (2013:1684) distinguishes several factors in the efficiency theory. He identified that the efficiency of an economic institution is determined by the competitiveness of the economic and political spheres of that society. Also, the quality of life of the people is a manifestation of the efficiency of the institutions working to attain a modern status. A third factor underscores ‘the good society’, focusing on different features of the society such as welfare, education and health. Similar to the second factor, here new institutions are combined with aspects of better living; the people of the society become the objective and focus and not a means to an end. Efficiency is scaled on how best and prudent the qualities of living, human rights, and opportunities for personal development are.

The notions of modernity as complex (Gyekye, 1997) and multidimensional (Savelyev, 2013) in my opinion encompass the earlier explanations given as a historical period (Linehas, 2009; Giddens, 1990; Trainer, 1998; Habermas & Ben-Habib, 1981) and a product of social evolution which led to change in society (Eze-Uzomaka & Oloidi, 2017). As a complex concept, modernity is composed of elements of tradition and the new era and these elements are sourced from diverse cultures. Reference to the past and new generation situates the concept in a historical period when something might have occurred. Also a product is an end result of a process thus the course of inheriting and appropriating from the past ended in the birth of a new era which has been termed modern. The diverse interpretation depending on the context in which it is being used is what makes modernity a multidimensional phenomenon. In one

context, it is a project that has to be accomplished and in another a civilisation, but what stands out is that modernity manifest in a change, it could be a new thing or an appropriation of the old to suit the era.

Considering the various interpretations given to modernity, in respect of historical period, the Dagaaba like most African societies which were colonised got exposed to change when the British introduced chieftaincy in 1900 (Yelpaala, 1983:352). The author adds that before this period, power was not vested in an individual but decentralised. Thus, roles were played by the *Tengan sob*, the *yir sob* and the clan heads in the administration of the communities. However, to enforce colonial rule, the system of indirect rule was instituted where the governor, then resident in Tamale or Accra, several miles away from the Dagaaba could enforce colonialism through these appointed chiefs. Thus, historically the Dagaaba experienced modernity through the institution of chieftaincy by the British through colonialism. Aside from colonialism, the arrival of the Catholic Missionaries in Jirapa in 1929 (Behrends & Lentz, 2012) and the mass conversion of the Dagaaba in the 1930s which consolidated the Catholic faith in the region, brought change. Whereas the traditional religion accommodated indigenous performances, the new religion frowned on it. The earlier missionaries' perception of indigenous performances as barbaric, due to ignorance, and the new converts' quest to satisfy requirements of the Christian religion, led to most of them shying away from indigenous performances.

The complexity of modernity is manifested in the Dagaaba's life through the way they are able to embrace features of colonialism, Christianity and traditional practices as a way of life. In 1935, the colonial government established the first school in Lawra (Behrends & Lentz, 2012) to offer enough formal education to aid in easy communication and transaction between the coloniser and the colonised. This western education provided European orientation to the Dagaaba which had to be combined with that of the traditional one being offered at home. In addition to the colonial schools, the Catholic Missionaries also established a school in Nandom in 1937 to aid in conversion of the Dagaaba to the Catholic faith. The outcome of this dual orientation (formal and informal education) and the imparting of different religion is a modern Dagaaba who could manoeuvre his way between cultures, ideologies and religion.

The consequence of this complexity resonates in the youth's submissions during my focus group discussions. For instance, most of the youths in making their arguments were code switching between Dagaare, English and Twi, evidence of being students and having travelled out of Lawra and Fielmuo, because Twi is not an indigenous language of the Dagaaba but can be learnt in commercial towns. They also revealed that their preference for art music is because it is one of the subjects they study and it is

examinable. From their submissions art music was initially studied as a requirement to complete various levels of education, either at Junior or Senior High, but when they realised that one could make a career of it or get additional income from it, they nurtured and developed interest in it. At the discussions I could count five (5) of the youth who were organists on pay rolls of churches, but none could play the *gyil*.

Modernity as a complex phenomenon manifests in how it is expressed or viewed by the Dagaaba community; a double-edged sword. At one level it is viewed as the cause of the decline in indigenous practices. It is therefore resisted by the older generation who are of the view that modernity is erasing traditional values and practices among the younger generation. As noted by the *Tengan sob* of Fielmuo and Naa Gandaa of Birifoh, they believe that if not for modernity, the youth would not have been reluctant to engage or participate in traditional practices. Meaning modernity presents options, making it easier for one to make a choice. On the other hand, the youth embraces modernity as a system they have no choice but to patronise. In their submission, the youth indicated that one has to embrace modernity in order to function; for instance, they have no choice but to be in school so they can qualify for formal employment.

From the analysis done on modernity, a link can be made between modernity and colonialism based on Shilliam's (2010) explanation. Shilliam (2010: 5214) refers to modernity as "a condition of social existence that is radically different to all past forms of human experience". Per this definition a link can be made between modernity and colonisation since the latter was the means by which Europe introduced new social patterns in varied degrees to most – if not all – of the known world, including Africa, the Americas, Asia and Australia. Coloniality, which ensues from colonialism (Shange, 2021), refers to the retention and management of power through the control of access to knowledge, moral and artistic resources of the indigenous or colonised people by the dominant group or hegemon (Townsend, 2016:33). The origin of modernity can be traced to Europe's colonisation of the known world because the global standard of modernity is still vastly European. Taking Shilliam's (2010) definition into consideration, modernity is demonstrated in social, religious and economical constructs all over the world. For instance, the clothing industry which sets the mode of dressing for various social events all over the world is tailored to mainly represent European standards. This can be seen in how European official wear, wedding gowns, and even casual wear have – to a large extent – replaced indigenous clothing all over the world. In Cord Magazine's 2017 publication of the top 10 clothing brands in the world, the entire list was made up of European brands: Louis Vuitton, Fendi, Prada, to name a few. When

it comes to trade and commerce, the banking system – introduced by Europe – is the main driver of all global exchange and the global currency standard for trade is the United States dollar. This is a currency backed by the Federal Reserve which was established in accordance with the European banking system in the US in 1913. The same effect of modernity can be seen in cuisine, education and religion, to name a few.

Kohn (2006) explains that colonialism “is a practice of domination, which involves the subjugation of one people to another”. From this definition we see a link between modernity and colonialism in the sense that it is through the subjugation of a people that the coloniser/subjugator is able to introduce a new condition of social existence to the colonised people and gradually eradicate the old. The greatest effect of this condition is seen in Africa to this very day. The commonest languages spoken by Africans, for instance, are English, French and Portuguese. These three languages were introduced as a result of colonialism and although Africa still has thousands of indigenous languages, there are many Africans today who, as a result of modernity, cannot speak any indigenous African language but can speak at least one of the three European languages. The engine that has caused this condition to prevail is Coloniality.

Coloniality operates through the control of access to knowledge, moral, and artistic resources. The educational system in most of the world is based on a European model. Even in countries that produce learning material in their indigenous languages – like China, Japan and Rwanda – the European certification standards are still used at the most relevant level, that is, the tertiary level. This standard is globally known as the ‘University’ system, introduced by Europe. One will also still find many institutions in these countries using the coloniser’s language as the medium of teaching and learning.

When it comes to morals, religion sets the pace today. The most dominant religions globally are Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. Of the three, the most far reaching is Christianity, which has spread wide across the continents especially to Africa, Europe and the Americas. This spread was propagated by Europe. The most popular version of the Bible which is the main moral guide of Christians all over the world is the King James Version. King James was an English king. As an African, my observation from the African context is that we even tend to condemn African traditional beliefs as demonic and rather embrace Biblical doctrines.

Indigenous art is seemingly also gradually declining these days. In Ghana, for instance, we have far more pianists, guitarists, saxophonists and trumpeters than we have players of indigenous instruments like the Xylophone, Gonje, Kora or the Seprewa. Although indigenous art forms do persist, it is on a much

smaller scale as compared to the foreign influx. This is not only in music, but also in literature, design, architecture and other forms of visual art. The reason we remain in this condition is undoubtedly as a result of coloniality.

Most societies around the globe function by the standards of our common colonisers – the Europeans – and we still depend on them for most of the resources that make it possible for us to function as a society. They on the other hand are world powers who control the global resources at their convenience, thanks to the power they have gained and maintained through modernity and coloniality. Europe takes credit for discovering the rest of the known world and even if that is arguable, the educational systems groom us to believe it is true. They control our trade, education, healthcare, beliefs, and even the language by which we communicate making them a ‘European Hegemony’. In fact, Europe’s global dominance is so great that their biggest global competitor/rival, China is putting in deliberate measures to get most of their population speaking the English language as soon as possible. According to Wei & Su (2012: 14) more than 400 million people are learning English currently in China, accounting for nearly one third of China's population. This can be attributed to the fact that in dealing with other parts of the world, Chinese – known to predominantly speak Mandarin – meet the stumbling block of language as a barrier. For instance, in recent years China has taken a keen interest in making investments in Africa and since the primary language in Africa is the English language, the Chinese will be able to break that language barrier more easily if they learn to speak English. This is another one of the many effects of the European Hegemony which has been able to persist for so long thanks to the use of modernity and the power derived from coloniality as a result of colonialism.

In the remaining sub-sections of this section – namely industrialisation, urbanisation, formal education, religion, technology – I discuss how features of modernity have influenced the Dagaaba, their way of life and indigenous performances.

5.3.1 Industrialisation

As indicated earlier by the evolution theorists, a major precursor of modernity is industrialisation, a transformation of production from mainly agricultural to manufacturing of goods, that is, the transition from manual labour to mechanised system of producing goods. Szreter (2004) explains industrialisation as transformation of means of production. According to him, this change leads to contacts between people previously not exposed to each other. He adds further that the conversion of people from diverse backgrounds at a production plant becomes a fertile ground for population growth, compromise in health

and exchange of ideas. As a public health researcher, much of Szreter's arguments focus on the impact of industrialisation on the health of residents and workers within industrial areas. Though he raises very critical and valid points, my interest in his analysis is on the exchange of ideas as this is in line with my argument that modernity has influenced indigenous performances of the Dagaaba.

The exchange of ideas is what influences one's already held perception about a subject matter, especially as the person has now become a part of the whole, he feels obliged to conform in order to belong. As indicated earlier the youth of Lawra and Fielmuo argued that their seeming abandonment of indigenous performances is not a disregard for one's culture but the transformation of the way things are done. In support of Szreter's argument, Dagaaba's in their quest to tap into the opportunities for waged jobs in industrial areas such as the mining towns come into contact with cultures different from their own. And as pointed out by the youth during focus group discussions, having become part of these communities through work, they have no choice but to absorb the new culture in order to fit into their new environment. Though these migrants make efforts to visit home as and when possible, their new environment, the exposure to new culture and their brief stay at home whenever they visit weaken their participation, expertise and knowledge in indigenous performances.

Muhammad et al (2018) submit that industrialisation is a departure from agrarian to industrial economy thus introduction of waged jobs, and although industrialisation led to an increase in the production of goods and provided employment opportunities – in other words, economic growth – it has its negative consequences. They argue that rural urban migration; especially the youth seeking for employment in industrial cities and towns, weakens family ties and diminish informal social control. This is because the distance from home alienate them from the “eyes of the community” and therefore their behaviour as Dagaaba goes unchecked by this new community. Moore in (Muhammad et al (2018:23) lays emphasis on this when he submits that industries employ people from different ethnic groups making it impossible to apply or adhere to any of the social controls from the different groups. Thus, individuals from these diverse cultures end up abandoning their informal control mechanisms to embrace what pertains in the new community. Moore's argument resonates the concerns of the youth of Lawra and Fielmuo, that they do not intentionally refrain from indigenous performances but situations and circumstances they find themselves in make it challenging to engage in Dagaaba indigenous performances.

Consciously or unconsciously, Lawra and Fielmuo, like many communities in the wake of industrialisation had to transform from their indigenous way of doing things in order to fit into the global transformation. The single rainy season in the region makes agriculture, the major occupation of the

indigenes, unreliable for sustenance. The attraction of waged jobs, which were rare in these communities, led to migration of the Dagaaba to mining towns such as Obuasi, Prestea and Tarkwa.

5.3.2 Urbanisation

An important aspect of social change over the centuries has been the rise and growth of cities. The transition from manual labour to mechanised systems of production created job opportunities that led to mass emigration of people from rural communities to areas where employment opportunities existed. Urbanisation, a product of industrialisation has had significant consequences for many facets of social, political, and economic lives (Macionis & Parrillo, 2010). Indigenous culture, in many cases, has been supplanted by the overriding western view of the world through increasing access to digital media, satellite communication, and increased interaction with peoples of different cultures through tourism and trade. The indigenous lives of Lawra and Fielmuo have been overtaken by demands from political, economic and social growth. Lawra's status as an administrative capital required face-lifting. This was done by connecting the town to the national grid to ensure consistent supply and distribution of electricity. A post office was also constructed to aid communication and draw Lawra closer to the outside world. In addition, banks were established to encourage saving and facilitate payment of salaries of people employed in the formal sector. There is also a police station to guarantee security and safety in the community. These provisions by the government also attracted entrepreneurs to establish businesses, thus urbanisation of Lawra. This new status of the community has made members embrace urban lifestyles, such as organising and participating in concerts rather than engaging in indigenous performances and going to the grinding mill to grind cereals instead of using the grinding stone. These replacements have made the performances of play and work songs nearly impossible.

Fielmuo, though not an administrative capital, has become urbanised due to trading activities, a situation which has heightened monetisation. The youth of Fielmuo no longer have an interest in or passion for indigenous art and performances. They prefer to learn how to play modern instruments such as trumpets and piano since the skills provide opportunity to earn money at events like church programmes and concerts. The effects of urbanisation amongst indigenous populations have shown that rapid social change and acculturation pressure can have impact on the cultural identity and well-being of indigenous groups, especially the youth.

The impact of urbanisation is being keenly felt by indigenous communities across the world, and carries both potential serious consequences for their culture, heritage as well as socio-economic opportunities. In 2008, it was indicated that the number of the world's population who were migrating within countries

and between countries continued to rise (UN, 2008). The United Nations asserted that the youth are particularly vulnerable in urban settings. Disempowered and marginalised from the urban society in which they live, they also lack opportunities to retain and develop their cultural identity, knowledge and traditional skills. As pointed out by Thomas Danikuu, a youth in Fielmuo, they have to abandon their indigenous life in order to remain relevant in the midst of social change. From his argument, they do not set out consciously to forsake the way of life of the Dagaaba but the system draws them away from indigenous performances. For instance, it is not intentional to stop hunting and shepherding but formal education which keeps them in the classroom and later outside their communities when they reach secondary and tertiary education. As a result of being supplanted, they often find it hard to sustain their language, identity and culture and to pass these on to future generations.

The trend of urbanisation over the years has had influence on all aspect of human development and the Dagaaba community are not left out. There is a growing concern, for instance among elder *gyil* players in Dagaaba land that the youth are becoming increasingly disinterested in their own traditions. This is a concern which led to a decree by the chief of Lawra to his divisional and sub-chiefs to form troupes to play the *gyil* during the *Kɔb bené* festival of Lawra. Many of the younger generation are abandoning their traditional music instruments in favour of popular western ones such as piano which they believe is economically viable compared to the *gyil*. This situation was confirmed during a focus group discussion when Der Belaar interjected that playing piano at concerts and church programmes attracts higher pay than that of the *gyil*. Thus the prospect of waged job in the modern instruments has led to the decline in participation in indigenous performances.

5.3.3 Formal Education

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in the 15th century, the people of the Gold Coast (now Ghana) had traditional or informal means of educating themselves with the goal of attaining societal values and equipping the younger generation with life skills. It was considered a sacred trust for grandparents, parents, and kinsmen to teach children taboos, history, music, rhetoric and overall survival. The objective of this informal education was to induct and orient the younger generation to be part of a community (Antwi, 1992: 23). Indeed, the entire community took part in the child's socialisation. The traditions and values of the community, as well as the meaning of life, were taught to the child. For instance, among the Akan ethnic group, future kings and chiefs were secluded for a period during which the elders took them through orientation on leadership skills and their role and responsibilities (Antwi, 1992:23).

The introduction of Western formal education dates back to 1529 when European merchants and missionaries established schools in the Elmina, Cape Coast, and Christiansburg castles. The primary purpose was to Christianise the local people and to train them for employment as interpreters in the European commercial enterprises (Antwi, 1992; Graham, 1971; McWilliam, 1962). By the twentieth century, Western forms of education had spread in Africa, particularly within the Gold Coast.

In 1874, when the British colonised the Gold Coast, they used schooling to impose their language, and culture. The education system was aimed at making the people of the Gold Coast embrace the life styles of the colonisers. (Macbeath, 2010:5). Although Gold Coast gained its independence in 1957, the education system of modern-day Ghana is still based on Western structure, perspectives, goals, and values. It is associated with the creation of Western urban, white-collar elite, whose world view is similar to those educated in the West (Coe, 2005). In other words, through European formal education, western cultures are manifested in the everyday lives of Ghanaians.

Though western education has its advantages, one cannot lose sight of its negative effects on indigenous life. According to Ofori-Attah (2006: 420), the curricular and training weakened the identity and personality of the African, making products of the education system reject the traditional way of life in place of western lifestyle. Having failed to include the indigenous life of the African in the curriculum and branded it inferior, students of the western education system were denied the opportunity of acquiring and developing socio-cultural skills that are relevant to his or her immediate community (Ofori-Attah, 2006). Also, failure of the Ministry of Education, the body responsible for school curriculum development in Ghana to depart from the more western oriented curriculum inherited from the colonial educational system, has contributed to the weakness of indigenous performances.

As lamented by the chiefs in the Lawra traditional area, parents lose control of their children as early as age four (4) when they are required by the educational system to enrol in schools. In these schools, they are taught the alphabets as *A for apple*, even though this fruit is not grown in Ghana. Thus, from this tender age, the child is uprooted from his immediate environment by what he is taught in school. This confirms the concerns of the youth in Fielmuo who argued that the system makes them abandon their way of life.

In his submission on 3 March 2020, Mr. Lèè Kuunyaa, the *Tengan Sob* of Fielmuo also traced the abandonment of indigenous performances to teachers. He lamented that teachers from the onset of education in the community made the enthusiastic pupils, who were eager to learn new things, to believe that indigenous practices and performances distract learning in the classroom. It is common knowledge

that pupils respect and uphold opinions of teachers. Therefore, it is not surprising that these pupils who were being trained in a Catholic school will obviously embrace a different religious orientation and way of life foreign to the people of Fielmuo. Presently Fielmuo does not have a Senior High School and since the introduction of formal education, parents had no choice but to let their children leave Fielmuo as young as fourteen (14) years to access higher education in other communities. The outcome has been the lack of social competence due to absence from the community and absorption of other cultures. Thus, exhibition of skills in indigenous performance as a mark of identity has been replaced by school certificates which are needed in securing a waged job to complete his or her new status.

Mr. L&E Kuunyaa's contribution to the impact of modernity on indigenous performances supported an earlier submission made on 10 December 2019 by the chief of Birifoh, Naa Debomo Gandaa who indicated that they have lost control, not in leadership but the social orientation of their children as they leave home to go to school and work in different environments. During my interview with the chief he stated:

You send your children to school to ensure that they benefit from formal employment, as has been the case now, and that is the beginning of our loss of control. They are socialized differently in schools; adopt the ways of life of other people they meet in the cities and communities where they work, so when they return to their homes, they are different people. They abandon or stay away from what used to be their way of life, they no longer want to participate in what we do, especially what we believe in as a group. Even we, the chiefs have lost control of the situation (Naa Debomo Gandaa, 10th December 2019).

Naa Gandaa's lamentation is not an isolated case, the chiefs of Eremon, Tampie and Baazing also acknowledged that formal education has made it impossible for the Dagaaba to allow their sons to continue being cowboys. Taking cows for grazing presented opportunities for work song performance but with the boys now in school this activity has been reassigned to the Fulani, a nomadic ethnic group whose major occupation is cattle rearing.

5.3.4 Religion

In the discussion of the Dagaaba perception of performance, I presented various occasions and the basis for indigenous art. It is evident from the observance of these occasions that in the belief system of the Dagaaba there is room for indigenous performances. However, as noted by the *Tengan sob* of Fielmuo all these changed when what he refers to as "the white man's religion" was introduced to the Dagaaba.

According to him, the Catholic Missionaries, the first “foreign” religious body in the north western part of Ghana branded every indigenous activity as *setaana* (satanic). This proclamation made most people who have been baptised into the Catholic faith to refrain from participating in most indigenous performances. Behrends and Lentz (2012) note that when the missionaries established schools, preference was given to children of the Catholic faith during school enrolment. This could have been an incentive for the Dagaaba to embrace the religion, thereby forego indigenous practices considered *setaana* to get the opportunity to enrol their children in the missionary school so that they could benefit from the new way of life.

Despite the strong opposition of the church which has contributed to the weakness of indigenous performances, the Catholic Church seems to be providing a space for the performances of play songs – whether intentional, or not. In Fielmuo I witnessed the Catholic Women Association of the St Paul’s Catholic Church engaged in play song performance before the commencement of their meeting. According to a member, Martha Nurubome, the songs serve as an announcement for members who have drifted off after church service to retreat their steps to the meeting ground. She also indicated that it gives the women the opportunity to relive a tradition that is fast dying. Lastly, the performance also serves as an ice breaker for a healthy deliberation.

Figure 6: Play song performance (Christian Women Association, Fielmuo, 8 March 2020)



Though it is not a widespread performance and contained within this specific women's group, this occurrence is an example of how alternative platforms can be created to encourage the continuity of indigenous performances.

5.3.5 Technology

Initially houses within Dagaaba communities were built through communal labour where community members moulded blocks. Large farms were also cultivated through co-operate farming and flour was produced by grinding on the stone. Information was delivered by messengers who sometimes walked or rode on horses and donkeys for days to reach their destinations. Though these modes of executing tasks were tedious and took a lot of time to accomplish them, it was a platform for social interactions. Working together, whether it is farming, hunting or building created opportunities for community members to share ideas through playing of improvised instruments, songs and dance performances. As indicated earlier, such informal occasions became rehearsal grounds for people to perfect their language proficiency, playing of instruments, arts of singing and dancing. However, the execution of tasks manually changed when Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press in the 15th century. This innovation was the birth of technology which has since made execution of tasks easier. Now there are trained masons who are paid to build houses, this has taken away the opportunity for community members to meet and interact while building. The grinding machine has also taken away the tedious process Dagaaba women had to go through to obtain flour for food. Similarly, people who hitherto were far apart have been drawn closer through the use of telephones and internet, access to, production and distribution of information have been made effortless. However, technology comes with a price.

Most significant of the impact of technological innovations is that it has altered social interactions (Sutton, 2013). The use of the phone and internet for instance has pushed people out of reality to a virtual world. A Dagao who has migrated from Lawra to Accra may no longer see the need to go home frequently because through the phone or internet communication with family members is possible. Though technology has shortened the distance between communities, it has displaced the opportunity for physical interaction. In my interview with the late Naa Dr. Francis Danikuu, the chief of Fielmuo, he submitted that death is what usually brings people who have migrated home so they can mourn the departed family member. I observed that the chief of Fielmuo who made this submission, also did not live in the community; he was a lecturer at the University for Development Studies in Tamale. His job requirement certainly did not allow him to be in Fielmuo always. In a situation like this, his children will grow up having little social interactions with community members and have limited expertise in the

performance traditions of the Dagaaba. But as has already been discussed, it is not because these people do not want to come home but most of them have their waged jobs outside of Fielmuo. Apart from the cost involved in frequent travels home, it is not feasible for an employer to regularly grant permission to employees to travel home.

Another aspect of technology that has had adverse impact on indigenous performance is the invention of the computer. The computer has the capacity to generate, collect and store raw material, these abilities of the computer has led to digital production of songs for distribution. This feat has displaced participation in and performance of indigenous songs since people can sit in the comfort of their homes to listen to songs from the radio or television. Primarily, the use of the computer and other digital resources which make it possible for transfer and migration of songs has made indigenous performances less attractive.

Throughout my stay in Lawra there was no evidence of play song performances. Rather, I observed a constant provision of songs, announcements and news on a public address system mounted at a fuel station in the centre of the town. The fuel station tunes in to a radio station, Lawra 101.1 FM, and then broadcasts the feed from the radio station onto the public address system. Though the primary objective is not for entertainment, as I gathered from the fuel attendants, but is a marketing strategy to attract patrons, it provided entertainment, updated the community members on information they needed to adhere to and upcoming events. There were also numerous bars and eateries in the town which equally provided music which, in the evening attracted people to showcase their dancing skills. Not the indigenous dance, but dance moves in music videos of popular artists. I was informed that people arrange for artists to come and perform periodically in Lawra. This observation and opportunistic information was therefore a corroboration of remarks made by the chiefs of Eremon, Baazing and Tampie during my interview with them, that they have banned such activities in their jurisdictions due to the influence on indigenous performances.

5.4 Transformation of indigenous performances

Transformation in indigenous performance of the Dagaaba is registered in the avenue for performances, digitisation, genre and copyright. As discussed earlier play and work song performances depend on certain activities thus their continuity is determined by the existence of these. However, features of modernity discussed have made this challenging hence the attempts by some identifiable women's group to keep the tradition of play songs by performing them at their meetings. Though it is encouraging to

observe that possible alternative avenues for performance has emerged, it is not all inclusive since only members of such associations get to perform.

Digitisation has also made collection, distribution and storage of indigenous performances possible. Initially, one could only have access to a performance by being physically present at the venue. But now it has become a common practice for people to record events at festivals, funerals and marriage ceremonies. These are later duplicated and stored for future use. Of particular mention is my collection of the performance at the Catholic Women Association meeting in Fielmuo with my digital equipment. Previously I could just watch and listen to what happened but with technology, I now have copies of the recording. Digitisation has therefore made it possible for indigenous performances to be stored and retrieved. The change has also aided in events moving outside of their geographical locations through reproduction and distribution.

Another transformation of indigenous performance is the modification of the genre. Typically, indigenous performances have the call and response style in performance but the youth, taking advantage of the change that has swept through Dagaaba land have employed contemporary song genre styles. Now there are artists who do not employ the call and response but sing in the styles of Afro Pop and Reggae. As discussed in chapter two (2), my interview with Mr. Jonas Dery Abesig, a Dagao Afro Pop musician revealed how he combines the original mode of composition by using topical issues in Dagaaba land and Afro Pop beats. He admitted that there is mixed feelings from listeners, while the youth are excited about the “upgrade” of indigenous songs, that is, visibility of the Dagaaba in contemporary music, majority of the adults yearn for the Dagaaba identity in music, the xylophone, a conspicuously missing instrument in his present repertoire. There are other artists of Dagaaba origin but outside of the two communities studied who have also modified the genre of Dagaaba songs. Wiyaala, Samini, Marce Dagaati and Lebkaar Justine have composed songs using genres of either Afro pop, Hip life and Dance Hall.

Previously indigenous performances of the Dagaaba, like most African arts were community owned, an individual could therefore not claim authorship. Again, indigenous performances were acknowledged as part of the community’s orientation and social control mechanism as such attention was not given to it as an occupation. So though at funerals mourners show appreciation to the *langkone* by giving him money, the act is not considered as an occupation, he could be a farmer or hunter contributing to the process of seeing a departed community member off to the world of the ancestors. The notion of community ownership however changed when individuals began composing songs in response to the establishment of show business and the music industry where one could make a career in music making.

Record labels now sign artists, manage and own rights to songs. Thus, though Mr. Jonas Dery Abesig and the other artists employ community materials to compose, the right to the songs does not belong to their communities but to the record label they are signed on. In this regard permission must be sought before any of his songs are used unlike indigenous performances which did not require consent before use.

5.5 Conclusion

Considering the notion of indigenous performances among the Dagaaba, the issue of orientation is essential as that is what drives participation. The bases for performances reflect various intensions towards each activity. Orientation on the inhabitants of the environment as a shared space between humans and spirits motivated the Dagaaba to engage in the *Bagr* performance to ensure balance in the environment. Similarly, knowledge of the sacredness of the earth sustained the adherence of *Takɔ daa*. These performances which were driven by the belief system of the Dagaaba continued until the onset of Christianity and formal education. It has also been established that the Dagaaba variously abandoned indigenous performances due to circumstances in which they found themselves. Catholicism found root in the land at a time the Dagaaba could not resist, during colonial rule. Though literature does not expressly indicate forced conversion, there was coercion. School enrolment in mission schools was based on membership so one seemingly had little choice but to become a catholic. As Catholics, the Dagaaba orientation towards *Bagr* and *Takɔ daa* performances changed as they were made to believe that such were satanic activities. Formal education also contributed to most Dagaaba relocating from their communities.

Orientation of accomplishment has also affected indigenous performances. While the exhibition of social competence through farming, hunting, songs, playing of *gyil* and dances were acknowledged as achievements thus motivated participation in indigenous performances, the birth of modernity changed this orientation. Since the emergence of modernity, the constitution of achievement has been one's ability to possess what enables an individual to fit and function in the various institutions that operate in the era. Thus social competence alone is no longer enough value for the Dagaaba. The change in the orientation of accomplishment spurred on the Dagaaba to get formal education, migrate to seek for skilled and unskilled employment and embrace cultures of work and new communities in order to fit into the new environment. This led to loss of social control mechanisms which were embedded in the indigenous performances that are no longer practiced.

The next chapter includes a number of play and work songs collected during my fieldwork. By analysing the texts of the songs the influence of modernity on the composition of play and work songs are investigated.

CHAPTER SIX

ANALYSIS OF COLLECTED PLAY AND WORK SONGS

6.1 Introduction

The songs discussed in this chapter were collected from a mother and son, Ms. Mary Emilia Nifaasie and Mr. Denise Nifaasie. who are striving to keep the art alive in spite of the complexity of modernity.

As indicated in chapter three (3) it was not possible for me to participate in or observe performances to collect play and work songs in their natural setting due to reasons already stated; with the exception of the requested work song at Tabier and the chanced play song performance at the Catholic Church in Fielmuo. My attention was, however, drawn to the social competence of Mr. Denise Nifaasie through Facebook. Due to the decline and perceived ‘less attractiveness’ of community performances, the few youth (like (Mr. Denise Nifaasie) who have acquired the skills in indigenous performance, record and upload their performances on either YouTube or Facebook. When I chanced on his performance, I contacted him telephonically and made an appointment to record the songs from him and his mother at Hamile, a community at the Ghana-Burkina Faso border, about fifteen (15) kilometres south of Fielmuo. Some of the songs Mr. Denise Nifaasie performed, are compositions of Alphonse Somé, a Burkinabe artist, and a friend of Mr. Denise Nifaasie. It was indicated in chapter one (1) that the Dagaaba are also found in Burkina Faso, thus there is a cordial relationship between the ethnic groups in the two countries.

On 20 February 2020, I visited the home of Ms. Mary Emilia Nifaasie, who had agreed to perform some of her songs for me to record. This was a private performance for me, but notably we soon got admirers in the compound who joined in the chorus when they became familiar with it. The setting for work songs is the relevant work environment, but Ms. Mary Emilia Nifaasie performed without the activity due to reasons already stated. Though Mary and Denise Nifaasie had other compositions, commissioned songs for public education and church songs, I selected twenty (20) songs which were in line with this study. The performances by Mary and Denise Nifaasie demonstrate the primary function of play songs, a space for the transfer of knowledge and skills.

Denise, a graduate of the University for Development Studies, Tamale, Ghana, in spite of his exposure to modern life is able to compose and perform play songs because he listened to and watched his mother, now seventy-three years (73) doing it. Ms. Mary Emilia Nifaasie who has lost her sight and is not mobile has succeeded in transferring the art of composing play and work songs to her son. Unlike Mr. Denise

Nifaasie, most of the youth I interacted with during the focus group discussion lack this social competence because they did not get the space and opportunity to practice.

6.2 Propounded theory

Considering existing research and studies on Dagaaba songs (Hien, 2019; Lawrence, 2011; Bodomo & Mora, 2007; 2002: Woma, 2012; Vercelli, 2006) as well as the present study, I conceive that play and work songs are accessorial performance. This notion is deduced from the observations made that play songs are accompaniment to recreational activities such as storytelling, *kaare*, and *bene* dances. Similarly, work songs aid the execution of tasks like hunting, renovation of buildings, shepherding and grinding. They are thus accessories to occupation, artistic and cultural expressions of the Dagaaba.

6.3 Aim of collected songs

In discussing the role and function of play and work songs of the Dagaaba in chapter two (2), I established that central to their performances is commentary on what happens in the community for remedy, thus songs reflect Dagaaba life. I also pointed out that modernity has led to compromise in these performances. The twenty (20) songs collected confirm this deduction. Of the twenty (20) songs, only three (3) are work songs, an evidence that its performance has declined as a result of social change. A link to the songs will be provided.

6.3.1 Work songs

The first three songs are typical *neer zu yielu* which enables expression of sentiments by the performer. In song one (1), the composer laments over poor treatment in her matrimonial home and reaches out to her father, who is a farmer of great repute, to come to her rescue. The reference to her father, a well-recognised farmer in the community, and the request for the dowry to be returned, implies that she was well taken care of in her father's house but marriage has destroyed her life.

Song two (2), directly calls out the father to return her bride wealth because of the challenges facing her in the marriage. Song three (3) similarly points out the treatment meted out to an unassuming lady by the husband. These complaints of maltreatment in matrimonial homes and praises to a father could not have been done in a spoken language, but the song provides the shield for expression and protection from reprimand. Songs one (1) two (2) and three (3) thus reflect the place of the woman in Dagaaba communities as discussed in chapter four (4).

6.3.2 Play songs

The remaining seventeen (17) songs project the role and function of play songs of the Dagaaba. While song four (4) announces an incest, which has occurred in the community, the rest have themes of advice to uphold the values of the Dagaaba and consequence of deviant behaviour. In addition, song twenty (20) demonstrates the principle of shared benefits and sanctions of the Dagaaba discussed in chapter four (4). Though the deviant failed to heed to counsel, the consequence of the deviant behaviour is shared by the entire family.

6.4 Play and work songs as verbal art

As indicated earlier the songs were not collected in a natural cultural environment, they are therefore analysed without the focus on performative elements prevalent in verbal art performance, this does not however invalidate them, but a shift as speech acts which bring something into being (Austin, 1975). The pronouncements of the composers bring reintegration, remorse, relief and contentment into being. The texts of the songs reflect play and work songs as verbal art performance. Bauman (1977) argues that verbal art has to be performed to manifest its value. Though spoken words have values, the sentiments expressed in the performances of play and work songs add value to the words. Expressions such as *yee*, *yeeiii*, *aah*, *yaa*, *wooi*, *wuu*, *oo*, *ah* and *ãã* in the songs are some of the emotions that add value to the intentions of the performer while delivering her message in the performance. These expressions also establish emphasis to indicate the motives of the performer.

The manifestation of play and work songs as verbal art performance finds expression in the frames of communication such as translation, joking, imitation, quotation and insinuation employed by the composers. There are uses of insinuations when song four (4) makes use of “modern Ghanaian men” when the song was specifically composed about an individual in the community who had impregnated the daughter. Song fourteen (14) also employs insinuation in addressing the Dagaaba youth with regards to bad behaviour. There is also employment of imitation when in song sixteen (16) the tune of the *gyil* played for stubborn children *dabulbakyenkyen*, is used as an expression rather than words.

The composers also make use of figurative words like *nakole koorra* (an appellation for a farmer of great repute) in song one (1) to describe the worth of the parent to establish the unfairness being experienced by the woman; the fact that she is from a well to do family but suffering in the hands of another because of marriage. *Kurkur* is also used to refer to the occupation of the father, which is farming. In the same song, *kakyiire* and *zibuule* are used to indicate qualities of grains. While *kakyiire* is the surplus of harvest,

thus of low quality, *zibuule* the highest quality is often stored by farmers for planting in the next farming season. The reference that she asked the father to give her the lowest of the grains, thus a humble request and the father gave her the highest grain shows how the father values her and also the calibre of farmer he is. It also confirms the type of family she belongs. In song three (3) the expression “*n sãã wa yam n kul ti guole baari yoo*” (my father come and redeem me so I may go home and take care of dogs), an appeal to the father to return her bride wealth so she could go home to take care of the dogs, is also figurative. It implies that she prefers taking care of the family dogs to being in her present situation. As indicated earlier in chapter two (2), *neer zu yielu* offers the Dagaaba women the space and opportunity to express their pent up emotions and this is captured in the three (3) songs collected.

Another use of frames of communication is identified in song four (4) when Gyille’s mother employs quotation by referring to what the Kyaammier dwarf said when they visited for consultation. The purpose of the quote from the source of the message adds weight to its purpose.

The composers also make provision for structure for interpretation and appreciation of the songs which Bauman (1977) refers to as keying. The introduction, either chorus or solo, establishes the idea of the songs to be performed. A lamentation, for instance is established in the beginning of song one (1) with the employment of “*yami yee Yami yee Yami yeeii*”, with this, whoever is listening gets the basis upon which to make an interpretation and appreciation of the song. The song will thus be analysed and interpreted within the structure of lamentation, not lullaby, and would be appreciated as such. *Gaanãã yi na debe yare*, (modern Ghanaian men are mad), the introduction of song four (4) and *A Gããna Pɔlbili* (Ghanaian youth) of song fourteen (14) like the rest of the play songs collected, provide the structure for interpretation of deviant behaviour to aid their appreciation.

6.5 Influence of modernity on text of songs

Manifestations of modernity are reflected in the composition of songs four (4), seven (7), nine (9), thirteen (13) and seventeen (17). The opening of song four (4) “*Gaanãã yi na debe yare*” (modern Ghanaian men are mad) implies that modernity has given leeway to unacceptable behaviour. As discussed in chapter five (5), the Tabier *naa*, Saabom Sogyang III complained that certain provisions in the 1992 constitution of Ghana have made it difficult for the traditional institutions to enforce sanctions. According to Naa Saabom Sogyang III, it is the knowledge of this provision – such as reporting crimes to the security agencies rather than taking the law into one’s own hands – that increases deviant behaviour. Otherwise the traditional sanctions such as fine and banishment for committing a taboo like

incest would have dissuaded one from doing it. The expression “*Gaanãã yi na debe yare*” implies that modernity has heightened deviant behaviour.

Teenage pregnancy, the message in song seven (7) is a deviation of the value system of the Dagaaba as discussed in chapter five (5). It is a deviation, because childbirth before marriage – traditionally a stigma, since in Dagaaba kinship it prevents the child from belonging to the father’s family – is seemingly no longer an issue. Though a child from teenage pregnancy still does not belong to the father’s lineage in Dagaaba community, social change has neutralised the deviation. The Ghana Education Service, the body responsible for supervision of education in Ghana, for instance allows girls who get pregnant while schooling to continue with the education in their condition. This therefore neutralises the gravity of teenage pregnancy. Against this background, the traditional ‘criminal’ outlook of teenage pregnancy is lifted, making the situation rampant hence the advice to the youth in song seven (7).

Evidence of external contact is captured in song nine (9) when the name Adwoa is used to address deviant behaviour. This is a day name of the Akan ethnic group, given to girls born on Monday. As discussed in chapter three (3), Naa Puowele Karbo III, the paramount chief of Lawra, condemned this practice. The use of a name outside of the culture of the Dagaaba in the song confirms the chief’s submission that external culture has been embraced by the Dagaaba. In the same song, reference is also made to Bayuo’s refusal to go and hustle in the mining towns of the southern part of Ghana like his mates. This points to migration that has become part of the Dagaaba’s life as a means of progress and social mobility. Again, reference to the use of contraceptives in song nine (9) is another pointer to external cultural contact with different values. Traditionally a Dagao’s wealth is measured by his ability to cater for a large family thus one could give birth till it stops naturally. The fact that a composer in this community alludes to contraceptives shows influence of external culture.

6.6 Motivation for composition

In spite of social change, what has been maintained in the composition of play and work songs, is the inspiration for composition. The main motivation has been to regulate behaviour to be in synch with the Dagaaba value system for social control. Songs were composed and performed based on topical issues in the community to either applaud for continuation or reprimand for correction and this has not changed.

Song four (4) became popular between late 1980s and early 1990s when I was in secondary school and the offense was committed. The motive behind the composition was to make the offense as active in the minds of people as possible to dissuade would-be offenders. It therefore remained a popular performance

at social gatherings at that time. I had forgotten about it due to my return to the southern part of Ghana on completion of secondary school, but when Mr. Denise Nifaasie performed it, it brought back memories. In this era, promiscuity, irresponsible life style, delinquency and drug abuse are topical issues hence their prominence in the songs collected.

When I interviewed Ms. Mary Emilia Nifaasie she relished in the fact that a study is being done on a performance that is becoming extinct. Though excited, she shared her concern on what will happen to the documented songs when they cannot be performed by the future generation who are embracing new things. But presently she is contented with the contribution she is making to her society; composing and performing songs for community leaders who approach her when they wish to create awareness on topical issue. She mentioned that she was commissioned to compose a song for public health education to help publicise the Covid-19 pandemic. On his part, when I asked why he performs indigenous songs when some of his mates, like Mr. Jonas Dery Abesig and Marce Dagaati have switched to emerging genres of songs like Hip hop and Afro pop, this is what Mr. Denis Nifaasie said:

As for me, I want my songs to guide people's way of life by inculcating moral lesson. Secondly, I want my songs to be an exposition of our (Dagaaba) rich cultural heritage because our culture is fast fading and we, the youngsters, seem not to know anything about our culture. I also want to entertain people with my song and most importantly continue the legacy of my mother. She happens to be blind and non-literate yet she is full of wisdom, so I want to use my level of education to promote her talent and craft. (Denise Nifaasie, 29th February 2020)

Below are the songs collected from three (3) composers, Ms. Mary Emilia Nifaasie, Mr. Denise Nifaasie and Mr. Alphonse Somé. As stated earlier, the first three (3) songs are work songs demonstrating lamentations of Dagaaba women due to challenged marriages. The remaining seventeen (17) songs recount various aspects of deviation ranging from incest, stealing, disobedience and reckless lifestyle in songs four (4) to seven (7). Song eight (8) demonstrates regrets over wasted life and song eighteen (18) registers a plea from a distraught child who wants to be enrolled in school. The rest of the songs, nine (9) to twenty (20) offers counselling to reiterate the need to uphold social norms and values.

For ease of reference, I present each song on a new page. English translations is provided next to the Dagaare. This is the link to the recording of the songs: [bit.ly/mIsmaila](https://t.me/mIsmaila), on Telegram. The composers give brief commentary to each song before singing.

Song 1: Nadole Kuora (Great farmer), Composer: Mary Emilia Nifaasie (Maria Milli)

Chorus

Yami yee Yami yee Yami yeeii

¹ *Yami yee ã minaa wa yam santuo mɔ?* Yami ye'eee, who will pay off my debts?

² *Yami yee n buol n sãã ko yam santuo ye* Yami ye'eee let me call my father to pay off my debts

³ *Yami yee mi kye Kukur ke ηme lau lau bie* Yami ye'eee let me call my father to pay off my debts

⁴ *Maa sãã nadole koɔra n sãã na ku kɔ ka fong ηa* My father is the great farmer, he plants the late millet

⁵ *Maa sãã e kakyiire kom u ber ke e zibuule wan* I ask my father for some stony millet and gets the purest millet instead

⁶ *Yami yee mi gbaal a za ti nyong tan don bie* Yami ye'eee son of a great farmer

⁷ *Yami yee ã minaa wa yam ni dari mɔ?* Yami ye'eee, who will off my debts?

⁸ *Maa sãã nadole koɔra n sãã na ku kɔ ka fong ηa* My father is the great farmer, he plants the late millet

Yami yee n buol n sãã ko yam santuo o (2×)

Yami ye'eee let me call my father to pay off my debts (2×)

Yami yee Yami yee Yami yeeii

Song 2: Wani a libie wa tir (Return the bride price), Composer: Mary Emilia Nifaasie (Maria Milli)

<i>Yel n sãã u wani a libie wa tir aaah (2×)</i>	Tell my father to return the bride price (2x)
<i>Gbaale dion gbaale luge</i>	Trouble here, trouble there,
<i>U wani a libie wa tir</i>	He should return the bride price
<i>N sãã fo nye ni maal zina e de a libie</i>	Father did you ascertain my wellbeing before
<i>dan dire baare</i>	spending the bride price?

Song 3: Kulaa Tuo (Difficult Marriage), Composer: Mary Emilia Nifaasie (Maria Milli)

Chorus

<i>N zin ni n sãã yir ber won yee</i>	I was at peace in my father's house
<i>A deble ña wa en me yele yee ti maali zuo</i>	But this young man has put me in trouble
<i>A yir ña dem wa tuur me zume naa ti kum</i>	Now I am a subject of insults in this house
<i>N sãã wa yam n kul ti guole baari yoo (4×)</i>	Father come and redeem me to go home and cater for the dogs
¹ <i>Bibile baalon na be damne yee</i>	She is a meek and peaceful child
<i>Bibile baalon ɔ be damne yee</i>	She is a meek and peaceful child
<i>A bie dem bibi baalon ɔ be damne yee</i>	This child is a meek and peaceful lady
<i>ε a wa mwe ñwen u nyog tang were viire?</i>	How come she is now wondering about in the wilderness?
² <i>Sen sen kuobe wa dogle gbagle yee</i>	He has brought cow hide to cook for his cooperative farmers
<i>Eee yee sen sen kuobe wa dogle gbagle</i>	Look at the irresponsible man cooking cow hide yaa for his cooperate farmers
<i>Ni nye a sen sen kuobe wa dogle gbagle</i>	
³ <i>N zin ni n sãã yir ber won yee</i>	I was at peace in my father's house
<i>A deble ña wa en me yele yee ti maali zuo</i>	But this young man has put me trouble
<i>A yir ña dem wa tuur me zume naa ti kum</i>	Now I am a subject of insults in this house
<i>N sãã wa yam n kul ti guole baari yoo (4×)</i>	Father come and redeem me to go home and cater for the dogs

Song 4: *Gaanā yi na deɛ yare* (Modern Ghanaian men are mad), Composer: Anonymous

Chorus

<i>Gaanā yi na deɛ yare</i>	Modern Ghanaian men are crazy
<i>Deɛ mi wa nyon ɔ pogyaa miŋa yaŋ poɔ</i>	Now a man impregnates his own daughter
<i>Gaanā yi na deɛ yare o</i>	Modern Ghanaian men are crazy oo
<i>Deɛ mi wa nyon ɔ pogyaa miŋa yaŋ poɔ</i>	Now a man impregnates his own daughter
 <i>¹Ni boɔle a pogli mantaar n sogri bel nye</i>	 Gather the young girls and let me inquire
<i>N pogyaa ŋa ter ɔ poɔ kaŋ n bobr ke n baŋ a sob</i>	My daughter is pregnant and I need to know the source
 <i>N pogyaa yella ε be sogri ɔ sãã</i>	 Ask my father, says my daughter
<i>Aaa ah n poɔ ŋa nibaalu poɔnu</i>	Aaa ah this my pregnancy is a pity
<i>Aaa ah n poɔ ŋa n sãã so u</i>	Aaa ah this my pregnancy belongs to my father
 <i>²Ni boɔle a debli mantaar n sogri bel nye</i>	 Gather the young men and let me inquire
<i>N pogyaa ŋa ter ɔ poɔ kaŋ n bobr ke n baŋ a sob</i>	My daughter is pregnant and I need to know the source
 <i>N pogyaa yella ε be sogri ɔ sãã</i>	 Ask my father, says my daughter
<i>Aaa ah n poɔ ŋa nibaalu poɔnu</i>	Aaa ah this my pregnancy is a pity
<i>Aaa ah n poɔ ŋa n sãã so u</i>	Aaa ah this my pregnancy belongs to my father
 <i>A Gaanā yin zina zie liebi</i>	 Modern Ghanaian men are crazy
 <i>Deɛ mi nyog u mi ŋa zii yaŋ poɔ</i>	 Now a man impregnates his own blood
 <i>A Gaanā yi na deɛ kore kūũ</i>	 Modern Ghanaian men are killers
 <i>Deɛ mi wa nyog u pogyaa miŋa toni viŋ</i>	 Now a man engages in a shameful act with his <i>tome</i> own daughter

Song 5: Taa le a Zure (Don't steal again), Composer: Mary Emilia Nifaasie (Maria Milli)

Chorus

<i>Taale wa zure</i>	Gyille don't steal again
<i>Gyillee taale wa zure</i>	Gyille don't steal again
<i>Gyillee fo waani Kyaamier kontomme na yellaa? (2×)</i>	Gyille, did you hear what Kyaamier dwarf said? (2×)
 ¹ <i>N na zu na n mǎã</i>	 I will steal mother
<i>N na zu na n sǎã</i>	I will steal father
<i>Nyanyũũlu nie be e bom ke naamwin iriii? (2×)</i>	If stealing was bad why then did God create it? (2×)
 ² <i>fo taale wa zure</i>	 That you should never steal again
<i>Gyillee taale wa zure we</i>	Gyille don't steal again
<i>Gyillee fo waani Kyaamier kontomme na yellaa? (2×)</i>	Gyille did you hear what Kyaamier dwarf said? (2×)
 ³ <i>Fo taale wa zure</i>	 Gyille don't steal again
<i>Gyillee e fo taale wa zure</i>	Gyille don't steal again
<i>Gyillee fo waani Kyaamier kontomme na yellaa? (2×)</i>	Gyille, did you hear what Kyaamier dwarf said? (2×)
 <i>N na zu na n mǎã</i>	 I will steal mother
<i>N na zu na n sǎã</i>	I will steal father
<i>Nyanyũũlu nie be e bom ke naamwin iriii? (2×)</i>	If stealing was bad why then did God create it? (2×)

Song 6: Koṇ de wulu (Disobedient Child), Composer: Mary Emilia Nifaasie (Maria Milli)

Chorus

<i>N mãã</i>	Mother!!
<i>Lɛb wa boole n mãã</i>	Now you are crying out to your mother
<i>Lɛb wa boole n mãã</i>	Now you are crying out to your mother
<i>N mã mi wula fo zagre ke yidenɛɛ</i>	But you used to ignore your mother's advice to go and roam
¹ <i>N mãã</i>	Mother!!
<i>Fo na wa boole fo mãã</i>	You are calling out to your mother
<i>fo mã mi wula fo zagre Ke yidenɛɛ</i>	But you used to ignore your mother's advice to go and roam
² <i>A fo na koṇ de wulu</i>	You wouldn't heed to advice
<i>Fo sãã mi wul guu fo yag ir</i>	You ignored your father's advice
<i>Fo mã mi wul guu fo yag ir</i>	You ignored your mother's advice
<i>Fuṇ ni ṇa wa de yelle waare ni</i>	Now you are in trouble and you are returning to your mother
³ <i>A fo na koṇ de wulu</i>	You wouldn't heed to advice
<i>Fo sãã mi wul guu fo yidenɛɛ</i>	You ignored your father's advice
<i>Fo mã mi wul guu fo yidenɛɛ</i>	You ignored your mother's advice
<i>ɛ wa pag yelle waare ni fo mã zie</i>	Now you are in trouble and you are returning to your mother
⁴ <i>A ɛr ɛre ṇa fo na pag yelle wani wa kpɛ zin</i>	Now you have brought trouble home
<i>Fo na pag yelle wani wa kpɛ zin</i>	You have brought trouble home
<i>Fo mã mi wula guu fo zagre ke yi</i>	But you used to ignore the counsel of your Mother

Song 7: A Teng sang na (The world is destroyed), Composer: Denise Nifaasie

Chorus

<i>Ni wuure a ti debli e wuure a ti pogli</i>	Shame onto our young girls and boys
<i>Wuu wuu a teng sang na</i>	The world is now destroyed
<i>Fo mi nye ni pogli bibile u de besaale bomzae</i>	You see a little girl today
<i>ere ere na a biyaal nu mi e a bie ma</i>	Babysitters are now mothers
¹ <i>Ni wuure a ti debli e wuure a ti pogli</i>	Shame onto our young boys and girls
<i>Wuu wuu a teng sang na</i>	The world is now destroyed
<i>Fo mi nye ni pogli bibile u de besaale bomzae</i>	You see a little boy today
<i>ere ere na a nakiine nu mi e a bie sa</i>	Cowboys are now fathers
² <i>Ni wuure a ti pog nyame</i>	Shame onto our old ladies
<i>e wuure a ti deb nyame</i>	And shame onto our old men
<i>Wuu wuu a teng sang na</i>	The world is now destroyed
<i>Zie mi sob na ti pon e pog kon kpe a yire</i>	The woman is not home in the middle of the night
<i>A fo bie ul yi</i>	When your child is delinquent who will
<i>Fo na yi na e leb wa sogle ann?</i>	you come to ask?
³ <i>Ni wuure a ti deb nyame e wuure a ti nimbere</i>	Shame onto our old men and shame onto
	our elders
<i>Wuu wuu a teng sang na</i>	The world is now destroyed
<i>Zie mi sob na ti pon e deb kon kpe a yire</i>	The man is not home in the middle of the night
<i>ere ere na da nwame na so a ti yelle sagne</i>	Now the calabash of pito is responsible
	for all our trouble

Song 8: Maa te bang (Had I known), Composer: Denise Nifaasie

Chorus

<i>N sãã ni n mãã woyee</i>	My father and mother
<i>Sakur na ka ti min kyen</i>	When we were in school
<i>A sakur bie ti ter me yin ke ti nyu dãã</i>	A school boy used to invite me out for a drink
<i>ε n wa yini poɔ lere lere</i>	And now I am pregnant
<i>A wono me na yaa, ε a n zanu na min san</i>	Now my education is over and I am suffering
	My mates are all successful
<i>N taabe za na your,</i>	All my friends are all successful
<i>N pogli taabe za na your</i>	If I had behaved well,
<i>Maa ti maal ereε a koη ti wa ηwe a ηae</i>	it wouldn't turn out this way
<i>Wooi en form one</i>	Wooo my form one
<i>Wooi en form two</i>	Wooo my form two
<i>Wooi en form tiri</i>	Wooo my form three
<i>A wome ata a poɔ sãã</i>	And by the third year it is pregnancy
¹ <i>N taabe za wooi</i>	Dear friends of mine
<i>ε ti mi en fan zane</i>	Let's concentrate on our studies
<i>Wa yi bio wa faa ti minε</i>	So we can support ourselves in future
<i>Teng zu senseno be viel togtoge</i>	Promiscuity is not a good thing at all
<i>A yang me ni yelle yaa</i>	It has landed me in trouble
<i>ε a n zanu na mi san</i>	And my education is over
<i>Maa ti maal ereε a koη ti wa ηwe a ηae</i>	If I was well-behaved it wouldn't turned out this way

Song 9: Bayuo song a fo dogfo (Bayuo help your parents), Composer: Alphonse Somé

Chorus

Bayuo wooi bayuo wooi yi ti soŋ a fo sãã

Bayuo go and assist your father

Adwoa wooi Adwoa wooi yi ti soŋ fo mã

Adwoa go and assist your mother

¹*ε fo kɔ kɔbε ε fo zagr*

You have refused to go to farm

ε fo zan sεbε ε fo zagr

You have refused to study

Fo taabε tugr salmε ε fo zagr

You have refused to join your mates in
the gold mines

ε lεb Jangbong wille nibe pen ηwaare

And now you have become a thief

²*ε fo kul sire ε fo zagr*

You have refused to marry

ε fo zan sεbε ε fo zagr

You have refused to study

ε fo bɔ tome ε fo zagr

You have refused to work

ε lεb bɔg kpεε bibiir gbolle

And now you've become a prostitute

³*Fo sãã na gbil bine wa pag fo mã*

Your father struggled before marrying
your mother

A bε wε kpεε ku u kε u kuor

And now he is the owner of a big farm

Fo ma gbil bine kyuur awae

Your mother struggled for nine months

Fo tome ni a ηa fo mi na wa zana?

Is this the work you have learned?

⁴*Fo mã na gbil bine di ligε poɔ*

Your mother struggled in the dark

U na tεr poɔ kyuur awae

And carried you for nine months

Hanne ni fo wa baari fo voore

Went through the trouble to give birth to
you

Fo ni ηa lieb nyanyuge wa zure booree

And now you are a thief, stealing goats

⁵*Fo ma ti baŋ ke a ηa na fo naa ηwe*

If your mother knew you would turn out
this way

Zagr a tome ε zure boor

A deviant who steals goats

U koŋ ti ber dɔɔ ε kyen ti kyɔr eŋ

She would have taken contraceptives

Ter u eη-gan ku kpeme daa daa

To maintain a healthy body

*⁶Fo sãã na gbil bine kaa fo wa baar
ε fo wa ton tome wa faa u*

You father struggled to take care of you
With hopes you would one day be his
saviour

*Foo ni ηa zagr tome ε zure boor
pãã lieb jibra a lanne tug poɔ*

And now you've refused to work and
become a thief

*⁷Fo ma na gbil bine di lige poɔ
A ter a fo poɔ kyuur awae
ε fo wa ton tome wa faa u*

Your mother struggled in the dark
And carried you for nine months
Went through the trouble to give birth to
you

Foo ni ηa zagr tome ε koɔre fo miηa

And now you have refused to work and
you are selling your body

Song 10: Bibiir koŋ de wullu (Disobedient children), Composer: Denise Nifaasie

Chorus

εε εε ηα bibiir koŋ de wullu yεε

Children of today do pay heed to advice

εε εε bibiir koŋ de wullu yεε

Children of today do not pay heed to advice

εε εε bibiir koŋ de wullu yεε

Children of today do not pay heed to advice

Bibiir koŋ de wullu yaa

They do not listen to advice

Wul bal ke gyire

They live on their own counsel

¹ *A sãã wa toŋ u guu*

If he does not go on errands for the father

Bibile koŋ de wullu yεε

It is because he doesn't heed to advice

A mã wa toŋ u guu

If he does not go on errands for the mother

Bibile wul guu na so

It is because he doesn't heed to advice

A dogr be wa toŋ u guuu

If he does not go on errands for the relatives

Bibiir koŋ de wullu yεε

It is because he doesn't heed to advice

Wul bal ε gyire

Children of today do not listen to advice

They live on their own counsel

² *Pogli bile wa tere poo*

If a teenage girl becomes pregnant

Bibile wul guu na so

It is because she doesn't listen to advice

Doo bile wa en pog poo

If a teenage impregnates a girl

Bibiir wul guu na so

It is because he doesn't listen to advice

Bibiir wa were muo

If a child misses the way

Bibiir wul guu na so

It is because he doesn't listen to advice

Bibiir wul guu na so

Children of today do not listen to counsel

Wul bal ε gyire

They live on their own counsel

³ *Bibile wa tuur u dogr be*

When a child insults his parents

Bibile wul guu na so

It is because he doesn't listen to advice

Bibile ηweer u dogr be

When a child beats his parents

Bibile wul guu na so

It is because he doesn't listen to advice

Bibile wa wone tuo

When a child is suffering

Bibile wul guu na so

Bi wul guu na so

Wul bal ε gyirε

It is because he doesn't listen to advice

Children of today do not listen to advice

They live on their own counsel

Song 11: A na waale nuo faa (A cursed quest for enjoyment), Composer: Mary Emilia Nifaasie (Maria Milli)

Chorus

<i>A na waale nuo yee a na waale</i>	Your quest for enjoyment, this your quest
<i>Polbile a na waale nuo yee</i>	Young man, this your quest for enjoyment
<i>A na waale nuo faa</i>	Will end badly

¹ <i>Eη fo ma ko kone yee, eη fo ma</i>	You left your mother in tears
<i>Bie na eη u ma ko kone yee</i>	The young man has left his mother in tears
<i>ε u kpe u loɔri ũũre</i>	Joining a speeding car

² <i>Fo na yi zɔ ε ber fo sãã u kone yee</i>	You run away and left your father in tears
<i>Bie na eη u sãã u wone tuo</i>	The young man left his father to suffer
<i>ε u kpe u loɔri ũũre</i>	Joining a speeding car

³ <i>zɔ ε ber a yir vuo ko gaη yee</i>	You run away and left an empty house
<i>Ber a yir vuo ko gaη</i>	You left an empty house
<i>Bie na ber a yir vuo ko gaη yee</i>	The young man left an empty house
<i>ε u kpe u muo ti kyolle</i>	Roaming about in the city

Song 12: Biiri yε bεrwoŋ (Listen children), Composer: Alphonse Somé

Chorus

<i>E yaa wu yee biiri yε bεrwoŋ</i>	E yaa wu yee listen children
<i>E yaa wu yee biiri yε bεrwoŋ nikore wuloŋ (2×)</i>	E yaa wu yee children listen to the
<i>yε</i>	teaching of the elderly
<i>N sãã kpεε doŋ ti yell</i>	My uncle once said
<i>N sãã niε doŋ yel yelle koma</i>	My father once told me that
<i>Ka a nikpεε borbor na kye u sa la a bilbil</i>	confused elder is still better than a wise
<i>vil-vil u naa</i>	child
<i>N saakoma doŋ ti yell</i>	My grandfather once said
<i>N mākoma niε doŋ yel yelle koma</i>	My grandmother once told me that
<i>Ka a nikpεε borbor na kye u sa la a bilbil</i>	a confused elder is better than a child
<i>bilebile u na</i>	
<i>Bibil koŋ wuloŋ ullɔ ni ŋa wa ziŋ ka yelle mhaa</i>	The life of the disobedient child is
<i>u e na yiib a yi mǎ ti ziŋ pǎã bɔ sirε kullu wε</i>	stressful
	She is now in search of a husband after
	mothering twins already
<i>Dε a bibil koŋ woŋ wullu ullɔ ni ŋa wa ziŋ</i>	The disobedient young man is now the
<i>e a pogba a yi sirε</i>	husband of two women
<i>U e na pogba a yi sirε maŋ kɔ baar kε</i>	He has two wives while there's no one to
<i>burburɔ ba kai</i>	sow his fields
<i>Dε a bibil koŋ woŋ wullu ullɔ ni ŋa wa ziŋ e a</i>	The disobedient young man is now the
<i>pogba a yi sirε</i>	husband of two women
<i>U e na pogba a yi sirε zɔŋ mi bin ε monmonε</i>	He has two wives while there's no one to
<i>bε kai</i>	prepare his meals
<i>Bibil koŋ woŋ wuloŋ ullɔ ni ŋa wa ziŋ ka yelle</i>	The disobedient child is now surrounded

<i>ηmā pəg</i>	by trouble
<i>A sãã ηmena na ko kəη u pãã niε wul a u sorbiε</i>	He has learned his lesson after the rainstorm
<i>Bandaã zũũr wa ηwãã u e ηmen niε bang a u kpεb zie</i>	A lizard with a severed tail cannot retrace its hole
<i>A sãã ηmena na ko kəη u pãã niε wul a u sorbiε</i>	He has learned his lesson after the rainstorm
<i>Wε</i>	
<i>Bibil koη woη wullu a sãã wul gũũ ko vire vire</i>	A disobedient child who ignored his father's counsel
<i>U e na pogba a yi sirε dug wa ziη ε monmone bε kai</i>	He is now the husband of two women while there's no one to cook his meals
<i>Codi voire na sang ni niε na sogr ε boη yelle na</i>	Have you enquired why Cote d'ivoire has lost her reputation?
<i>Bibil kyirε nimbεrε wullu na eη a teng wε</i>	It is disobedient children who have destroyed this world
<i>Sããkumu na bɔrε ni niε na sogr ε boη yelle na</i>	Have you enquired why our culture is fading?
<i>Bibil kyirε nimbεrε wullu na eη a teng wε</i>	It is disobedient children who have destroyed this world
<i>Afrika na sang ni niε na sogr ε boη yelle na</i>	Have you enquired why Africa is now destroyed?
<i>Bibil kyirε nimbεrε wullu na eη a teng wε ti</i>	It is disobedient children who have destroyed this world

Song 13: Ni ta kyãã sieer a soɔruɛ (Stop keeping knives), Composer: Denise Nifaasie

Chorus

<i>Ni ta kyãã sieer a soɔruɛ togtoge</i>	Stop keeping knives on you
<i>A Gããna Pɔlbili na mi kyere ɛ sieer a soɔru,</i>	Ghanaian young men who walks about with knives

<i>Soɔ dira be e bomdienaɛ</i>	A sharp knife is not to be played with
<i>Nir za ta kyãã sieer a soɔruɛ togtoge,</i>	No one should ever keep a knife again
<i>Soɔ dira kon dãã Kuole (2×)</i>	A sharp knife killed a drunk (2)

¹ <i>N nyu sãã dendere ni</i>	I am drunk and staggering
	A sharp knife killed a drunk
<i>Soɔ ni ɲa mi hab eɲ siɲkpigre</i>	But there is a knife on my waist
<i>N be kyãã e nir mieɛ</i>	I am highly intoxicated
<i>Maa wa lore u kyorebare a kũũ ko a</i>	I will be stabbed to death by this very
<i>Soɔ dira kon dã Kuole.</i>	knife should I fall

² <i>Ni ta kyãã nyuur a tramɔl togtoge,</i>	Stop taking tramadol
<i>Ti ɛɛ ɛɛ ɲa bibiir na mi nyuur a tĩ kpen,</i>	Children of today who abuse drugs
<i>Tĩ kpen na ziɲ a kure ni kũũ,</i>	Drug abuse kills
<i>Nir za ta kyããnyuur tramɔl togtoge</i>	No one should ever abuse tramadol again
<i>Tĩ kpen na ko Pɔlbile</i>	Drug abuse killed a young man

<i>N nyu dãã dendere ni</i>	I am drunk and staggering
<i>Maa ni ɲa, n beɛ kyãã so eɲ mi ɲaɛ</i>	I am highly intoxicated
<i>Maa wa lo ɲmer zu kũũ ko,</i>	I will break my head should I get an
	accident
<i>Nyea dãã ko dã Kuole.</i>	See, alcohol killed a drunk

Song 14: Nita mi zebr taar (Don't fight), Composer: Denise Nifaasie

Chorus

*A Gããna Pɔlbili ni ta mi zebr taa yee
a ni pogbɛ yellei*

Ghanaian young men don't fight each
other over ladies

*A Gããna pogsire ni ta mi zebr taa yee
Ni ta mi zebr taa yee ani dɛɛbɛ yellei*

Ghanaian ladies don't fight each other
Don't fight each other over men

¹ *A pog bɛ bobr nia
Ni ta mi zebr taa yee ani pogbɛ yellei*

If a lady is not interested in you
Don't fight each other over ladies

² *A dɔɔ bɛ bobr nia,
Ni ta mi zebr taa yee
Ni ta mi zebr taa yee ani dɔɔ bɛ yellei*

If a man is not interested in you
Don't fight each other
Don't fight each other over men

³ *Bɛɛ saa wa toor fo a
Taa wa zebr ni nir yee fo tɔ pog ɛɛɛ*

Even when you are being insulted
Never fight with anyone over your
mate's wife

*Bɛɛ saa kore fo wa
Ni ta mi zebr taa yee ani pogbɛ yellei.*

Even when you are being wounded
Never fight each other over ladies

Song 15: En̄ na ɔbraa (Laziness), Composer: Mary Emilia Nifaasie (Maria Milli)

Chorus

<i>Ɛ en̄ na ɔbraa</i>	Laziness
<i>Pogle na en̄ na ɔbraa,</i>	A lazy girl
<i>A pogli taabe mi tone Ɛ gado zu (2×)</i>	She is always In bed while her mates are working

¹ <i>Udug kɔ dāā u zagre</i>	She refuses to brew pito for the farmers
<i>U mɔŋ ko Saab u zagre</i>	She refuses to prepare food for the farmers
<i>Ɛ yel ul be tɛr daar na dug kɔ dāā e</i>	With the excuse that she has no firewood to brew pito for the farmers

² <i>Ɛ u kpɛ weɛ ti gɔr daar u zagre</i>	She refuses to go search for firewood
<i>U kyen puo ti to tome</i>	She refuses to go work in the farm
<i>U yel Ɛ ul be laar be na ton tomei,</i>	her excuse is that she is not feeling well

³ <i>A fo en̄ na ɔbraa dɔɔ buoru naa kul fo mɔ</i>	A u taabe mi tone Ɛ gado zu
<i>A fo pogli taabe mi tone Ɛ fo ziŋ yir were</i>	Which man will marry you with this laziness?
<i>U na koŋ ton ton a faa nir Ɛ ko le toton a faa u mi ŋa</i>	Your mates are working while you sit idle. She neither works for others nor Herself.
	Her mates are always working while she is in bed

Song 16: Dabulbakyenkyen (A stubborn Child's funeral), Composer: Mary Emilia Nifaasie (Maria Milli)

Chorus

*Dabulbakyenkyen ni ημε Dabulbakyenkyen
 ɔnaa mi wa kpi na be de a gyil ημε
 Dabulbakyenkyen.*

Dabulbakyenkyen play
 Dabulbakyenkyen
 When he dies they will take the
 xylophone and play Dabulbakyenkyen

¹*Bibile koη woη nwullu nu nyog dɔpan zoor
 ɔnaa mi wa kpi na be de a gyil ημε
 Dabulbakyenkyen*

A stubborn child has grabbed the tail of a
 mamba
 When he dies they will take the
 xylophone and play Dabulbakyenkyen

*Bibile koη woη nwullu nu tig gbaa bɔg
 ɔnaa mi wa kpi na be de a gyil ημε
 Dabulbakyenkyen*

A disobedient child has dug the hole of a
 cobra
 When he dies they will take the
 xylophone and play Dabulbakyenkyen

*Fo na wul fo guu fo sãã mi wul fo guu
 Ulle ni ηa kyere nyaakpime teng be
 ηmieer Dabulbakyenkyen*

A stubborn child defied all his father's
 teaching
 Now he is journeying to the land of the
 spirits and they are playing
 Dabulbakyenkyen

Song 17: Seni Seni dɔg bie (Promiscuity), Composer: Denise Nifaasie

Chorus

<i>Seni Seni dɔg bie bɛ vieele</i>	Having a child through promiscuity is very bad
<i>Kpɛ nakoli tɛr poɔ bɛ vieele</i>	Gettting pregnant in school is very bad
<i>Fo na bɛ tɛr a aru zie ɛ bɛ lɛ tɛr a</i>	When you have nowhere to turn to in life
<i>zinzinna zie,</i>	
<i>Seni Seni dɔg bie bɛ vieele.</i>	Having a child through promiscuity is very bad

¹ <i>Fo na kul a pog ɛyi sɛnɛ a bɛ vieele</i>	Engaging in promiscuous life as a married man is very bad
<i>Fo mi na kul a sir ɛyi sɛnɛ a bɛ vieele</i>	To have a husband and being promiscuous is very bad
<i>Yaa</i>	
<i>Fo na bɛ tɛr a aru zie ɛ bɛ lɛ tɛr a</i>	When you have nowhere to turn to in life
<i>zinzinna zie</i>	
<i>Seni Seni dɔg bie bɛ vieele.</i>	Having a child through promiscuity is very bad

² <i>Seni Seni dɔg biir enɲ bɛ wone tuo,</i>	Having children out of wedlock make them suffer
<i>Dɔg bi yaga koɲ toɲ guole a bɛ</i>	To give birth to many children that you cannot take care of is very bad
<i>vieele wɛ,</i>	
<i>Fo na bɛ tɛr kpatiere mi ɛ bɛ lɛ tɛr</i>	When you have no one to assist you in life
<i>soɲ soɲne mi</i>	
<i>ɛ Seni Seni ti dɔg bie wa zini.</i>	Having a child through promiscuity is very bad

³ <i>Seni Seni ti nyog moɔra a bɛ vieele yaa</i>	To engage in adultery and break the sacred vows of one's marriage is very bad
<i>Seni Seni ti nyog baalu a bɛ vieele wɛ</i>	Diseases can be contracted through promiscuity

<i>fo na be ter aru zie e yor tone a faalu tome</i>	When you are not stable in life
<i>Seni Seni dog bie be vieele.</i>	Having a child through promiscuity is very bad

Song 18: N taabe kpe sakūr (My mates are all in school), Composer: Denise Nifaasie

Chorus

<i>N taabe kpe sakūr ε maa be kpe sakūreee (3x)</i>	My mates are all in school and I am not in school (3x)
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<i>Bibir za n sãã</i>	I cry to my father everyday
<i>Bibir viere za n s sãã</i>	Every day I cry to my father
<i>Bibir za n s sãã woo n na kyene sakūree.</i>	Each day I cry to my Father to send me to school

<i>¹N taabe kpe sakūr ε maa be kpe sakūreee (3x)</i>	My mates are all in school and I am not in school (3x)
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<i>Bibir za n sãã</i>	I cry to my mother everyday
<i>Bibir viere za n s sãã</i>	Every day I cry to my mother
<i>Bibir za n s sãã woo n na kyene sakūree.</i>	Each day I cry to my mother to send me to school

Song 19: Eṅtuo (Laziness), Composer: Mary Emilia Nifaasie (Maria Milli)

Chorus

Fũũ nē na kpe eṅtuo (3x)

Whoever is lazy (3x)

Fũ yelle za na mi wē

Everything of yours will amount to nothing

¹*Eṅtuo koṅ maale fũ ε*

Laziness can never help you

Eṅtuo koṅ maale fũ mi

Laziness can never help you!

Eṅtuo koṅ maale fũ fũ nye enṅ ṇmaaru wē

Laziness will never bring you peace

²*Eṅtuo koṅ maale fũ*

You cannot progress being lazy

Eṅtuo koṅ soṅ fũ

Laziness brings no progress

Nie zani gan yi mi nye tome

Better study hard to get a job someday

²*Dɔɔ wa kpe eṅtuo (2x)*

Any man who is lazy (2x)

U lle wa kpe eṅtuo

If he is lazy

U kɔb zana mi wē

His farming becomes unsuccessful

³*Pɔg wa kpe eṅtuo (2x)*

Any woman who is lazy (2x)

Ulle wa kpe eṅtuo

If she is lazy

U buru zana mi faa

Her sowing becomes unsuccessful

⁴*Eṅtuo koṅ maale fu*

Laziness cannot help you

Eṅtuo koṅ soṅ fu ε

Laziness can never help you

Eṅtuo koṅ vε fu tuɔṅ wa e nir bioε

Laziness cannot make you successful in future

Song 20: Ziṇ kog taa (We are in this together), Composer: Denise Nifaasie

Chorus

Ziṇ kog taa ziṇ kog taa

Ulle wani ti wa ziṇ kog taa (2×)

A n eṇ zii na faa nu n zina guu e sisigre

*¹Ti eṇ eṇ eṇ na baapaal be na be kyāā sagr
be dogrbe wullu (2×)
e alle pāā wa e yeltuo be le wani ti wa zi
kog taa*

*²Ti eṇ eṇ eṇ na poglie na be kyāā sagr
be dogrbe wullu(2×)
e alle pāā wa e pōg puor ulle wani ti wa
zi kog taa*

*¹Ti eṇ eṇ eṇ na dēblie na be kyāā sagr
be dogrbe wullu (2×)
e alle pāā wa e yanyāār be le wani ti
wa zi kog taa*

*eṇ eṇ eṇ na bi sāā minē be be kyāā zore a
viṇe (2×)*

*Dōō mi wa yi ti kuoli dāā ti gaṇ gūr ni sor
kyara pōō*

Now we are in this mess together

He has returned and we are in this mess
together (2x)

But I cannot ignore because he is my
own blood

The youth of today don't listen to the
advice of their parents (2x)
But when they are in trouble they return
to share it with us

Our young ladies of today don't listen to
the advice of their parents (2x)
But when they get pregnant they return
home to share the trouble with us

Our young men of today don't listen to
the advice of their parents (2x)
But when they become mad the burden is
brought home for us to share

Fathers of today have no shame (2x)

A men now gets drunk and sleep by the
roadside

⁴εε εε ηα bi mǎ minε be be kyǎǎ zore a viηe

Pɔg mi wa yi ti seni viε zιε be le kpe dion

togtog e

Mothers of today are shameless

Women now gstay out late chasing after
men

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I conclude my dissertation with this chapter which will give a brief overview of the study before highlighting the main findings. I will also propose a number of recommendations based on the findings and identify possible further research. Though discussions in the preceding chapters have provided initial answers to why the vitality of play and work song performances is weakened, I ultimately summarise that cultural interaction due to modernity has weakened the vitality of play and work song performances.

7.1 Overview of study

This study was inspired by Schechner's (2003:28) fan model of performance theory which draws attention to the debate on what is performance and what is not and concludes (very simplistically stated) "that performance is the execution of activities". The fan model was thus configured as *fuwra* to demonstrate that play and work songs are verbal art performance which facilitate social discipline and control (Fei & Sun, 2013). These theories along with Okpewho's (1992:42) idea of "various physical factors that influence the creativity of the oral artists", informed my investigation of the vitality of play and work song performance of the Dagaaba.

I set out to investigate the perceived disappearance of spaces or platforms for indigenous performances of the Dagaaba and modernity has been my primary point of reference to this phenomenon. My study sought to answer the following questions:

- What is the role of traditional performances, such as play and work songs, in upholding the social structure of the Dagaaba?
- How has modernity influenced the Dagaaba community of north western Ghana?
- What is the impact of modernity on play and work song performances of the Dagaaba community?
- What alternative platforms for indigenous performances such as play and work songs can be considered in relation to their roles within the Dagaaba community?

A qualitative research paradigm and ethnographic research approach guided my data collection process, which consisted of an extensive literature study and fieldwork in two Dagaaba communities, namely Lawra and Fielmuo. Interviews, focus group discussions and participant observation were employed for primary data collection.

My principal challenge was navigating between etic and emic perspectives to describe and explain the emic data collected for triangulation. However, I established my position foremostly as a researcher in this study to push aside the possible subjectivities of an insider. Conceding that I am a Dagao from Fielmuo, one of the studied communities, I constantly reminded myself of the credibility of the data as paramount and distanced myself from the identity. I also relied on the knowledge that the position of a researcher changes based on the situation (Arthur (in Milligan, 2016) and (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009)).

7.2 Summary of findings

As stated, the general objective that guided me to answer the research questions of the study was to unearth the influence of modernity on indigenous Dagaaba performances thereby discovering the manifestations of modernity in the Dagaaba community of north western Ghana.

In my discussion of indigenous performances in chapter five (5), I stated that these performances are done based on the orientation given, thus a change in orientation influences performance. The Dagaaba's orientation towards play and work song performances changed when they came into contact with formal education and Catholicism. Unable to distinguish between traditional religion and traditional performances, the Roman Catholic Church branded indigenous performance of the Dagaaba as *setaana*. This blanket description of the arts, and the Christian orientation given to the new converts changed the Dagaaba's perception of indigenous performances. Thus, while a practitioner of traditional religion recognises indigenous performances as part of the culture of the Dagaaba and therefore continues performing, the Christian, per the new orientation perceives indigenous performances as ungodly. Unfortunately, practitioners of traditional religion are few and elderly, hence the weakness of indigenous performance vitality.

In addition to the Christian culture, orientation from formal education which was and is still based on western culture has increased the changed perception of the Dagaaba with regards to indigenous performances. The long hours (and many years) spent in school has weakened the contact the Dagaaba (specifically the youth) have with indigenous culture and reduced social competence. This incompetence prevents participation upon their return home as they feel inadequate. As the indigenous culture weakens, the external culture becomes prominent and dominant, impeding practice of indigenous culture. Thus, as the Dagaaba absorb new cultures through religion and formal education their lifestyle is shaped differently and subsequently their responses to indigenous performances.

Cultural interaction became inevitable when the Dagaaba began migrating to mining towns in the southern part of Ghana in search of waged jobs brought by industrialisation. Being in a new environment with different cultural orientation, the Dagaaba had to embrace the new culture in order to fit in, thus assimilation of other cultures occurred. The expertise and knowledge of indigenous performance of the Dagaaba weakens due to long absence from home, the exchange of ideas from work colleagues, and the need to be accepted in a new culture to function properly both at work and in the new community where they live.

The Dagaaba have also experienced remote cultural interaction and external cultures through technology. The Ghana government's developmental drive saw a nationwide electrification which most communities of the Dagaaba benefited from. Electrification engineered the acquisition of television and radio to match the social change. Since humans are naturally influenced by what they see and hear, the Dagaaba through programmes on media platforms have been exposed to other cultures, thereby influencing their lifestyle. Indeed, the technology introduced indoor entertainment thus no motivation to go outside to engage in, for instance, play song performances. Electrification therefore arguably erased one of the opportunities for indigenous performances.

As the world has become a global village, the Dagaaba have also been influenced by changes which have occurred globally through inventions. Architecture, formal employment and mechanisation as elements of modernity, have led the Dagaaba to embrace new ways of doing things. While architects now design buildings, which eliminates courtyards for performances, formal employment relocate the Dagaaba to a community where there is no platform to engage in indigenous performances. The grinding machine has replaced the grinding stone and thereby erased the space for the performance of work songs by Dagaaba women. The absence of performance due to electrification, urbanisation and technology supports Okpewho's (1992) argument of physical factors that influence performance which are discussed in chapter five (5).

Having been exposed to Christianity, formal education, formal employment, migration and technology, the Dagaaba have attained a new status which requires a different lifestyle to function in the new system. For instance, presently, a school boy does not herd sheep nor take the cattle to graze, not out of arrogance but it is impractical. There is no time since they leave home for school early in the morning and return in the evening with homework and assignments to be done and submit the next day. The inability of the school boy to go herding the sheep or participate in other indigenous occupations which lend themselves to indigenous performances denies him the opportunity to practice this art for perfection and

participation. This lack of opportunities for training results in social incompetence of most youth. Also migrants and relocated Dagaaba on their return home, having been assimilated into other cultures, rather possess expertise in the external cultures which often unconsciously interfere with their indigenous expressions.

Another significant deduction is that the Dagaaba now have access to security services that are responsible for ensuring conformity to rules of law and judiciary services that discipline violators of the law, thus making the performance of play and work songs for social control redundant.

7.3 Conclusion

Though the study was framed with Schechner's (2003) fan model of performance theory, analysing the motivation for singing led me to theorise play and work songs as accessorial performance. They are accessories of various activities in performance. They aid in the execution of Dagaaba traditional dances such as *bewaa* and *kaare*, aid in babysitting as lullabies as well as shepherding, hunting and grinding, aid in ritual performances and rites of passage. I have thus contributed to literature by conceptualising play and work songs as accessorial performance. In addition, I have contributed to the documentation of Northern Dagaare songs. Play and work songs are verbal art performance because as demonstrated in the various songs, they are rendered using communicative devices to lay emphasis, arouse empathy or remind community members of their responsibilities and the consequence of neglect of these. Again, the songs employ frames of communication to facilitate the execution of messages.

Finally, the lack of original spaces and opportunities for indigenous performances has led to the utilisation of alternative spaces. The most accessible spaces for performances presently seem to be social media platforms. Though the use of social media affords accessibility – people can watch and listen to these uploaded songs – the training and transmission from one generation to the next is lost. Similarly, radio and television networks are also used as alternative spaces for performances., but though it contributes to the survival of indigenous arts, the missing key factor stays the training for continuity.

Another alternative space which may be more promising in the preservation of indigenous performance is the use of play and work songs at meeting places of identifiable groups. The establishment and organising of indigenous performance festivals or competitions can also serve as alternative platforms. The nagging question remains though, of how the Dagaaba can keep performing if they don't have the training that was built into the social orientation of earlier generations.

7.4 Recommendations

There was evidence of awareness that play and work song performances have declined, a deduction I made from the unanimous lamentations by respondents in both communities. The reason for the decline discussed in chapter five (5) seem irreversible thus the need for alternatives to restore performance vitality arise. Despite the awareness, there seems to be ineffective measures put in place for mitigation. While the Lawra *naa* has instituted compulsory participation to showcase traditional performances at the *kɔb benɛ* festival, some divisional chiefs in the Lawra traditional area have placed a ban on concerts in their communities. A move which I see as unfriendly and which in all probability will result in a high possibility of noncompliance. The youth, unlike the adults have avenues and opportunities to stay away from their communities thus actions that may encourage migration should not be taken. As captured in chapter five (5), a women's association in Fielmuo have found an alternative platform for performance of play songs, namely meeting places. I therefore recommend that this be replicated, not only at women's groups' meetings, but at heterogeneous gatherings to ensure inclusion of the youth for continuation. A voluntary and informal approach, as in the days of old, has the potential to attract the youth to indigenous performances rather than hard handedness.

As observed in my introductory chapter, there seems to be lack of commitment in ensuring preservation of cultural heritage in Ghana. Though there is a National Commission on Culture with agencies such as the Centre for National Culture at district and regional levels, their mandate in maintaining and documenting cultural heritage is not upheld. The National Commission on Culture falls under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture and because the ministry determines the spending of the budget, it seemingly most often places priority on tourism to the detriment of culture. There is lack of personnel and logistics for visitation to communities for research to identify materials for documentation. I therefore recommend that the Ghana government should take a second look at the policies regarding cultural heritage. The National Commission on Culture could also be separated from the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture so that it could have its own budget to be able to honour its mandate.

The advocacy for the preservation of cultural heritage will end on paper if there is no recognition of what culture is. In Ghana, the only time acknowledgement is given to culture on the national platform is when there is an event such as the Independence Day celebration, graduation or a visit of a dignitary. The Arts, in my view, is an appendix in Ghana, performers are often called upon to either usher in dignitaries at state functions or to entertain. I recommend for an appropriate placement of the Arts in the national agenda so that it will be replicated at the regional and district levels.

For cultural heritage to be preserved there should be knowledge about what exists to be able to identify what is getting lost. I deduced from an interview with Mr. Pamphilio Kuubesign, the Programmes Officer of the Centre for National Culture in the Upper West Region, that most personnel lack the expertise and knowledge in this regard. I recommend that recruitment for positions of cultural officers be based on qualification, people who have knowledge in the performing arts and affiliate courses. This will help in the collection and documentation of cultural heritage that are getting extinct.

Though the Ghana Education Service, the implementing body of the Ministry of Education organises biannual cultural festival alternatively in basic and senior secondary schools, they often ignore the needs and diversity of culture in the country. Performances to compete in are decided at the head office, not based on the need of individual regions or culture, and schools have the choice to participate in what they can. This approach does not give opportunities for schools to showcase the indigenous performances they have for preservation but what the organisers want to see. I therefore recommend that schools be given the freedom to present performances to showcase the rich culture in their locality to make contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage that are getting extinct.

Training is central in capacity building. The social change that is being experienced is irreversible making it impossible for the Dagaaba or any other ethnic group to return to how things used to be. I therefore recommend the inclusion of indigenous knowledge systems in the school curriculum to ensure that the youth do not lose their cultural heritage.

7.5 Proposed further research

While conducting this study I came across a fertile ground which I think requires further research. The Dagaaba are found both in Ghana and Burkina Faso, and I identified that though they are equally confronted with elements of modernity, the Burkinabe are making efforts to sustain indigenous performances. A comparative analysis of performance culture among the Dagaaba of Ghana and Burkina Faso will bring a discovery to how the Dagaaba in Ghana can sustain the vitality of indigenous performances to avoid extinction.

Since this study could not analyse play and work songs in a natural cultural environment, further research studies can focus on the performative elements of other songs of the Dagaaba.

Of equal attention for research is the place of indigenous performance in the national agenda. This research will focus on Ghana's commitment to UNESCO's convention which aims at salvaging

indigenous knowledge systems. Through this research, the government of Ghana's commitment to upholding the cultural heritage of Ghanaians will be tested.

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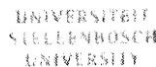
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Addendum

1. Ethical Clearance



APPROVED WITH STIPULATIONS

REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) Initial Application Form

16 July 2019

Project number: RECOOI 99724

Project title: Indigenous Performance and Modernity: Investigating the vitality of play and work songs of the Dagaaba community of North Western Ghana as Verbal Art Performance

Dear Mrs Margaret Ismaila

Your REC: Social, Behavioural and Education Research (SBER) Initial Application Form submitted on 3 July 2019 was reviewed by the REC: Humanities and approved with stipulations.

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
16 July 2019	15 July 2022

REC STIPULATIONS:

The researcher may proceed with the envisaged research provided that the following stipulations, relevant to the approval of the project are adhered to or addressed:

1) The researcher is requested to add the 'rights of research participants' block to the informed consent form (see REC template for the details): www.sun.ac.za/english/research-innovation/Research-Development/Pages/REC-Documents.aspx

HOW TO RESPOND:

Some of these stipulations may require your response. Where a response is required, you must respond to the REC within six

(6) months of the date of this letter. Your approval would expire automatically should your response not be received by the REC within 6 months of the date of this letter.

Your response (and all changes requested) must be done directly on the electronic application form on the Infonetica system: [https://applyethics.sun.ac.za/1\)roject/tndex/1_5437](https://applyethics.sun.ac.za/1)roject/tndex/1_5437)

Where revision to supporting documents is required please ensure that you replace all outdated documents on your application form with the revised versions. Please respond to the stipulations in a separate cover letter titled "Response to REC stipulations" and attach the cover letter in the section Additional Information and Documents.

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (9724) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary).

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Document: Type	January. 2019	16/04/2019	word
Research Protocol/Proposal	ISMAIL.A	Document	
Proposal 7		10/05/2019	Microsoft
Budget	Budget	word	
Data collection tool Interview		20/05/2019	Microsoft
(Autosaved) Data collection tool		word	
Focus Group Discussion		20/05/2019	Microsoft word
Data collection tool Participant Observation		20/05/2019	Microsoft word
Informed Consent Form	Informed consent	02/07/2019	Microsoft word
Default		02/07/2019	Microsoft word

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

National Health Research Ethics Committee (NHREC) registration number:

REC-050411-032.

The Research Ethics Committee: Humanities complies with the SA National Health Act No.61 2003 as it pertains to health research. In addition, this committee abides by the ethical norms and principles for research established by the Declaration of Helsinki (2013) and the Department of Health Guidelines for Ethical Research: Principles Structures and Processes (2nd Ed .) 2015. Annually a number of projects may be selected randomly for an external audit.

2. Informed Consent



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CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Dear (Chief, Traditional Priest, member of
Traditional Council, Elder, Youth).

My name is Margaret Ismaila and I am a student of Stellenbosch University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study entitled “Indigenous Performance and Modernity: Investigating the vitality of play and work songs of the Dagaaba community in North Western Ghana as Verbal Art Performance”.

The research is an academic study which aims to find out the strength of indigenous performances, especially play and work songs of the Dagaaba in the midst of modernity. The outcome of the research will also be used for teaching as well as publishing articles from it. As part of the data collecting process, audio recording and photography may be used. Efforts, such as masking and coding would be used to protect your identity and information provided. If you feel uncomfortable with any of the approach in the course of the research, you can withdraw. Your identity will be hidden and information provided will be protected.

Your participation in this research will be to answer questions on the state of indigenous performances with emphasis on play and work songs. Please be informed that this participation is voluntary and you

can withdraw at any point of the research when you feel uncomfortable. You may also be asked to withdraw if you do not follow the agreed plan of the research. You can still participate if you do not want to answer questions. Please be informed that there is no monetary reward, however, your participation will contribute to dissemination of knowledge on indigenous performances of the Dagaaba on a broader platform.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact margaret.ismaila@yahoo.com;0244732734, mareli@sun.ac.za;+27848118983

If you are willing to participate in this study please sign the attached Declaration of Consent.

By signing below, I

agree to take part in a research study entitled ‘Indigenous Performance and Modernity: Investigating the vitality of play and work songs of the Dagaaba community in North Western Ghana as Verbal Art Performance’ and conducted by Margaret Ismaila

I declare that:

1. I have read the attached information leaflet and it is written in a language with which I am fluent and comfortable.
2. I have had a chance to ask questions and all my questions have been adequately answered.
3. I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and I have not been pressurised to take part.
4. I may choose to leave the study at any time and will not be penalised or prejudiced in any way.
5. I may be asked to leave the study before it has finished, if the researcher feels it is in my best interest, or if I do not follow the study plan, as agreed upon.
6. All issues relating to privacy and the confidentiality and use of the information I provide have been explained to my satisfaction.

Signed on.....

Signature/thumb print of participant.....

I declare that I have explained the information given in this document to

He/she was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English/Dagaare and (no translator was used/ this conversation was translated into

..... by.....

.....

Signature of investigator

.....

Date

3. Interview questions

Preliminary – **Traditional Performance**

- Please can you tell me your name?
- Which part of Lawra/Fielmuo are you from? Did you grow up in the community?
- What are the traditional performances in Lawra/Fielmuo?
- What prompts traditional performances? What are their purposes in the community?
- Do you think traditional performances are of value to the people of Lawra/Fielmuo? Can you explain why?
- Who has authority over traditional performances? Are there rules that prohibit one from performing?
- Can everyone in the community perform? Can you perform traditional performances?
- What can make an indigene ignorant of traditional performances?
- How does the community react towards indigenes that have no knowledge of traditional performances?
- Have you had the need to defend anyone who cannot perform traditional performances? What was the circumstance?

Play and work songs

- Are you familiar with play and work song performances in Lawra/Fielmuo? How did you come to have this knowledge?
- Who composes these songs for performance? What stimulates the composition?
- How different is play and work song performances from other traditional performances?
- What impact do these performances make on the community?
- How frequent were performances of these songs growing up?
- When was the last time you participated in or observed play and work song performances? Do you remember any play or work song?
- Where are play and work songs performed? Are these platforms available?
- Are there performances in competition with play and work songs?
- Are you likely to back the continuous performance of play and work songs?
- How will you achieve this?

Modernity

- Have there been changes to the way traditional performances are done?
- In what forms are these changes? What has accounted for these changes?
- Which of the traditional performances are mostly affected by the change?
- How has the change affected the lives of the people of Lawra/Fielmuo?
- Do you have the power to make things different? How will you go about it?

4. Focus Group Discussion

The focus group discussion would be in communities in Lawra and Fielmuo. The aim of this focus group discussion is to obtain in-depth information on the state of traditional performances of the Dagaaba in general; however, emphasis will be on play and work song performances.

Probe questions

- How familiar are you with traditional performances of Lawra/Fielmuo? Can you elaborate on your knowledge of these performances?
- How often do you participate in these performances? What is the motivation for traditional performances?
- Why do people engage in play and work song performances? What purpose do they serve in the community?

Follow-up questions

- What are your favourite and least favourite of traditional performances? Why?
- How often are play and work song performances done in your community? What could be the reason for the frequency or absence of performance?
- What do you think can influence participation in play and work song performances?
- What will influence your participation in play and work song performances?
- If there is to be a replacement of traditional performances which one will you want to be replaced and why?

Exit question

- Is there anything else about play and work songs you will want to say?