"Hakuna Matata" (No More Worries) - Integrating Indigenous Systems of Conflict Resolution into the Formal System of Government Administration in Cameroon: Case Study of the Ekpe Society of Manyu Division

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“Hakuna Matata” (No More Worries) - Integrating Indigenous Systems of Conflict Resolution into the Formal System of Government Administration in Cameroon: Case Study of the Ekpe Society of Manyu Division

by

Stephen Ojong Agbor

A Dissertation Presented to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences of Nova Southeastern University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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This dissertation was submitted by STEPHEN OJONG AGBOR under the direction of the chair of the dissertation committee listed below. It was submitted to the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences and approved in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Conflict Analysis and Resolution at Nova Southeastern University.

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Abstract

Colonialism had tremendous effects on the lives, geography, and institutions of the colonized peoples. The colonizers rejected indigenous institutions and practices and adopted or imposed Western and Eurocentric policies in the processes of administration and conflict resolution. Not surprisingly, the differences in cultures between the colonialists and the indigenous populations were bound to cause challenges both to the colonizers and the indigenes. Despite the challenges encountered by the respective colonial administrations, most post-colonial governments replicated their policies. The consequences have been poor governance, confusion, and conflicts in the post-colonial era. To address the situation, calls are being made for the integration of indigenous institutions into the formal institutions of respective post-colonial administrations.

The mixed method case study used in this study highlights the Ekpe process of conflict resolution as practiced by the indigenes of Manyu Division in the South West Region of Cameroon and explores the possibility of using Ekpe to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division. Through observation and qualitative interviews, the Ekpe process of conflict resolution is described and the participants expressed their preference of Ekpe in resolving disputes. Logistic regression is also utilized to find out if there is a correlation between administrative involvement and chieftaincy conflicts, administrative involvement and land conflicts, the courts and succession to property disputes as well as a correlation between the Ekpe model and disputes. The outcome of the study reveals that the indigenes prefer the Ekpe model to resolve chieftaincy and land disputes, and the courts to resolve succession to property disputes in Manyu Division.
Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

This mixed method case study examines and describes the Ekpe indigenous method and process of conflict resolution as practiced by Manyu indigenes in the South West Region of Cameroon. The purpose is to find out if Ekpe could be employed to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes that are fast becoming protracted in various villages in Manyu Division particularly and Cameroon as a whole. The study also samples the opinion of a cross section of Manyu indigenes living in Cameroon to find out which system of conflict resolution the indigenes think will be more effective in resolving these disputes. To better understand the nature of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Cameroon, a brief description of the law that governs each concept is necessary.

Chieftaincy Law in Cameroon

Presidential Decree No. 77/245 of 15 July, 1977 reorganized the law that governs Traditional Chieftaincies in the Republic of Cameroon enacted by the colonial administration. The decree organized traditional chiefdoms into first class, second class, and third class chiefdoms (Article 2). The same decree mandated all conflicts related to chieftaincy issues to be resolved by the administration. The decree was announced (proclaimed) and implemented without consulting the people or their representatives; and to date, the people have not been given the opportunity to express their opinion on the effectiveness of the decree, and/or given a say into how the laws that govern their traditional leaders should be organized or determined.
The situation is raising concerns because claims to chieftaincy title by competing parties have often resulted in disputes and, in some cases, violence. Unfortunately, the Presidential Decree does not seem to be a panacea to resolve such conflicts. For example, of the eleven villages that make up Mamfe Central Sub-Division, four had chieftaincy disputes between the periods ranging 1972 to 2012. These disputes have to date divided the inhabitants of these villages.

**Land Tenure Law in Cameroon**

Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974 established land tenure rules following the reunification of the Cameroons (French and British Cameroons) in 1972. The ordinance created Land Consultation Boards at divisional level, headed by the Divisional Officer to allocate land and resolve land disputes. The ordinance was announced, by the president of the Republic of Cameroon, and implemented without consulting the people. The people were not, and have not been, given an opportunity to express their opinion on the effectiveness of the ordinance and/or on how the laws that govern their land tenure should be organized or determined.

**Succession to Property Law in Anglophone Cameroon**

The law governing succession to property in Anglophone Cameroon is the law that was applicable in Britain on or before 1955. Most of these laws are outdated, and are no longer applicable in Britain. It is possible there might be difficulties in implementing these laws in Cameroon. This situation is worsened by the fact that the indigenes of Cameroon, just like most territories in Africa, culturally practice collectivism; a culture that is different from the individualistic culture of the colonial masters. To proceed, it is helpful to define collectivism and individualism.
Collectivism and Individualism

Individualism and collectivism are commonly referred to as cultural distinctions (Hofstede, 1980). The main focus of the individualist is centered on independence, self-fulfillment, and autonomy of the individual (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). From the perspective of the individualist, the personal goals of the individual come first or are more important than the goals of the group or community (Wagner, 1995). That is to say, the attitudes of the individual take precedence to that of the society (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelf, 1995; Triandis, 2001). In individualistic cultures, the ties between the individual and the society are very loose, and each person is expected to look after himself, herself, or their immediate family (Hofstede, 1997). On the other hand, collectivists believe that for the individual to succeed, the collective interest of the community or society must be protected. In this vein, collectivists are taught to forgo their personal goals and interests for the interests or good of the community, and will maintain or preserve the relationship of the group even in situations where the cost to the person exceeds the benefits that they will get in return.

In a collectivist society, people are integrated into the society from the time they are born, and the society is expected to protect them for their entire life. In return, the individual is expected to pledge their loyalty to the group without asking questions (Hofstede, 1997). The individualist cultures are Eurocentric and found principally in Western Europe and North America, while collectivism is a tradition common to Africa, the Middle East, and East Asia (Hofstede, 1991, 2001; Triandis, 1995).

The system of governance that the administration of Cameroon uses in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes is based on the model used by the
colonial masters, which happens to be imbedded in the Eurocentric individualistic tradition of the West. That is, it is mostly focused on the individual rather than on the collective interest of the group. On the other hand, the customs or culture of the various ethnic groups that form Cameroon are primarily focused on the collective interest of the community. It is possible that policies and solutions taken to resolve disputes are more likely to be against the interests of the group, which ends up escalating rather than deescalating or resolving conflicts. Added to these challenges is the fact that Cameroon is culturally diverse with more than 250 ethnic groups. While judges and administrative officials are appointed by Presidential Decree, most of them are posted to Regions they are not familiar with the customs of the indigenes. The effect is that court judgments and administrative decisions are sometimes unenforceable, which ends up breeding or aggravating conflicts and dividing families in certain situations. Analyzed data collected in this study suggests that it will be in the interest of the government and the indigenes of Manyu to integrate the Ekpe indigenous model of governance and conflict resolution into the formal institutions of Cameroon. Integrating Ekpe into the institutions of Cameroon will make the institutions to reflect the culture of the indigenes and build confidence in the people, as they will feel they own or are part of the institutions that govern them. This will make it more likely for the indigenes to respect the judgments and decisions of these institutions in times of conflict.

**Method of Study**

This case study was conducted with the use of concurrent qualitative and quantitative methods. The qualitative part described the Ekpe indigenous institution and process of conflict resolution as practiced by the Indigenes of Manyu Division. The goal
was to find out if the present institutions are effective in resolving conflicts, determine if the indigenes desire Ekpe to resolve conflicts, describe the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, and establish how the Ekpe model can be integrated into the formal institutions of Cameroon to make them more effective.

The qualitative part of the research also described the Ekpe indigenous institution and process of conflict resolution as practiced since the pre-colonial era. The goal was to find out if Ekpe is still being relied upon by the indigenes to resolve disputes, and if the process could be effective and reliable in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division.

The quantitative study sampled the opinion of Manyu indigenes living in Manyu, as well as other towns in Cameroon, to find out what they think of the chieftaincy, land, succession to property laws, and Ekpe. Logistic regression analysis was performed to find out the correlation between administrative involvement and chieftaincy disputes, correlation between administrative involvement and land disputes, correlation between the courts and succession to property disputes as well as the correlation between Ekpe and disputes in Manyu Division. My hope was to find out if the indigenes desire Ekpe and, if so, how Ekpe could be integrated into the formal institutions of governance in Cameroon, so as to make them more effective in resolving conflicts.

To fully understand the phenomenon of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division, I visited Manyu Division to understand the perception of the indigenes going through life with these disputes, as well as the perception of those living around those witnessing such disputes; in conformity with Willis’ (2007) opinion that “human beings are influenced by their subjective perception
of their environment” (p. 6). By doing an intrinsic case study, I had to go into the community, observe the challenges that the indigenes face, observe the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution, and conduct interviews with the indigenes both individually and in a group setting. My goal was to understand the nature of truth or existence (ontology) of the people of Manyu from their perspective. It is my belief that the intrinsic case study method of research was very appropriate for the study.

In the course of the study, I took an ontological position of metaphysical subjectivism to fully understand how the Manyu indigenes perceive things through their senses, and make meaning of their reality (Willis, 2007). It is my hope that I fully understood and captured how the reality of the existence of the Manyu people can be known (epistemology). In the epistemological area, I was more concerned with what could be known about the reality of the Manyu people, and how it could be known. A mixed method research was the most appropriate research method to understand and report the ontology of the Manyu people.

I originally hail from Manyu Division and from a family lineage that has served and continues to serve as chief. I also have family members that have been parties to land dispute cases. I understand that my lineage might influence the nature of my research. To ensure objectivity in the study, I employed triangulation by verifying the findings with existing literature in the field as well as discussions with other researchers in the field. The transcripts were also given to the research participants to go over to ensure everything they said or intended to say was captured correctly prior to publishing the findings. The study was guided by the problem statement discussed herein.
**Problem Statement**

Chieftaincy disputes are on the rise in Manyu Division and are gradually becoming protracted. For example, of the eleven villages in Mamfe central Sub-Division, four experienced chieftaincy disputes between the years 1972 to 2012. In some cases, the conflict continues even after the death of the original contenders, and the conflict is passed over from one generation to another. The case of Besongabang village is precarious in that the dispute has lasted for over forty years. In addition, most of the people that have been recognized and installed as chiefs by the administration in Cameroon presently reside away from the villages they are supposed to be governing in violation of Article 17 (1) of the Presidential Decree regulating their activities (Ref, No 038/03/D3/1/044 of January 14th 2005-Memo of the Sub-Divisional Officer for Mamfe).

On the other hand, the authority of chiefs in their chiefdoms are on a decline because of the meddling in their appointment by the administration and the abuse of powers by some chiefs. The address of Emmanuel Fuh Neba, Chief Executive Officer of the Cameroon Council for Reunification, about the declining powers of traditional leaders was reported by the Cameroonian online newspaper, The Eye Newspaper, in August 2012:

Cameroon’s traditional authorities - fons, chiefs, sultans and lamidos (emirs) were once the indisputable custodians of the nation’s tradition, culture and identity. They represented a true reflection of the legitimate aspirations of the Cameroonian people. They discharged their functions and delivered judgment with neither fear nor favor and were seen as embodiments of wisdom and character. (para.4)
However, he lamented that the powers and authority of the once revered traditional authorities are gradually shrinking and their institutions teetering on the brink of collapse in just 50 years of independence and reunification. He said “Their powers are eroding, palaces collapsing, and there are virtually little or no stipends for them. In fact, they have been shamefully relegated to the hallmarks of ‘royal beggars’ ” (The Eye Newspaper, 2012, para. 4).

Also, as the population increases and agriculture gains traction in Cameroon, the quest for land has also increased. Unfortunately, the available land cannot sustain the need of the indigenes. The result has been an increase in land disputes. To resolve them, the Head of State, relying on Section 21 of the 1972 Constitution, enacted Law No. 73-3, and established rules governing land tenure. On the basis of this law, the 1974 Land Ordinances were enacted and the Land Consultative Board was created to allocate land and to resolve land disputes. However, the procedure to bring a dispute to the land consultative board is lengthy, time consuming, and expensive. More so, there are questions as to whether the indigenes understand the procedure or not.

Finally, Cameroon customary law excludes women from succeeding their husbands and parents and they are, as a result, excluded from the list of beneficiaries. On the other hand, English law gives priority of succession to the spouse of the deceased as against blood relatives. The customary and received laws applicable in Cameroon have recognized that it is the obligation of the man to maintain certain members of his family by providing them with education, food, shelter, clothing, and medical care (Ebi, 2011, p. 6).
To meet the needs of those that depended on the deceased for their existence, these dependents often rush to take the property of the deceased, or dispose those that they believe are in possession of the deceased’s property, when they are not entitled to succeed the deceased. In cases where the deceased was married, the extended family members of the deceased usually direct their anger to the spouse and children. Attempts to resist in most cases results in violence against them. Female children, and female relatives of the deceased, mostly receive such treatments from their male counterparts who believe women should leave their father’s house, go marry, and stay in their husband’s house and not be around upon their father’s death to claim the property of the deceased. Wives also receive such treatment by the husbands’ family members for they are considered outsiders to the family (Ebi 2011, p. 9).

**Objectives of the Study**

Some may ask the question: “Why did you decide to study the Ekpe indigenous institution of conflict resolution as well as the role of the administration and legal system of Cameroon in resolving conflicts in Manyu Division?” The answer to this question is simple. Most emerging post-colonial societies in the world face a situation in which the systems they inherited from the colonial masters have not been effective in resolving conflicts, building peace, and engineering economic development. The situation is making it difficult for the indigenes to evolve out of poverty cycles. Countries like Bolivia and Canada have come to realize that a possible way to build peace in a multicultural society is to accept and integrate the various indigenous practices of the people into the institutions of the society.
Therefore, the objectives of this study were to describe the Ekpe model of conflict resolution and to find out if Ekpe can be effective in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division. In the first part of my research, I read archival records, observed the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, conducted interviews, and described the Ekpe indigenous model and process of conflict resolution to find out if Ekpe is effective and reliable in resolving conflicts in Manyu Division. Concurrently, a quantitative study was employed to sample the opinion of Manyu indigenes to see if they understand the laws governing Succession to Property as practiced in the English Speaking Regions of Cameroon. The ultimate goal was to find out if and how the Ekpe conflict resolution method can be integrated into the institutions of Cameroon to make them more effective in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property conflicts in Manyu Division.

As of now, existing studies on the Ekpe indigenous institution focuses on the cultural aspects of Ekpe. There is no known research that examines the role of Ekpe in governance, nor the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution as practiced by the Bayang and Ejagham indigenes of Manyu Division, or any other area of the world. Also, there is no known existing scholarship that samples the opinion of the indigenes of Manyu about the effectiveness of the chieftaincy decree, land tenure ordinances, and succession to property laws.

It is hoped that the government of Cameroon, other post-colonial states in Africa and beyond, as well as international organizations and donor countries, will rely upon the findings of this study when looking for solutions in post-conflict situations. The findings
of this study if relied on could help prevent conflicts, as well as build formidable grass root institutions in emerging democracies.

**Research Questions**

In this study, my goal was to describe the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution and to find out if Ekpe could be effective in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division. To be successful, I came out with the following research questions:

1. What is the Ekpe indigenous model and process of conflict resolution?
2. How are chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes impacting relationships in communities throughout Manyu Division and Cameroon?
3. Does Manyu indigenes understand the formal process of resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division?
4. Under which system can chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes be effectively managed and resolved?
5. How can the Ekpe indigenous model be integrated into the formal institutions in Cameroon to make them more effective?

**Importance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to describe the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution and to find out if Ekpe can be effective and reliable in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division as well as other regions of Cameroon. The possibility of using Ekpe was considered because the administrative officials charged with settling these disputes most of the time are appointed by the President of the Republic by order of a decree, and come from other regions of the
country. They do not fully understand the customs of the indigenes and, in most cases, come out with decisions that are unenforceable. The laws that guide the appointed administrators in their actions and decisions were mostly inherited from the colonial masters at the time of independence with minimal changes. These laws are based on the individualistic cultures of the colonial masters and do not suit the collectivist cultures of the indigenes. The application of the law causes challenges to both the administration and the administered (indigenes).

The resulting consequences are that disputes are dividing families and once peaceful communities. Moreover, most of the time the indigenes do not understand the process of administration of justice. Unfortunately, no studies have so far been undertaken by the authorities of Cameroon to assess the effectiveness of the institutions of governance.

Further still, there are no known studies that sample the opinions of Manyu indigenes to find out how well they understand the institutions that govern them, the effectiveness of these institutions, and how they think the institutions of the state should be organized. As a result of this vacuum, it is my wish that this research contributes to the field in many ways.

This study describes Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution, reveals the perception of the indigenes with regards to the laws and institutions that govern them, which in turn will guide researchers and administrators on how to govern the people more effectively. The research will also empower the indigenes to rely on their indigenous institutions and process of resolving conflicts. Finally, it will produce data that is
presently lacking about the perception of the indigenes with regards to the laws and institutions that govern them.

**Definition of Terms**

*Chieftaincy:* The word “chief” refers to the one to whom authority is given to govern a village or ethnic group in Cameroon as well as Africa in general. Chiefs had been in existence during the pre-colonial era, and continued to exist during colonization as well as in the post-colonial era. Chiefs existed in both the centralized and stateless societies in Africa (Delancey, Mbuh, & Delancey 2010, p. 99).

*Ekpe:* Ekpe is a predominantly male indigenous institution that had been existing along the Cross River area of the Bight of Biafra (Gulf of Guinea) prior to the colonial era. For a long time, the indigenes had been using the name Ekpe and Mgbe interchangeably in reference to the institution, until recently in 2005 when the Mgbe Supreme council came out with a communication requesting ‘Mgbe’ the official name of the institution in Cameroon. It functions includes the performances of artistic dance styles, masks, governance, and conflict resolution in the respective communities. While there are slight changes in the institution in the respective communities where Ekpe operates, it is known as one institution; and once a member in one Ekpe lodge, the person is free to partake in the activities of Ekpe wherever one is held. In this study, I will use the name Ekpe.

*Collectivism (collective consciousness).* Shared sentiment within a society that serves the moral function of providing social solidarity.

*Colonialism.* The process by which social, cultural, economic, and political institutions of the society (land and the people) is maintained and controlled by a foreign
power. In certain instances, settlers from the power that is ruling migrate to the colony. However, history has shown that these migrant population have always been a minority when likened to the bulk of the indigenous conquered population. (Lachman, 1991).

**Cross River Region.** This is an area in coastal regions of Southeastern Nigeria and Southwestern Cameroon known as the basin of the cross river. Also known as the forest region, the cultures of the people that live in this area are very related and interacted closely with one another until when they were separated by the colonial boundary as drawn by the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. The ethnic groups/cultures in the Cameroon area that form the Cross River are Ejaghams, Bangwas, Bayangs, Ejaghams, Ekwe, Keaka, Anyangs, and Widekum ethnic groups. These societies were governed by the Ekpe society (Delancey et al., 2010, p. 221).

**Ethnic group.** A social group distinguished by language, geographic or national origin, race, customs, and religion. (Lachman, 1991). There are said to be more than 250 ethnic groups in Cameroon, which has a population of about twenty million people.

**Ekpe/Mgbe society.** The ‘Ekpe’ or ‘Mgbe’ in English language means “leopard”. The society is a widespread form of governance used primarily to institute regional authority, as well as to ensure justice, peace, and commerce in communities where centralized kingdoms were rare. The origin of Ekpe society is said to be among the Ejaghams, and it is a brotherhood society in which members buy the ranks into the various stages of the association hierarchy. Because of its efficiency and respect, the society was bought by all the ethnic groups in the Cross River Region as well as in other parts of Africa (Delancey et al., 2010).
**Indirect rule.** Indirect rule is a system of governance whereby the British colonial administration allowed Africans to exercise authority on behalf of the colonial administration (Delancey et al, 2010, p. 206).

**National identity.** Those attributes that are generally confined within the defined limits or boundaries of a nation.

**Pre-colonial period.** This is the period prior to the colonization of a given territory or community.

**Presidential decree.** Presidential decrees are certain declarations of the President of Cameroon that have the force of law. It is also part of the regulatory function of the President of the Republic, which falls beyond the competence of the organ entrusted with law making (Senate and National Assembly) as defined in the 1996 Cameroonian constitution.

**Post-colonial period.** This is the period that comes after the end of the colonization of a territory.

**Society.** A social group of relatively large size, not necessarily confined within politically defined borders like a nation, which exhibits continuity of existence from generation to generation (Lachman, 1991).

**Traditional systems.** Not foreign. In this research, traditional systems will be referred to as systems or institutions that the people were using since the pre-colonial period and have not been affected greatly by modernization.

**Indigenous.** Indigenous will be referred to as the actual people that first inhabited a geographical area, mostly before colonization.
Chapter Summary

The focus of this chapter was to give an overview of the state of the institutions of governance in Cameroon, especially the laws governing chieftaincy, land, and succession to property conflicts. In particular, it delimits the scope, objectives, relevance, and limitations of the study. I gave a justification for the study, as well as the questions that I will be addressing.

Chapter two provides a background and context to the study. In the chapter, I discuss the origin of the various ethnic groups in Cameroon, and how people from over 250 ethnic groups found themselves in Cameroon. It also talks about the history of Cameroon from the pre-colonial era, colonization by the Germans, the defeat of the Germans during the First World War, the cessation of the territory to the British and French, how the country was divided and administered as two separate entities, the introduction of English and French languages, systems of governance, and legal systems into their respective portions of the territory until independence when the two Cameroons decided to re-unite as a single entity. The central nature of the government is also discussed in this chapter, including how the country is sub-divided into regions, divisions, and sub-divisions for administrative purposes. Chapter two also talks about the origin of the people of Manyu Division, as well as the evolution of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property laws in Cameroon.

In chapter three, I reviewed the existing literature on indigenous institutions and cases where indigenous institutions have been used to resolve conflicts. Chapter three is about calls for the integration of indigenous institutions in respective post-colonial societies, situations where indigenous institutions have been integrated into the
institutions of governance, as well as the limitations of indigenous institutions in the post-colonial era.

In chapter four, the theory of nationalism, post-colonial theory, and indigenous theories are used to analyze and explain the situation of Cameroon. I explain that it was as a result of the feelings of nationalism that Cameroonians decided to re-unite at independence. Also, it was as a result of the feelings of nationalism that the government adopted English and French languages, culture, system of governance, and legal systems. That is, the authorities felt these foreign institutions were known nationally, and that the indigenes will easily succumb to them. I also discuss how adopted Western institutions and systems aroused suspicions from nationalists, who feel that they have been left out, and are now calling for the integration of indigenous institutions and practices to preserve national pride and install the feelings of oneness into the population/indigenes.

Chapter five, is about the methodology that was used to conduct the research. Here, I describe the procedures that were used to collect, interpret, and analyze the research data that was obtained in the field. In the qualitative study, I observed the Ekpe process of conflict resolution and interviewed research participants to find out what they think about the process of Ekpe conflict resolution. The interviews were recorded with the use of a tape recorder and later transcribed by the principal researcher. I also described what I did to make sure that the transcriptions were correct. In the quantitative part of the study, surveys were used to collect data which was later analyzed with the use of logistic regression. The goal was to find out if there was a correlation between the involvement of the administration and chieftaincy disputes, correlation between the
administration and land disputes, and the relationship between the courts and succession to property disputes.

Chapter six is a discussion of the findings and results of the study and how it impacts indigenous study, post-colonial theory, and conflict resolution studies in general. Chapter seven concludes the research and discusses the measures worth considering in integrating indigenous institution and systems of conflict resolution into the formal institution of government in Cameroon.
Chapter 2: Historical Context

This chapter briefly recounts the history of Cameroon including that of the people of Manyu Division. It is hoped that an understanding of the history of Manyu Division in particular and Cameroon in general will help explain why the Ekpe indigenous institution of governance and conflict resolution should be studied. It is my contention that understanding the history can also help in understanding why a) administrators and judicial officials do not sometimes understand the culture of the people in the area they work, b) it is sometimes difficult to enforce administrative decisions and court judgments, and c) it is necessary to integrate indigenous institutions of conflict resolution into the institutions of Cameroon.

The Pre-Colonial History of Cameroon

The territory that is presently known as Cameroon had been in contact with the Mediterranean world since ancient times as a result of travel along the routes across the Sahara, wherein exchanges were made through Libya, Egypt, the Fezzan, and Tchad. During this period, ivory, salt, bronze, ostrich feathers, imported pearls, and other manufactured goods were exported through Cameroon (Kange Ewané, 1985). Because the territory is located at a path across the south to north and west to the east of Africa, all the races of Africa settled in the territory during the course of the various migrations across Africa.

In the 10th century, the people of the Sao clan came southwards from the north of Africa and settled on the banks of Lake Chad, in the present day Far North Region of Cameroon (Griaule, 1943, p. 54). It is also alleged that the Sudanese people migrated from the east of Africa (Abysinia-Ethiopia and Eastern Sudan) and travelled westwards
across the present North Cameroon. While most continued to the west of Africa, some Sudanese ethnic groups -including the Massa, the Moundang, and Toupouri- settled in the north of Cameroon (Griaule, 1943, p. 220).

Furthermore, while fleeing capture and enslavement to Goree and El-Mina, the Fangs got to the present day Cameroon during the 18th century migration and settled in the equatorial rain forest of the South and East Cameroon. They included people of the present day Fang, Ewondo, Boulou, Bane, Fon, Beti, and Bakoko ethnic groups (Mveng, 1963, p. 243). In addition, the Foulbes or Fulanis arrived in the north of Cameroon from Egypt, Abyssinia, Senegal, Mali, and Nigeria towards the end of the 18th century.

Another group that is very prominent in Cameroon is the Bantu. The Bantus are a group of people that speak languages of the Bantu origin. The first Bantus are said to have migrated from the upper Nile and possibly settled around central and southern Cameroon during the great migration of the 15th century, and the second migration of Bantus arrived Cameroon around the 17th Century. The Bantus include the people of Duala, the Sawas, and the people of the Cross River Region (Ibiobios, Abos, Ejaghams, Bangwas, Balundos) (Greenberg, 1955, pp. 41-42). As a result of these migrations the country ended up with more than 250 ethnic groups with diverse cultures. These associations of cultures are bound to cause conflicts.

**The Political History of Cameroon**

Various European traders and missionaries exploited Cameroon, including the coastal and interior forest areas of the Cross River during the European exploration of the continent. During the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, the area presently known as Cameroon was given to the Germans as a colonial territory. The German colonial rule
was however short-lived because the First World War started in 1914 and the Germans were defeated in Cameroon by the English and French in 1916. The conquered German territory was sub-divided disproportionately between Britain and France. This division was confirmed by the Mandates of the League of Nations in 1922 as well as the United Nations as a trusteeship agreement in 1945 (Ardener, 1962; Fanso, 1999).

Britain and France had full authority to constitute parts of Cameroon into a customs, fiscal, currency, and administrative union or federation with adjacent territories by the terms of both the League of Nations and the United Nations (Fanso, 1999, p. 282). French Cameroon became a member of the Federation of French Equatorial Africa as a separate entity and was called by the Gallicized form ‘Cameroun’ (Ardener, 1962). The British portion of the territory consisted of mere strips of territory pointing at, but not touching, each other on the border with Nigeria and was called ‘Cameroons’ (Ardener, 1962, p. 341). Parts of the Cross River Region happens to be in the southern portion of British Cameroon.

While the French administered their mandate / trust territory as a separate entity with a strong central government, British Cameroons was subdivided into two territories. The northern strip of the territory, called Northern Cameroons, was subdivided and fused with the administrations of three separate provinces in Northern Nigeria. The southern portion was administered as an integral part of the Southern and later Eastern Region of Nigeria until 1954, when it was made a semi-autonomous region of Nigeria. A year later, the status of Southern Cameroon was upgraded into a full Region in the Federation of Nigeria (Chen-Langhee, 1995, p. 17).
During consultation talks between the political elites of the Northern and Southern Cameroons with the United Nations for independence from 1959 on, many options were advanced as a way forward for the British Cameroons. These included: a) unification of Northern and Southern Cameroons to be amalgamated into a single administrative unit within or outside of the Nigerian political framework, b) integration of the Northern and Southern Cameroons either as single entities or together to be constituted into autonomous regions or states permanently into the Federation of Nigeria, c) secession of Northern Cameroons and Southern Cameroons from Nigeria to develop together as an independent state either as two provinces or as a single unit, and d) re-unification of all the portions of the former German Kamerun to form a single independent state (Chen-Langhee, 1995, p. 17). While unification had advocates in the three portions of the former German Kamerun, the British Northern and Southern Cameroons preferred a federal system while French Cameroun was for any form of re-unification (Chen-Langhee, 1995; Chem-Langhee & Njeuma, 1980).

**Independence and Re-unification of the Two Cameroons**

French Cameroun got its independence on January 1\textsuperscript{st} 1960 after a turbulent anti-colonial struggle. However, those who were given the authority to rule were handpicked by the French colonizers and were not those who had fought for liberation in the 1950s (Chem-Langhee & Njeuma, 1980). On February 11th 1961, a plebiscite organized by the United Nations was held in the British Southern and Northern Cameroons in which the people were given two options to vote for in deciding their independence (including full integration into Nigeria) or re-unification with the French Cameroun (Chen-Langhee, 1995). In the plebiscite, Northern Cameroons voted for integration into the Federation of
Nigeria, while Southern Cameroons voted for re-unification with their peers, French Cameroun (Njumbe, n.d., p. 2; Ardener, 1962). Southern Cameroons and the former French Cameroun Republic were thus united into a bilingual federal state with the name called, the Federal Republic of Cameroon.

Re-unification of the Two Cameroons and the Post-Colonial Administration

A new constitution that provided for two federated states was drafted and adopted. Each state had a legislature and a Prime Minister appointed by the Federal President. As stated by Articles 51 and 52 of the Federal Constitution, Ahmadou Ahidjo from East Cameroon became the first President while John Foncha from West Cameroon became the first Vice-President (Ardener, 1962). However, what was expected to mark the beginning of a unique federal experiment in Africa soon turned out to be shadows rather than reality (Stark, 1976).

For instance, while Southern Cameroons and the French Cameroun agreed on a loose federal system of governance with equal status for Southern Cameroons and the Republic of Cameroon, no law was put in place to protect the status and rights of the minority Southern Cameroons whose population comprised just about a quarter of the total population and about nine percent of the total size of the territory (see Appendix A for map of Cameroon). Also, the role of traditional institutions of governance and conflict resolution was abrogated with the new constitution (Konings & Nyamnjob, 1997).

The constitution created a strong presidential regime at the federal level. The president became a powerful, active chief executive, head of state, head of the federal government, and chief of the armed forces. The president had the power to legislate by presidential decree, and bypass the legislature in the case of a state of emergency. Also,
the constitution gave the president powers to appoint ministers, governors, judges, and other administrative officials throughout the country without consulting any other organ of government. In practice, these officials depended on presidential favors to stay in power (Konings, 1999, p. 298).

Territorial administration soon became an issue of conflict between West Cameroonian leaders and President Ahidjo, when the latter by Presidential Decree No. 61-DF-15 of 20 December 1961, divided the whole country into administrative regions to be administered by federal inspectors of administration, responsible to the president only. The federal inspectors were to represent the federal government in civil and judicial matters, to ensure that federal laws and regulations are enforced, and to maintain law and order. The police force, gendarmerie, as well as federal services were placed at the disposal of the administrative inspectors (Konings, 1999, p. 302). This system of administration greatly sidelined the existing traditional institutions of governance and conflict resolution throughout the country (Stark, 1976, p. 432).

Furthermore, the federal nature of the state was transformed to a unitary state by the National Assembly on May 20th, 1972. The then President Ahmadou Ahidjo’s justifications for reforming the structures of the country were that federalism was an expensive administrative system for a developing country, impeded the economic development of the whole country, prevented the spirit of nationalism, but promoted regionalism (Konings, 1999, p. 304).

Upon promulgation of the unitary state in 1972, the president decided to restructure the bicameral nature of the West Cameroon House of Legislature, and abolished the House of Chiefs in an effort to bring it in line with the legislature in East
Cameroon, which had only one chamber in the legislature. At the level of the judiciary, the constitution created two new courts: the Federal Court of Justice to hear appeals from the highest state courts, handle federal or interstate or state-federal issues, and give advisory opinions to federal authorities on limited situations; and a High Court of Justice to adjudicate in cases of high treason, conspiracy against the state, or various crimes that the highest federal or state officials committed (Konings & Nyamnjoh, 1997).

The Present Structure of Administrative and Legal Institutions in Cameroon

Presently, Cameroon has a centralized system of governance and the country has been divided administratively into ten regions. Of these regions, eight are officially French speaking while two are English speaking (South West and North West Regions) as figures 2.1 and 2.2 show.

Figure 1. Map of Cameroon Showing Regions
The regions are further divided into divisions, and the divisions into sub-divisions. A governor serves as the chief administrative officer of the region, a senior divisional officer heads the division, and a sub-divisional officer is in charge of the subdivision. All these administrators are appointed and dismissed by the President of the Republic by manner of presidential decrees.
Figure 3. Administrative Leadership in Cameroon

The judicial system is composed of a Supreme Court, Appeal Courts, High Courts, Courts of First Instance, and Native/Custodial Courts. The Supreme Court is the highest court of the country, and sits in the capital city Yaoundé. The rulings of the Supreme Court are final and not subject to appeal. Each region has an appeal court that hears appeals from the lower courts in the region. Appeals to the judgments and decisions of the Appeal Courts are heard by the Supreme Court. At the divisional level, there is a High Court that hears aggravated criminal cases as well as civil cases with fines of more than CFA 250,000 francs (approximately $500.00).

The court of First Instance (Lower Court) hears all other minor offenses. However, there are Native Courts with judges that are supposed to be vested with the traditions of the people. Customary courts are purposely meant to resolve domestic cases including inheritance, succession, and child custody, and parties are required to
voluntarily submit to the jurisdiction of the court. The judges of the customary courts are guided by the customs and traditions of the ethnic group in the area of the jurisdiction of the court. The judges are appointed by the administrators, and can be dismissed by the administrators at their will (US State Department, 2012).

**Manyu Division**

The territory presently called Manyu Division was generally referred to as the Cross River area. The inhabitants traded and intermarried with people from the Calabar Region of the present day Nigeria. The people have similar cultures and speak almost the same languages. With the coming of the colonial masters, the Cross River area was split in two halves, one half was ceded to Nigeria and the other half found itself in Cameroon. The effect was that, some families became divided with part living in Nigeria and others living in Cameroon. The portion that was ceded to Cameroon was named Mamfe Division by the Germans. After the Germans were defeated in the First World War, the British renamed it Manyu Division.

Manyu Division has been split into four sub-divisions which are Mamfe Central, Eyumojock, Upper Bayang, and Akwaya Sub-Divisions (see Appendix A for map of Manyu). The chief administrative officer of Manyu Division is the Senior Divisional Officer who sits at the Divisional Headquarters of Mamfe. The sub-divisions are each headed by a Sub-Divisional Officer who is subordinate to the Senior Divisional Officer.

There is a High Court and Court of First Instance situated at Mamfe which are responsible for hearing all legal issues. However, the judges on a monthly basis go to the suburbs to administer justice by setting up ad-hoc tribunals at some sub-divisional headquarters where there is no court of First Instance. However, all High Court cases are
tried at the premises of the High Court in Mamfe town. Also, there is a customary court in Mamfe with jurisdiction to hear cases throughout Manyu Division.
Chapter 3: Literature Review

Integration of Indigenous Institutions of Conflict Resolution

The previous chapter indicated the existence of loopholes in formal dispute institutions in Cameroon which have rendered them ineffective. While the indigenes affected in most cases do not fully understand the process, or lack the finances to commence legal proceedings, those upon whom power is bestowed to administer justice are either corrupt, or do not understand the cultures of the people. To add more, the institutions (National Assembly and Senate) designed by the 1996 constitution to enact laws are either unwilling or unable to carry on their functions effectively. The effect is a stalemate or breakdown of the system. It is hoped that this research will suggest alternative and effective mechanisms that resonate with the justice demands of the people thereby providing in them an ownership of the processes. This study was driven by the following general question:

“How could the Ekpe society be best integrated into the formal system, yet maintaining its uniqueness and effectiveness?” In answering that question, I did look at the process of resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Cameroon, and the inherent challenges.

To answer the question, I conducted empirical research on the Ekpe system to determine a wide range of issues including its origins and objectives and its ability to effectively respond to the justice demands of the people. It is my hope that the findings of the study if implemented will reduce the rate of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division, restore trust, and strengthen policy initiatives.
The Importance of Indigenous and Traditional Institutions

Increasingly, researchers have written about the importance of indigenous institutions, and the necessity of integrating them into the institutions of post-colonial administration. Huyse & Salter (2008), for example, talk about the importance of integrating indigenous and traditional systems into the institutions of the state in countries emerging from armed conflict. Hamer (2007) also writes about the necessity of integrating the traditional system of governance and conflict resolution of the Sidāna ethnic group into the institutions of Ethiopia.

To add more, indigenous institutions and systems of conflict resolution have been used successfully in orchestrating genuine reconciliation between perpetrators and victims in Uganda, where traditional-based practices were used in the Acholi region for reconciliation (Latigo, 2008). Another example is in Mozambique, where the Megamba spirits were used successfully to reconcile perpetrators and victims through confession (Igreja & Dias-Lambranca, 2008).

Whereas there is some literature on the increase in the number of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Cameroon (Cheka, 2008; Fisiy, 1992), limited research have been done about the Ekpe indigenous institution and the process of resolving disputes. Also, there is no research to my knowledge that samples opinions of Manyu indigenes to bring out their opinion about the formal administrative and judicial processes of conflict resolution. The recent work of Cheka (2008), became significant because of the use of empirical evidence to highlight the important role traditional institutions and values play alongside republican institutions and therefore argue that the two institutions must be integrated in development initiatives. By integration, providing
legitimacy to informal institutions to operate separately but within the formal legal system

Molotlegi (2004), at a Fourth African Development Forum in Ethiopia, also refuted the misconceptions and theory that indigenous modes of governance are not the same thing as tribal politics, and that the (formal) administrative systems that seem perfect theoretically but faulty when put into practice are outdated and should no longer be relied upon by post-colonial administrations. These works aroused my curiosity to conduct a research into the Ekpe indigenous institution of conflict resolution. The goal is to find out if Ekpe can be effective in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division.

More so, the scholars in Belaunde, Cortes, Hogstad, Ku, Nascimento, & Trzcinski (2010) conducted a study in Yaounde, Douala, and Njombe in 2010. They carried out forty interviews that included governmental officials of different levels, peasants, NGOs, various peasants associations, and development organizations investigating how decisions get made around land conflicts and what the perceived outcomes (both governmental and traditional) of these processes were in 2010. In this study, I will cover a spatio-temporal domain from 1972 to 2012, to include some chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes on central government administration, judiciary, and traditional Ekpe institution conflict resolution processes.

Moreover, this study is aimed at moving beyond the conceptual and methodological issues, as previously discussed, specifically the inadequacy of research, narrow scope of most analysis on chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes,
and effectiveness of methods of management. A review of the existing literature on the Ekpe society will be discussed next.

**The Ekpe Indigenous Institution Examined**

The Ekpe society is an ancient African institution that combines forms of art and performance styles of dance, music, and mysterious knowledge in its functions. Ekpe means Leopard in the Ejagham and Kenyang languages of Manyu Division while the Efiks and Ibiobio ethnic groups of Cross River State in Nigeria call it Ekpe. (Behrendt, Latham, & Northrup 2010, p. 31). While the indigenes of Manyu use the name Mgbe or Ekpe interchangeably, the Ekpe Supreme Council did come out with a communication advising the general public to use the word Mgbe referring to the institution and to refrain from using the name Ekpe. However, since the name Ekpe is still widely used, I will be using it in the study. The leopard is an animal inhabitants around the forest area of West and Central Africa believe symbolizes strength, energy, vigor, determination, persistence, stamina, and swiftness (Behrendt et al., 2010).

While the leopard was used as a symbol of leadership and royalty by many communities in Africa, the people that lived around the Cross River Region decided to use the symbol of the leopard to symbolize the Ekpe society. The perception in indigenes myth is that the leopard is a ‘sacred’ animal that is active at night when all other animals including humans are sleeping (Miller & Ojong 2012, p. 2). Rosevear (1974) bestows to the greatness Africans confer to a leopard saying that the respect natives give the leopard is justified taking into consideration the fact that the leopard devours all other animals in the wild and always feels unsubdued, stable, and secure.
Ekpe is an invisible spirit that was placated to guide the well-being of all in the community. It is believed the leopard travels from the forest to come and interact with people in the communities. The leopard societies were founded to guard the community from evil spirits and to unite the people around a supernatural being. With the use of ostentatious masquerades, the Ekpe society performed rituals in the community (Behrendt et al., 2010, p. 31). As a result of the integrative and controlling qualities of the institution, both the riverine and forested zone communities across the Cross River Region relied on Ekpe for security and solidarity as they migrated from one settlement to another.

During the pre-colonial period, Ekpe society members were commonly seen parading the streets dressed in their Ekpe regalia and masks in various communities. However, the rampant nature of such appearances made the early colonial officials to look at the institution as a threat to the peace and proper functioning of the colonial administration (Nwaka, 1978, pp. 187-188). As a result, attempts were made to limit the functions and appearances of Ekpe by the British colonial administration.

**The Origin of the Ekpe Society**

The origin of the Ekpe society still remains a mystery. However, anthropologists and historians believe that Ekpe societies originated around the present day Cameroon-Nigeria border area that is occupied mostly by the groups of people that speak Bantu-related languages including Keaka, Ejagham, Etung, Baluondo, Badundu, and also known as the Cross River Region (Talbot, 1912; Thompson, 1983; Leib & Romano, 1984; Nicklin 1991; Onor 1994; Tangban 1982, 2003). These communities were connected geographically and communicated with each other before European explorers
and missionaries first visited the area (Miller & Ojong, 2012, p. 1). The Berlin Conference of 1884-85 divided the area into two parts and shared it to the British that named it the Cross River State of Nigeria, and to the Germans that named it the South West Region of Cameroon. The indigenes that lived in these communities used the Ekpe institution extensively in governance, to resolve conflicts, to ensure peace, and to guarantee trade.

In every community where Ekpe was instituted, the institution helped to integrate the community, and strengthened relationships among the people (Ottenberg & Knudsen 1985; Röschenthaler, 2011). The use of Ekpe in governance, conflict resolution, and peace building was noteworthy in communities where there was no central government (king), army or organized judicial system (Miller & Ojong, 2012, p. 4). Kanni Fongot in an interview with Ivor Miller in December 2010 stated that,

There was Ekpe influence among the Bamenda Fondoms derived from the Mamfe region. It is referred to by many names: the Bali Chamba call it Ngumba; the Nso call it Nwerong; the Kom and Bafut call it Kwifor Mintu, or “the Fon of the night”; in Bali Ngonga they sing the phrase: “Nyampe Nyampe” [which is consistent with the reference to an Ekpe grade called Nyamkpe in the Cross River Region]. (Miller & Ojong, 2012, p. 5)

As a result of its successes in resolving conflicts and maintaining peace, Ekpe was bought and transferred to other parts of the Cross River Basin in Cameroon, including the Bayang areas in Manyu Division, Fontem and further into the Grassfields of the North West and Western Regions, the Batanga coast in the Eastern Region of Cameroon, to the Ibiobio land in the Cross Rivers of Nigeria, and to other areas of Africa like Malabo,
Equatorial Guinea and Cuba, wherein the institution was transferred in the course of the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Miller & Ojong, 2012).

**Function of Ekpe**

As mentioned previously, Ekpe is a secret brotherhood society charged with the responsibility of maintaining the well-being of all in the community. The jurisdiction of the Ekpe society includes running the village in all respects: economically, socially, politically, and judicially. Membership into the Ekpe society is synonymous to being a member of the local customary government (Lieb & Romano, 1984, p. 48). It is believed that the origin of the social and economic authority of the association is the mighty spirit of the leopard. Its spirit is implored with the use of rituals to release the leopard’s power. Whenever the spirit is invoked, it is recommended that the leopard be appeased so as to ensure the welfare of the community (Lieb & Romano, 1984, p. 48). In the appeasement, members cook food, eat, drink, and dance to traditional Ekpe rhythms. Lieb and Romano (1984) classified Ekpe into three concepts including:

1. The corporate group, that is, the association itself, its established principles of organization, and the politico-juridical functions it encompasses.

2. The cult agency, meaning the body of religious beliefs belonging to Ngbe and the set of ritual means to enact them.

3. The icon, the venerated image of the leopard in its numerous manifestations. (p. 48)

During the pre-colonial era, the Ekpe institution had four main functions; the first being to bestow citizenship rights to members of the community. Men holding Ekpe titles were recognized as full citizens and given the right to participate in making decisions that
impacted the entire community. Ekpe also acted as the police in the community, and had the power to discipline/punish any member that failed to respect the law. Ekpe punishments involved seizure of offenders’ property, including their land, and banishment from the community. The function of Ekpe as an institution of conflict resolution and peace during the pre-colonial time was stated by Behrendy et al. (2010), when they stated: “Antera Duke’s first dated entry, January 18, 1785, discusses a dispute between Efik traders Egbo Young Ofiong and Little Otto, one resolved by the Ekpe society of Old Calabar to which wealthy Efik men belonged” (p. 3).

Thirdly, Ekpe functioned as a school where the young were instructed on the customs, traditions, and the concept of human life as a recurring process of regeneration and reincarnation of human beings upon their death. Finally, Ekpe provided entertainment to the community by offering them music, dances, and body-mask (Miller & Ojong, 2012, pp. 1-2). The peace that prevailed in the communities that had incorporated the Ekpe institution during the pre-colonial period serves as proof of the effectiveness of Ekpe in maintaining peace. Miller & Ojong (2012) emphasized the effectiveness of Ekpe saying:

Between societies that absorbed the Ekpe culture and those that did not, the difference was striking, in that those who used Ekpe as a system of governance were noted to maintain cordial relations in contrast to the frequency of internal conflicts that characterizes societies lacking Ekpe authority and values. (Miller & Ojong 2012, p. 5)

Ekpe society provided an authoritative framework to regulate social interaction above the level of the extended family group. Copious evidence demonstrates that, in
communities throughout the Cross River Region, Ekpe sanctions historically regulated traditional institutions with clan and village councils (Talbot, 1912; Onor, 1994; Tangban, 2008). Miler & Ojong (2012) give an example of this saying that:

In 1853 Old Calabar, the Reverend Anderson witnessed the use of Ekpe to end a conflict between two principalities: ‘Heard Egbo’s [Ekpe’s] voice in town early this morning, and about seven o’clock saw Creek Town Egbo [Ekpe] coming down the river. A stop has been put to the war between the Henshaw and Archibong families, and both parties have been bound over to keep the peace. I hear that a fine was inflicted for yesterday’s contumacy’ (Marwick 1897, p. 277). Meaning that, the mystic Voice of Ekpe was alluded in calling for the cessation end of the conflict. Thereafter, an Ekpe delegation was sent by canoe to confirm the peace through a meeting of leaders of both communities. (pp. 5-6)

The Ekpe institution is still being used in the settlement of disputes. Recently, Ekpe sanctions were used in resolving conflicts between some communities in Manyu Division and logging companies. The conflict arose when the community used Ekpe to stop the logging company from harvesting timber without respecting the traditional and forest exploitation law in Cameroon, thereby failing to protect their land rights against unhealthy forest exploitation. Sharpe (2005) reports that, “in a number of cases, villages have closed their forest to loggers or conservationists using emblems of the Male or Ekpe cult associations” (p. 6).
Chapter 4: Theoretical Perspective

The theory of nationalism, post-colonial theory, and indigenous theories were used to analyze the political situation of Cameroon and the predicaments of the indigenes of Manyu Division and to explain why it is important to integrate indigenous institutions and systems in Cameroon. The theory of nationalism explains why the people of British Cameroons voted to reunite with French Cameroun at the end of colonization. It was also as a result of the spirit of nationalism that Western institutions and system of governance were adopted after the re-unification of the Cameroons. Nationalistic feelings, related to the colonial master’s culture, were the few things that a cross section of the population could identify with. English and French, for example, were the only languages that could be used in communication in the territory and that indigenes across the board could understand. As a result, it was considered a national pride to speak English and French languages, and rely on the Western system of governance and method of conflict resolution. However, with the passage of time, the indigenes seem to have realized that the Western culture and institutions are incompatible with their customs and ways of living. There is awakening and a feeling of pride in the indigenes to rely on their indigenous institutions of governance and conflict resolution. They seem to have come to realize that Western institutions are in fact orient to them, and increase rather than resolve conflicts. As a result, they are clamoring for and reverting to their indigenous institutions in resolving conflicts within their communities. The pride of being governed by their indigenous institutions is arousing nationalistic feelings within the indigenes of Manyu. Before delving into greater details, it will be helpful to define the meaning, origin, and the main propagators of Nationalism.
Nationalism Defined

From the point of view of Gellner (2008, p. 1), “Nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and the national unit should be congruent”. That implies that nationalism both as a sentiment or as a movement can best be defined in terms of that principle; either as the anger caused by its violation or the satisfaction by its accomplishment. A group of people motivated to act in accordance with such sentiments are generally considered to be directed by nationalistic sentiments.

Gellner also points out different ways through which the nationalist principle can be violated including:

The political boundary of a given state can fail to include all the members of the appropriate nation; or it can include them all but also include some foreigners; or it can fail in both these ways at once, not incorporating all the nationals and yet also including some non-nationals. Or again, a nation may live, unmixed with foreigners, in a multiplicity of states, so that no single state can claim to be the national one. (p. 1)

Gellner further states that another form of the violation of the nationalist principle is when a majority of the population is ruled or governed by a minority group and that creates a very high sentimental feeling. In a nutshell:

Nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires ethnic boundaries not to cut across political ones, and, in particular, that ethnic boundaries within a given state – a contingency already formally excluded by the principle in its general formulation – should not separate the power-holders from the rest. (p. 1)
On his part, Benedict Anderson (2006) looks at nationalism as an imagined community saying: "it is an imagined political community - - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (p. 6). Anderson further said that: “It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (p. 6). Anderson also pointed that “In fact, all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. Communities are to be distinguished, not by their falsity/genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined” (p. 6).

The nation is imagined as limited because even the largest nations with the highest human population have fixed or adjustable boundaries, outside of which other nations do exist, and there is no nation that can imagine it can include all the people of the world in its territory. Even the most ardent believers of the notion of nationalism do not believe that there is going to be a time when all human beings in the world will join their nation in such a way that it could be possible; just as Christians and Muslims for example dream of the day when everybody in the world will join their religion (Anderson, 2006).

Anderson also says it is an imagined community because, irrespective of the fact that there is inequality in the community and the rich exploit the poor in the society, the citizens still look at the nation as a deep “horizontal comradeship.” In summary, Anderson seems to lament that the feeling of brotherliness has made it possible in the last two centuries for millions of people to kill other people and for people to be willing to die for the limited imagining feelings or sentiment for the state. Anderson believes that
Gellner (1964) works on nationalism seems to agree with his imagined notion of it since Gellner wrote that “Nationalism is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness: it invents nations where they do not exist” (p. 169).

I turn to agree with the positions of both Gellner and Anderson on nationalism. I accept with Anderson that nationalism is imaginary. It is because it is deceptive that people will be willing to fight and give up their lives for the sake of others in the nation when in reality they do not actually know the people they are willing to give up their life for. Also, I agree with Gellner that the notion nationalism developed as a result of industrialization and modernity. As rightly stated by Gellner, nationalism is not a sentiment expressed by pre-existing nations; rather it creates nations where they did not previously exist. He acknowledges that certain prior conditions - for example written vernacular, territorial state, distinctive religion - influence specific nation formations, but these conditions do not amount to pre-nationalist nations. I also agree with him that nations and nationalism are not natural because they are not a permanent feature of the human condition but came into being with the transition to industrialism.

**Nations and Nationalism**

Gellner (2008) made a distinction between structure and culture as drawn from anthropology. By structure, he refers to the distinct roles people play and the relationships between these roles. Whereas Gellner does not provide an equivalent definition of culture, he contrasts the presentations people make of themselves to others (dress, dance, ritual) with the role they perform. He argues that during the agricultural era, people were defined through structure. Everybody was aware of their role as well as
their social position in the society. In that way, structure furnished identity while culture fortified structure.

Industrialization brought with it a complex, large scale industrial society that was structured and works differently from the agricultural era. The scale and structure of the industrial society, especially in the modern city, made it possible for diverse people to come in contact physically with one another. The industrial era eliminated most of the fixed rules and positions and introduced elasticity making it easy for people to move between many positions, migrating, and changing jobs easily. The industrial era also made it difficult to identify people in terms of structure (Gellner, 2008). Colonialism, just like industrialization, brought with it modernity and the movement of people from one community to another. Manyu indigenes have move to other communities in Cameroon and people from different cultures have moved into Manyu Division as well bringing with it complications in the understanding and practice of the Ekpe indigenous institution. As a result of this movement of people, the government imposed Western institutions which they considered to be national to the indigenes.

The argument fits with the spread of a standard culture amongst the subjects of an increasingly interventionist state in the transition to industrialism. Nationalism appears as a unifying process, resembling Eugen Weber’s account of peasants being turned into Frenchmen, or D’Azeglio’s observation that, having created Italy, it was now necessary to make Italians. That is, having created a United Cameroon at independence, the government decided it was time to create Cameroonians by imposing on the indigenes institutions that they considered to be national, and suppressing the indigenous institutions which they felt would prevent national integration and unity.
Nationalism, however very often, breeds more conflicts and separation from the existing state than assimilation and unification. To add more, industrialization was and is not evenly spread in the society. While some groups have advanced quickly in the process, others have remained backwards or developed in a slower pace. As a result, some regions are disadvantaged when compared to those that are forward in the process. The indigenes of Manyu are an example of the group that seems to feel they have been left behind in the national integration process of Cameroon. Without cultural homogeneity of the group, there cannot be nationalism because there will be a lack of a clear incentive. To add more, social and cultural distinctions based on such ‘diacritical marks’ like language or religion are obstacles to nationalism.

During the pre-colonial period, there was nothing like a Cameroonian territory, people, or nation. The indigenes of the territory lived in their respective communities as farmers and hunters. The Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 created the country Cameroon and gave the territory to the Germans. Many diverse nations were forced into a single nation and made to believe they were a nation. The German colonial masters introduced industrialization and created the feeling of oneness of a Cameroonian nation. The country was subsequently split and given to the British and French as two separate entities with the defeat of the Germans in the First World War. Despite the division, the feeling of oneness of a nation that the Germans had inculcated into the people made them to desire a return of the nation of Cameroon at independence. Colonization and industrialization brought about the feeling of nationalism in Cameroon. To ensure national integration, the respective governments adopted Western institutions and policies that a cross section of the population could identify with. This feeling was however just imaginary as the people
were very diverse culturally, socially as well as in their religious beliefs. The consciousness of the indigenes seems to have been awakened with the passage of time. They seem to have realized that the formal institutions are indeed foreign to them and a threat to the existence of their culture and are now clamoring for a return to their indigenous institutions.

In the same nature, the indigenes of Manyu Division feel the existence of their cultural practices are being threatened. The imposition of Western institutions, systems of governance, and conflict resolution in the name of national unity is imaginary to them and not real. They believe their cultural institutions of governance and conflict resolution are more effective than the formal institutions that are foreign to them. They want to own the institutions that govern them. They have identified the Ekpe institution, culture, and model of conflict resolution as the institution to rely on in resolving their conflicts. Ekpe is their culture and way of life. They want to have the feeling of pride in relying in their cultural practices in resolving conflicts within the group. The nationalization policies of the government have contrarily awakened nationalistic feelings among Manyu indigenes.

According to Gellner (2008), nationalism is not a sentiment expressed by pre-existing nations; rather it creates nations where they did not previously exist. Gellner concedes that certain prior conditions (written vernacular, territorial state, distinctive religion) influence specific nation formations, but these conditions do not amount to pre-nationalist nations. He recognizes that where nationalism has acquired power and prestige, it can give rise to derivative or limited forms. It is nationalistic feelings that are influencing Manyu indigenes to believe in the Ekpe indigenous institution. The Ekpe institution had been existing prior to colonialization in the territory. They believe it is
pride to rely in a system imbedded in their tradition to resolve their conflicts. Whereas the Ekpe indigenous institution predates colonialization, the indigenes were not passionate about preserving the institution. Rather, their awakening was a consequence of nationalistic feelings that developed as a result of their feeling of an increase in the influence of the formal institutions of government. Nationalistic feelings is thus creating a nation in Manyu where it did not previously exist.

In Cameroon, colonialism brought industrialization and modernism, which in turn aroused nationalistic feelings in Cameroonians to reunify at independence. The feeling that they were once colonized by the Germans inculcated in them the spirit of oneness. The feelings that they had developed the same culture fortified their desire to reunite. However, this feeling was just imaginary because, in reality, British colonized Cameroonians did not really know French speaking Cameroonians, and their respective cultures were glaringly different. The feeling of nationalism that brought Cameroonians together at independence was just imaginary and it was as a result of colonialization and modernity that such feelings of oneness were aroused.

Not surprisingly, nationalistic and ethnic pride is presently driving Manyu indigenes to revert to the Ekpe institution in settling conflicts. The feeling of the pride of ownership of the institutions of governance and conflict resolution is driving Manyu indigenes.

The Theory of Nationalism and Cameroon

The feeling of nationalism was the driving force behind the desire for the reunification of British and French Cameroons at the time of independence. The nationalist feeling made the people to resent the fact that they were being governed by a
foreign power. As a result, the people requested their freedom and desire to govern by themselves.

Also, it was believed that the institutions of governance and conflict resolution that were inherited from the colonial masters would be a uniting factor, and help facilitate the emergence of a Cameroonian nation to effectively accomplish the goal of nationalism. Surprisingly, the country has become deeply divided, with each ethnic group fighting to dominate other ethnic groups, resulting in the respective ethnic groups finding it difficult to understand and co-exist.

Cameroon has more than 250 ethnic groups, vernaculars, and cultures, with some being large unified nations, including the kingdoms in the Grassfields, Adamawa lamidates, and the ethnic and cultural groupings in the forest areas of the coast. The people are also divided in their religious believes with Christianity, Islam, and traditional African believers being the dominant religions. Furthermore, Cameroon is made up of two distinctive English or Anglo-Saxon and French or Francophone cultures; both former independent states, which are unwilling to compromise and with the people affectionately tied to their respective cultures. The desire to protect the respective cultures or nations can be seen as the cause of conflicts in Cameroon.

**The Role of Nationalism in the Conflict in Cameroon**

Cameroon, originally colonized by the Germans, was handed to the British and the French as mandated and later trust territory by the League of Nations and subsequently United Nations. The British and the French decided to divide the territory and governed it as separate entities. In the 1950s, elites started clamoring for independence, arousing nationalistic feelings among fellow Cameroonians. It was
nationalistic instincts that made Southern Cameroonians to vote massively in favor of joining their French Cameroon counterpart.

After independence and re-unification, it was soon realized that the division of Cameroon by the League of Nations, and subsequently United Nations, resulted in consequences which the people of Cameroon could not overcome. By administering portions of the territory as an integral part of Nigeria, the British introduced their system of governance (indirect rule), legal system, educational system, and culture into the British portion of the country (Fanso, 1999). In the same vein, the French had introduced their educational system, language, legal system, culture, and system of governance in the French mandated territory administered as part of French Equatorial Africa. The question that comes to mind is why the respective post-colonial administrations did not revert to the pre-colonial culture and institutions of governance of the territory. To answer this question, it is worthwhile to look at post-colonial theory in the light of Sengor, Fanon, and Cabral. The post-colonial theory will also help in understanding why Ekpe should be integrated into the formal institutions of Cameroon to make them more effective in resolving disputes.

**Post-Colonial Theory**

The colonial period saw the rapid acquisition of territories by European countries in the late nineteenth century in Africa. This period, that is generally referred to as the scramble for Africa, saw the conquest and confiscation of the land and natural resources of the indigenous population (Williams & Chrisman, 1994). The forceful acquisition of territories was a result of the search for new markets and sources of raw material as well as the desire to prevent competitive nation’s access to such markets and raw materials.
The aftermath of the Second World War saw increased calls for liberation, end of colonization, and for the granting of independence to previously colonized countries.

Calls for independence from the colonial administration took various forms including demonstrations, legal and diplomatic maneuvers, and opposition of the ideological high ground principles and procedures of the colonizers (Williams & Chrisman, 1994). With the end of formal colonialism and the granting of independence to the colonized people, there were great hopes for the newly independent countries and for the inauguration of a proper post-colonial era. However, such hopes were relatively short-lived, as it quickly became clear and obvious that the European powers had not completely relinquished control of the former colonies. The European powers continued to exert economic, military, and political influence on the territories they once colonized. Marxists call this form of control over the formal territories as neo-colonialism (Williams & Chrisman, 1994).

Post-colonial theory works in Cameroon in that the colonial masters forced the post-colonial administration in Cameroon to adopt and continue their imperialistic policies. While the colonial masters handed over the management of the country to Cameroonians, they in fact exerted economic, political, and military influence over the territory. As a result, the post-colonial administration had to continue the central system of governance and conflict resolution that is mostly based on the individualistic culture of the colonial masters.

**Colonial Culture**

Post-colonial theorists hold the view that the goals of colonialism were to change, distort, and destroy the culture of the colonized people as well as to impose the culture
and rule of the imperialists on the indigenous people during the colonial period and thereafter. Fanon (1994) conferred to this by saying that,

Colonialism is not satisfied merely with hiding a people in its grip and emptying the native’s brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of the oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it. This work of devaluing pre-colonial history takes on a dialectical significance today.

(p. 37)

The natives were made to believe that they lived in darkness, their culture was bad, and that colonialism has come to brighten their darkness. The indigenous people were made to think if the colonialist left, they would revert to their archaic and barbaric lifestyles. The African intellectuals were also made to believe that the culture of the imperialist is superior to theirs. In this vein, the indigenous intellectuals felt it was a pride to talk, dress, and even walk like the colonialist. At independence, it was thus easy for the colonialist to adopt the Western system of administration while the indigenous institutions were discarded and abandoned.

The post-colonial theory and culture applies in the Ekpe indigenous institution of conflict resolution in that it was used during the pre-colonial period to resolve conflicts. During the colonial period, Cameroon was considered to have no pre-colonial culture or institutions. Ekpe was considered to be fetish and barbaric by the colonial masters and sidelined or discouraged (Miller & Ojong, 2012). The colonial masters imposed Western institutions and systems of governance and conflict resolution. No studies were made into the culture of the indigenes to see if the Western institutions could be effective and reliable.
As time went by, it became clear that the Western institutions are not compatible with African culture, and that these institutions are making conflicts to become protracted rather than resolve them. As a result, there are calls for reconsideration of the received laws or for the return to indigenous institutions of conflict resolution.

Fanon (1994) give three stages of the evolution of the indigenous African since the colonial era. The first phase is characterized by the intellectual’s interest to be assimilated in the culture of the colonial power. His writings at this stage parallel that of the colonial writers and oppose those of his mother’s country. He is inspired by European writers, dresses like the Europeans, and he is willing to be assimilated into Western culture. In the second stage, the native becomes confused and decides to remember who he is and where he comes from. However, since the indigenous intellectual does not consider himself to be part of his people and only has external relationship with them, he is satisfied with reporting or recalling their life story as an outsider. Here, the indigenous intellectual reports past memories of childhood experiences in light of an outsider. In the third and final stage, the indigenous intellectual will awaken the people with his writings and together they will fight for liberation, and more people are inspired for call for liberation.

Fanon (1994) believes that whereas the intention of the colonialists was to destroy the national culture of the indigenes, the colonial masters did not achieve that goal. For Fanon, traditions and customs are the culture of the indigenes. Cabral (1973) concurs saying that, the colonial masters were not successful in imposing their power and culture throughout the territory they control, but that their control was only limited to the metropolitan areas. Fanon further argues that ‘the people’ were the foundation of the
anti-colonial political struggle, and it was as a result of their desire to protect their cultural heritage that the people decided to fight against colonial domination. On the other hand, Cabral argues that it is ‘popular culture’ that was the backbone of the anti-colonial political struggle (Williams & Chrisman, 1994, p. 25).

The Manyu indigenes have come to realize that the Western institutions that were inherited at independence have not been successful in resolving disputes and are now requesting a return to the pre-colonial indigenous institutions of conflict resolution. They are convinced the Ekpe model will be more effective in resolving these disputes, and ensuing peace and community wellbeing.

**Indigenous Worldviews**

Indigenous methods of conflict resolution have been used by communities in Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Americas prior to colonization. The standards, methods, values, models, and rules developed by the various indigenous communities were used to check the behavior and conduct of members, and to ensure peace and stability in their community. Indigenous approaches are holistic, and in most cases comprise social, economic, cultural, and spiritual-religious dimensions. In indigenous approaches, the parties in the conflict have the ability and freedom to negotiate with each other and, with the help of the community that acts as third party mediators, transform and resolve their conflict. The Ekpe model of conflict resolution is in line with other indigenous models of conflict resolution. Its use predates colonization as it was also a crucial instrument for dispute resolution during the trans-Atlantic slave trade (Behrendt et al., 2010).
The West minimized, and in some instances discouraged, the use of indigenous institutions during the colonial administration and in the post-colonial era in favor of Western institution, with the pretext that indigenous systems were archaic and barbaric. Molotlegi (2004), however, argues that the formal administrative systems and institutions inherited from the colonial masters are perfect in theory but flawed in practice; and thus should be discontinued. In the same vein, the formal justice system in Cameroon has not been very effective in resolving disputes and reinstituting peace in the communities. The indigenes in most instances do not understand the process, lack the resources to bring fort a suit in cases of need, and the corrupt practices of administrative officials have made a difficult situation precarious. These challenges warrant the exploration of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that are reliable and which the indigenes can trust, and actively participate in the process to resolve their conflicts. The Ekpe indigenous approach helps to feel in that gap. The successes recorded by the Ekpe model fueled my desire to study the Ekpe indigenous approach to conflict resolution and to find out if it could be effective in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division that are fast becoming protracted.

As a result of the successes recorded by indigenous models, there have been increased calls in recent years to integrate these institutions into the formal system of administration to ensure effective governance and to resolve conflicts. Examples of situations where indigenous models have been used successfully to resolve disputes include Rwanda, where the Gacaca courts were used to restore peace after the genocide of 1994, as well as the case of South Africa where the Truth and Reconciliation Commission through confession was used to restore peace at the end of Apartheid.
Other cases in which indigenous mechanisms have been successfully used to restore peace in the community after war and to successfully orchestrate genuine reconciliation between perpetrators and victims were in Uganda, where traditional-based practices were used in the Acholi region for reconciliation (Latigo, 2008) and in Mozambique, where the *Magamba* spirits were used successfully to reconcile perpetrators and victims through confession (Huyse & Salter, 2008). Hamer (2007) also studied the indigenous methods the Sidâna ethnic group in Ethiopia uses to resolve conflicts and recommended the Ethiopian government integrates the system into the formal institutions of the country. Huyse and Salter (2008) further talk about the importance of integrating indigenous and traditional systems into the institutions of the state in countries emerging from armed conflict. Other cases include Kayo Cuk, Ailuc, Tonu ci Koka, CuloKwor, MatoOput in Uganda, Jirga in (in Afghanistan and Pakistan) and Sulha in Iraq.

The successes recorded by indigenous institutions raised awareness of the importance of these institutions. As a result, International Non-Governmental Organizations have criticized the United Nations and the West for continuously focusing wholly on the rule of law initiatives in post-war situations. Critics accuse the West of purposely and relentlessly trying to destroy customary and indigenous justice system and replacing these systems with the rule of law and the formal justice system (Huyse & Salter, 2008; Asfura-Heim, 2011).

Participation in the indigenous models are in most instances out of the free will of parties in a dispute. Boege (2006) argues that indigenous methods of conflict resolution are largely free and voluntary, and witnesses are always members of the community.
Also, by being imbedded in the cultural practices and rituals of the community that practice them, indigenes have a feeling of pride of ownership and identity of indigenous systems. To add more, indigenous models focuses on the welfare of the family or families involved in the conflict as well as the members of the community, the indigenous methods of resolving disputes are usually considered an experimental and learning opportunity for everybody in the community.
Chapter 5: Methodology

Methodology is a research strategy that translates ontological and epistemological principles and governs the way research is orchestrated (Sarantakos, 2005). Marczyk, DeMatteo and Festinger (2005) look at methodology as principles, procedures, and practices that govern research. Qualitative and quantitative methods are the principal and fundamental forms of research. While the qualitative method is interpretivist and subjective in nature, quantitative research on the other hand is objective and positivist.

This chapter focuses on the rationale for the selection of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, how the case was selected, and the sampling method in describing the Ekpe indigenous model and process of conflict resolution. The goal was to find out if Ekpe can be integrated into the formal institutions of Cameroon to make them more effective in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu in particular, and Cameroon in general. The manner in which the research data was collected, managed, and analyzed are also discussed and described. Finally, ethical challenges and sensitive issues I grappled within the course of the study and the way I dealt with them are discussed and addressed, including the protection of the anonymity of the research sites, the guarantee of the confidentiality of research participants, the establishment of rapport with research participants, and the maintenance of their trust.

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the Ekpe indigenous model and process of conflict resolution?
2. How are chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes impacting relationships in communities throughout Manyu Division and Cameroon?
3. Does Manyu indigenes understand the formal process of resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division?

4. Under which system can chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes be effectively managed and resolved?

5. How can the Ekpe indigenous model be integrated into the formal institutions in Cameroon to make them more effective?

**Research Design**

In this case study, qualitative and quantitative methods were used concurrently to examine the Ekpe indigenous model of conflict resolution, as practiced by the indigenes of Manyu Division, to find out how it is structured and if it can be integrated into the formal institutions of Cameroon to be more effective in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division. In the qualitative part of the study, documents were analyzed and the Ekpe process of conflict resolution was observed. Individual and group interviews were conducted to explore and describe the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution in order to establish if it could be reliable in resolving conflicts within the group.

Logistic regression was employed in the quantitative part of the study to determine:

1. If there was a correlation between central administrative involvement and chieftaincy and land disputes.

2. If there was a relationship between judicial involvement and succession to property disputes.
3. The opinion of the people of Manyu about the Ekpe indigenous institution and conflict resolution.

My intention was to come out with a hybrid institution of conflict resolution that combines both the formal and traditional systems that will be more effective in resolving these disputes in Manyu Division and Cameroon in general. The procedures and instruments used in data collection, the strategy in selecting participants, the procedures employed in data analysis and interpretation of findings of the study, and the role I played as the researcher is discussed in this chapter.

**Reasons for Case Study Methods**

As stated by Creswell (2007, p. 73), “case study research involves the study of an issue explored through one or more cases within a bounded system”. Yin (2003) further refers to the case study approach as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p.13).

The types of case studies can be distinguished by the size of the specific case, such as whether the case was conducted with a single individual, many people, a group, an entire program, or the study of an activity (Creswell, 2007, p. 74). The way the researcher intends to analyze the case may also determine the kind of case study method best suited for the study. Creswell lists three variations of intent in using a case study: the single instrumental case study, the collective or multiple case study, and the intrinsic case study (p. 74).

In the single instrumental case study, the main focus of the researcher is on the issue he is interested in investigating. In the collective or multiple case study, the
researcher selects a single or specific concern or issue and uses multiple case studies to demonstrate, explain, or exemplify the issue or concern. The researcher can as well choose to select many programs from several research sites, or many programs from the same site.

On the other hand, an intrinsic case study is a case study method whereby the focus of the researcher is on the case itself; for example, monitoring or evaluating a program because the case may present a specific or unusual situation (Creswell, 2007, p. 74). This study is an intrinsic case study, in which documents were analyzed, the Ekpe indigenous method of conflict resolution was observed, and interviews conducted to understand and describe the Ekpe institution and process of conflict resolution. The opinion of a cross section of Manyu indigenes was sampled with the use of logistic regression to see: a) if there was a correlation between administrative involvement and chieftaincy and land dispute, b) a correlation between the courts and succession to property disputes, and c) a correlation between Ekpe and disputes.

The use of an intrinsic case study enabled me to fully understand and describe the Ekpe indigenous model and process of conflict resolution. I did fully immerse myself in the study and asked questions that helped reveal the Ekpe indigenous model and process of conflict resolution in detail and challenges the indigenes face. It is my hope that the findings will help give meaning to issues, create an opportunity for the development of knowledge, and give a better understanding of the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution and the experiences of the indigenes of Manyu.
Qualitative Study

Qualitative research was defined by McMillan and Schumacher (1993) as “primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among categories” (p. 479). Qualitative enquiry is buttressed and strengthened by interpretivist epistemology and constructionalist ontology. Qualitative research holds the view that meaning is embedded in the experiences of the research participants and is communicated through the perception of the researcher (Merriman, 1998). The primary objective of the qualitative researcher is to attain an insider’s view of the group or community he is studying. The researcher immerses himself in the culture or group he is studying by observing the activities of the group and their ways of interaction. By immersing himself, the researcher participates in the daily and regular activities of members of the community, interviews key people, takes life histories, constructs case studies, and analyzes existing documents or other cultural artifacts. In a qualitative study, data and meaning actually emerge from the context of the research.

There are many kinds of qualitative research processes including: case study, focused group, ethnography, phenomenological, grounded theory, and historical/content analysis research. I conducted an intrinsic study of the Ekpe indigenous model and process of conflict resolution in which I analyzed documents, observed, and interviewed Manyu indigenes about the Ekpe indigenous institution process of governance and conflict resolution.

Rationale for Qualitative Research

My goal was to fully understand the Ekpe institution, model, and process of conflict resolution and the reasons Manyu indigenes rely on Ekpe to resolve disputes
within the community. It was my belief that a qualitative method was most appropriate to understand and describe the Ekpe institution from the view of the Manyu indigenes. A qualitative enquiry is buttressed and strengthened by interpretivist epistemology and constructionist ontology. Qualitative research is embedded in the experiences of the research participants, and meaning can best be communicated through the perception of the researcher (Merriman, 1998). The primary objective of the qualitative researcher is to attain an insider’s view of the phenomenon, group, or community he is studying. Through qualitative research, I was able to immerse himself in the culture of Manyu indigenes by observing the activities and interactions of the group, participated in their daily and regular activities, interviewed key participants or witnesses, take life histories, construct case studies, and analyzed existing documents or other cultural artifacts.

By conducting qualitative study, I was able to understand how different people make sense of their existence and how they experience and resolve conflicts through Ekpe. The goal of qualitative enquiry is to search and produce the views of participants of the phenomenon in the study and how they make meaning or live with the situation that is being studied (Bogdan & Bilken, 1998). A genuine trustworthy interpretation of qualitative method must be taken from multiple perspectives by means of firsthand accounts and observations of the phenomenon given in a particular context and within a certain time range.

Social constructivists believe that, while individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work, they develop meanings of their experiences and such meanings are subjective to them. Since the views of individuals are multiple, the qualitative researcher should look for divergent views rather than to narrow the meanings
to just a few categories or ideas. As such, a successful qualitative enquiry requires a
detail, holistic, and all-inclusive description of the process and/or phenomenon under
study (Creswell, 2007, p. 20). To do that, qualitative researchers should rely as much as
possible on the subjective views of research participants, which should be negotiated
socially and historically through interaction with other individuals. According to
Creswell, principal researcher, in interacting with research participants, asks open ended
questions for that helps the researcher to better listen to what research participants say or
do in their life setting.

I agree with the beliefs of social constructivists that research participants
construct meanings from situations that originate by interacting with other members of
the community. Since social norms, culture, religion, and indigenous practices are
constructed socially, my goals were to investigate how Manyu indigenes understand the
situation of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in their territory, and
understand how they actually deal with those situations to see if the formal and
indigenous institutions could be integrated to be more effective. Furthermore, the Ekpe
model and process of conflict resolution could best be understood by means of a detailed
and holistic description of its cultural and historical context. An intrinsic case study
happens to be the approach that was most appropriate to achieve that goal.

**Rationale for Selecting Manyu and the Ekpe Model of Conflict Resolution**

This study is a single holistic case study design (Yin 2003), defined as a single
Ekpe indigenous model of conflict resolution as practiced by Manyu indigenes.
Participants in the study are Manyu indigenes living in Manyu Division in the South
West Region of Cameroon. The data was analyzed by means of a holistic analysis of the
Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution. I was interested in studying the Ekpe model of conflict resolution because I had developed an interest in the way of life of the indigenes of Manyu Division while growing up in it. I was particularly impressed by the Ekpe culture and the way it resolves dispute in which members of the community participate in the process and with the principal goal being reconciliation, and not just punishment or retaliation. Whereas the Ekpe model is popular within the community, very little has been written about the model and process of conflict resolution in Manyu Division, or in any other community where it is practiced. With limited research on the Ekpe culture and model of conflict resolution, I felt it was worthwhile to feel in that vacuum by exploring the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution as practiced by the indigenes of Manyu Division.

To ensure that the outcome of the study was valid and reliable, I collected detailed and extensive data from multiple sources. (Yin, 2003; Creswell, 2007), advocate six forms of sources in case study research, including documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artifacts. In that regard, data for this study was collected by means of direct observation, participant observation, semi structured interviews, and a collection of documents and archival materials.

The successes recorded by the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution influenced my desire to study the model in debt with the use of an intrinsic case study method that focused on the phenomenon entrenched in its context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, this research is a focused and intrinsic study of the Ekpe indigenous
model and process of conflict resolution as practiced by the indigenes of Manyu Division rooted in the setting and context in which they occur.

While some attention has been given to Ekpe at the national level, the main focus has been on the cultural display of the Ekpe dance style and colorful dressing of regalia, and the perceived marginalization of Manyu Division and the indigenes. There has not been any study that explore the Ekpe model of governance and conflict resolution. Whereas existing studies focuses mainly on some cultural aspects of Ekpe, this study elaborates on the Ekpe culture and further explores the model of conflict resolution as practiced by the indigenes of Manyu division. It is my hope that this study will bridge that gap by investigating the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution, and fully illuminating the model to the world of indigenous studies. By using an intrinsic case study method to explore the model and process of conflict resolution in a broader context, it helped in the understanding of the experience of stakeholders and the process of conflict resolution, and brings to light the overall significance of the Ekpe conflict resolution process to the entire community.

**Case Study Justification**

A case study method is used to contribute to our knowledge of individuals, groups, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena. The case study method “allows the investigator to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events – such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries” (Yen, 2003, p. 2).
In an effort to relate my observation to case study approach, I first of all had to ascertain if Manyu indigenes, as a group can be classified as a community and a case. Manyu indigenes are an ethnic group of people that hails from Manyu Division in the South West Region of Cameroon. Whereas they live in a defined area, some members of the group have moved and presently reside in various towns in Cameroon as well as other countries of the world. Lodewijk Brunt (2007, p.80), citing W.L. Warner and P.S Lunt, defines communities as a collection of people sharing certain interests, sentiments, behavior, and objects by virtue of their membership to a social group. Brunt further alleges that members of the community should be located in a given territory, which they partly transform for the purpose of maintaining the physical and social life of the group, and all the individual members of these groups should have social relations directly or indirectly with each other.

This definition seems to be problematic taking into consideration the fact that some of the members of the Manyu ethnic group do not necessarily live in the same territory, which they have transformed for the purpose of maintaining a physical and social life of the group. While some people have moved to other towns in Cameroon, others have moved to other parts of the world. Also, there are indigenes from other ethnic groups that have moved to, and presently reside in, Manyu Division. However, Lodewijk Burnt (2007, p.82), quoting B. Anderson, defines a community as a place not only of human association, but also a place where memories are centered, both individual and folk memories. It represents an accumulation of group experiences which comes out of the past and extends through time even though the individuals making up the community are forever coming and going. The Manyu ethnic group includes people of all works of
life that are from a particular area of Cameroon and share the same ancestry. It is this cultural bondage that binds them together. Brunt seems to be in support of this when he states that anthropologists have demonstrated that as communities disperse, due to migration, many people still retain a strong feeling of belonging and loyalty. The Manyu ethnic group is a good example of such community, and the sentiments of their culture constitute a strong force in uniting members the community.

Having ascertained Manyu indigenes as a community, it is worthwhile to justify the study of the Ekpe model as a case. A case study method as defined by Creswell (2007), is “a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a bounded (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-debt data collection involving multiple sources of information” (p. 73). The sources of information used in conducting case study researches include; observations, interviews, audiovisual material, documents and reports. Yen (2003) further states that a case study method “allows the investigator to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events – such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, international relations, and the maturation of industries” (p. 2).

The qualitative case study approach is used to contribute to our knowledge of individuals, groups, organizational, social, political, and related phenomena that is being investigated. My intention was to research the Ekpe indigenous model of conflict resolution that Manyu indigenes use in resolving conflicts within the community. The Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution has never been adequately assessed and investigated and a case study method is thus appropriate to conduct a holistic study of it. A study of the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution required the gathering of
thick data sources including observations, interviews, and document analysis, and the goal of the study was to describe the Ekpe process of resolving disputes (Merriam, 1998). This study employed descriptive analysis technique to develop conceptual categories and to challenge the theoretical assumptions I made at the onset of the studies.

It was conducted by employing the intrinsic case study in which I selected the Ekpe model of conflict resolution because of its uniqueness. The research presents a detailed analytic description of the Ekpe process in resolving conflicts set within the context, setting, and surrounding where the Ekpe usually resolve disputes. Creswell (2007) prescribes a case study approach as situations where by the researcher has “clearly identifiable cases with boundaries and seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the cases or a comparison of several cases” (p. 74). By choosing the intrinsic case study approach, I was able to describe the Ekpe process of resolving conflicts in the chronology through which the process takes place. The themes that emerged from that description are not for generalizing the Ekpe model with other indigenous models, but rather to help with a better understanding of it and of the reasons why Manyu indigenes will prefer it in resolving their disputes.

The case study approach was selected because I am very interested in indigenous methods of conflict resolution and their usefulness, especially in the post-colonial era. Also, the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution can easily be identified, but the model has not yet been explored. By employing the case study approach, this study allured to numerous sources of data collection including: archival records, participant observation of Ekpe cultural rites and activities, standby observations of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, video recordings of the process, and both individual and in group
settings interviews with Manyu indigenes focusing on the Ekpe process of resolving disputes. By employing multiple sources of data collection, I was able to come out with a holistic description of the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution, and a holistic explanation of the experiences of research participants. Therefore, the case study approach was very appropriate to study the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution.

When developing a case study, qualitative researchers face the challenge of identifying a case and deciding on the kind of bounded system to study. Creswell (2007) points out that qualitative case study researchers are required to establish rationale “for purpose sampling strategy for selecting the case, and for gathering information about the case” (p. 76). Deciding the boundaries of the case was restricted due to limitation in time, events, systems, and processes that I faced in the course of the study. The geographical location of this study was Manyu Division, in the South West Region of Cameroon. I stayed in the location from January 18th to March 15th, 2014 and from February 3rd to April 15th 2015, and the collected data was analyzed from February 2015 to June 2016.

**Sampling Methodology**

The purpose of the qualitative case study was to explore and describe the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, and to find out if and how Ekpe can be integrated into the formal institutions of Cameroon to help resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes that are fast becoming protracted. This case study involved the observation of the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution, semi-structured interviews with individuals and with focus groups, and analysis of documents and archival records. I obtained permissions from the Paramount Chief of Mamfe (the First
Class Chief of Manyu Division), the President of the High Court and Court of First Instance in Mamfe (serving the entire Manyu Division), and the Senior Divisional Officer for Manyu Division. Permission was also sort and obtained from the Sub-Divisional Officers of Mamfe Central Sub-Division and Eyumojock Sub-Divisions to come and conduct research in Manyu Division. The Paramount Chief of Mamfe town and the parliamentarian for Eyumojock Sub-Division served as gate keepers for the study.

I collected extensive data about the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution from multiple sources and perspectives in four villages (sites) that belong to two sub-divisions in Manyu Division. These sites were proposed to me by the gate keepers and elders of Manyu Division that were vested in the Ekpe culture and process of conflict resolution. The two sub-divisions were chosen because they were easily accessible by road, and because of their knowledge of the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution. Eyumojock Sub-Division is the bedrock of the Ekpe culture in Manyu Division and Mamfe Central Sub-Division is the seat of the headquarters of the Ekpe Supreme Council that serves as the appeal council/court for Ekpe cases.

I participated in Ekpe activities, observed the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, and analyzed documents and archival records. For the observation, I took part in three Ekpe cultural festivities that were organized during my stay in the community, and observed what was going on as a participant observer. I also directly observed the trial proceedings of two Ekpe trial cases in each site (two in Egbekaw village and two in Eyumojock town) and two Ekpe appeal cases at the site of the Ekpe Supreme Council meeting venue Holden at the premises of the Paramount Chief of Mamfe town. The sites were randomly chosen as they happened to schedule sessions during the period of my
stay. The parties had brought their dispute to Ekpe and had willfully submitted to the jurisdiction of Ekpe for resolution. The judges were all Ekpe members and vested in the knowledge of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. The parties were at least 18 years of age and above, but were not necessary initiated Ekpe members.

For the interviews, a purpose sampling method was used to include participants that met a certain criteria and reflected a representation of the targeted population (Manyu indigenes). In all, I conducted eight semi-structured interviews with individuals as well as one focus group interview. The interviews participants chosen for the study were 18 years old and above indigenes of Manyu Division, who had lived in Manyu Division for at least 5 years of their lives, had knowledge of the Ekpe culture and process of conflict resolution, and had had a dispute that was resolved using the Ekpe model and process. Manyu indigenes that were not vested in the Ekpe culture and process of conflict resolution as well as all non Manyu indigenes living in Manyu Division were excluded from the sample because of the Ekpe focus of this study. My goal was to conduct 10 open-ended interviews with research participants, but after 8 interviews, I realized that saturation had been attained and suspended the interviews.

The process of data collection began after I had secured the consent of the research participants. Data collected through interview came from four sets of sample from participants that were vested in the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution. The first sample was from one-on-one interviews with Manyu elders of age 18 and above. The criteria for selecting participants was that they might have attained the rank of Sessekou in the Ekpe institution, had lived in Manyu Division for at least five years, and had vested knowledge in the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution.
The second sample was from one-on-one interviews with Manyu indigenes that were at least 18 years old, had lived in Manyu Division for at least five years, had had a dispute that was resolved using the Ekpe model and process either as an appellant or as a respondent. The third sample was one-on-one interview with Manyu indigenes that were at least 18 years old, had lived in Manyu Division for a minimum of five years upon attaining 18 years old, were aware of the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution, but had not had a dispute that was resolved by Ekpe. The forth sample included 22 participants who interacted in an open-ended focus group discussion. The focus group comprised of Manyu indigenes of various works of live that were 18 years old or older, had lived in Manyu Division for at least 5 years, and were aware of the Ekpe Model and process. Participants included those that could not be in individual interviews because of time constraints or were shy and uncomfortable to give one-on-one interviews. As stated by Creswell (2007), focus group interviews are advantageous in situations where research participants are similar and are able to cooperate with one another, when there is limited time to collect information from participants individually, and when research participants are reluctant to provide information on one-on-one bases, probably because they are shy.

Collection and Management of the Data

The data collection and analysis for this study took place from February 2015 to June 2016. In conducting the interviews, I followed the guideline lines for conducting research established by the Nova Southeastern University Institutional Review Board. In that regards, I did seek the permission of the respective authorities to access literature, archival information, and audiovisual documents that were used for the study. I also explained the nature and purpose of the study clearly to research participants and
informed them of their rights not to take part in the study and to withdraw at any time in the course of the study if they thought that their confidentiality had been violated or if they were no longer comfortable with the study, with no repercussions to them.

Furthermore, I exercised diligent care in collecting and protecting the emergent research data accurately and systematically throughout the duration of the study. The data that I collected from the field was stored accurately and systematically throughout the duration of the research study in a drawer in my office and will be destroyed three years after the completion of the research study.

**Recruitment of participants and collection of data.** I secured the services of gatekeepers who served as contact and liaison persons to the community. Creswell (2007) defines a gatekeeper as, “the initial contact person for the researcher and leads the researcher to other participants” (p. 125). The Paramount Chief of Manfe Town acted as the primary gatekeeper and I contacted him to inform of the date of my arrival in Manyu Division to begin conducting the research. Upon arrival, he introduced me to the leaders of the Ekpe society and other village chiefs and elders in the community. The parliamentarian for Eyumojock Sub-Division also served as my gatekeeper and introduced me to the Senior Divisional Officer, Sub-Divisional Officers for Mamfe Central and Eyumojock sub-divisions.

After the introduction, I began to familiarize myself with the indigenes by immersion into the community. Being an indigene from Manyu Division and an initiated member of the Ekpe society, it was relatively easy for me to get access and personal contact with elders in Manfe Central and Eyumojock sub-divisions respectively. They invited me to attend and participate in Ekpe cultural festivities and helped secure
approval for me to observe Ekpe process of conflict resolution. The Ekpe elders in Mamfe and Eyumojock sub-divisions also helped me to recruit key informants to take part as participants in the individual and focus group interviews. The following were very instrumental in recruiting participants for the study.

- Chief Dr. Godfred Oben Mamfe Central Sub-Division (Paramount Chief of Mamfe town);
- Mr. Agbor Bissong Bissong of Egbekaw village (Secretary General of Ekpe Supreme Council);
- Chief Ekuri Emmanuel Ayimesien (Third class chief of Agborkem German village);
- Mrs. Susan Nsosie Okpu (Member of Parliament Eyumojock Sub-Division).

Upon immersion and familiarization with the community, I requested and scheduled appointments with the gatekeepers to discuss the modalities for the selection of the observation sites and the criteria for the recruitment of interview participants. The gatekeepers were further advised that, whereas they could be present during the observation and interview sessions, it was required that they avoided any possibility of influencing what the research participants did or said during the course of the research. However, purposeful snowball sampling technique was further used to locate and select potential research participants (Creswell, 2007).

Logistic of collecting the data. Data for this study was obtained in Mamfe Central and Eyumojock sub-divisions. After having selected Ekpe conflict resolution sites to observe and interview participants, I had to schedule dates for observing the Ekpe process of conflict resolution and for conducting interviews.
Observations. After I had become familiar with members of the community, I began making arrangements to observe the Ekpe process of resolving disputes. The parties to the conflict cases and the judges were informed of my intention to observe the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution, and of their rights to refuse to give me permission for observing the process before it commenced, or at any time in the course of the observation if they were no longer comfortable with my presence. I also informed the parties that I would take notes during the process of observation of what went on, and that nothing that might reveal the identity of the parties would be written down in order to protect the identity and confidentiality of the parties.

Upon the approval of all the parties that I could observe the Ekpe conflict resolution process, I requested the parties to sign the consent form individually. Each person was given a copy of the signed consent form for their records, and to guide them of what to do if they had issues with the study later on. I also signed and kept each of the respective consent forms. The observations took place at the venue where the Ekpe institution usually resolves disputes, and the usual time set to do that. The observations lasted for as long as the Ekpe processes went on. I did not influence the time or location in anyway.

Interviews. To accommodate the schedule and convenience of the research participants, I had to schedule interviews on different days, at different times, and at the homes of the respective research participants. That required me to move back and forth from Mamfe town to Eyumojock Sub-Division, with stops at Taboh, Mbakem, and Egbekow villages. Most of the interviews were conducted during the weekends and in the evenings since the interview participants worked most of the day during the week, and
preferred to relax and have a conversation in the evening hours (local time). To ensure participants were comfortable and convenient, interviews were conducted at the homes of the research participants or at quiet public places.

After having selected research participants, the next step was to conduct the interviews with the posing of open ended questions to research participants. During the course of the interview, semi-structured open-ended questions that I had developed and prepared as well as probing questions for follow up were posed to the research participants. The interviews lasted about sixty minutes each and took place in the form of a conversation. Also, the questions posted to the research participants during the interviews were developed from the case study protocol (Yin, 2003). The interviews were recorded with the use of a digital audio recording device. The service of a translator or the use of the dialect of the indigenes (which I speak) was not necessary since all the interviews were conducted in English.

**Documents and archival records.** Permission was sort and obtained from the Archive Office in Buea to collect and publish documents, and from the Sub-Divisional Officer of Mamfe to examine and collect documents and records in the Mamfe and Eyumojock sub-divisional offices. The inclusion of the works and points of views of other researchers was negotiated and sited properly before publishing the final study. In most cases, documents used served in corroboration of other sources of data that were obtained in the course of the study.

**Researcher observations.** As stated by Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw (2009), participant observation involves both gaining access to, and immersing oneself in new social worlds; thereby, producing written accounts and description versions of what the
observer noticed to the worlds of others (p. 352). Emerson et al. further state that
descriptive field notes can be written in many different styles (p. 357). Quoting John Van
Maanen, they identified three principal styles that can be used to describe or organize
field events in whole ethnographies, and in extended fieldnote segments, including realist
tales, confessional tales, and impressionist tales.

The sites for my observations were proposed by the gatekeepers who arranged my
access and introduced me to the various Ekpe conflict resolution sites for direct
observation of the process of Ekpe conflict resolution cases. I attended Ekpe conflict
resolution schedules as a non-participant wherein I observed the Ekpe process and was
able to give a vivid description of it from my point of view as somebody who was a
spectator of the process. By directly observing the Ekpe model, I was able closely
observe and capture the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution in the context and
settings of the indigenes.

I also lived with the indigenes, ate the food they ate, went to their farm lands with
them, and attended Ekpe cultural festivities and meetings with the indigenes throughout
my stay in Manyu Division. In doing so, I was able to observe, perceive, and understand
their way of life and circumstances in the way they perceive them. I followed the
observational protocol that I had developed for the study in recording notes about my
experiences. The notes that I recorded included descriptive and reflective notes, as well
as portraits of informants, physical settings of Ekpe halls, events, activities, and the way I
reacted to what I observe; taking into account the suggestions of Creswell (2007).

By living with Manyu indigenes, observing and perceiving their way of life in the
way they do, and directly observing the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, I was able to
observe more closely what community life meant to Manyu indigenes, and understand how and why they would choose a particular system to resolve their conflicts.

Throughout the period of my stay and observations, I visited the houses of indigenes, went to their farms, shared their type of food, and experienced the way they interact with one another. I also visited farmlands that had disputes, observed the formal process of selecting a third class chief, and observed the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. Also, I did everything possible to separate my personal opinion of the cultural and social life of the indigenes and of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution by bracketing myself.

I ensured I remained polite and respectful of the cultures and practices of the indigenes. I emulated their traditional practices and customs. As the duration of my stay in Manyu started coming to an end, I started withdrawing gradually from the community, but thanked them for being very opened to me, and promised to maintain my contact with the community. The main challenge I faced was that the indigenes thought I was rich, and kept asking for financial favors from me. However, I kept reminding them I was just a student and that I was personally funding my studies.

**Interview/focus group details.** Interviews served as one of the primary sources of data collection for this study. During the interview, semi-structured, opened ended questions were asked to research participants. The interviews lasted for about sixty minutes each and were conducted in compliances with the interview guide (see Appendix B). In total, eight individual interviews and one focused group interview were conducted with research participants. The individual research participants were solely male, while the focused group was made of eight males and three females. Interview participants were at least twenty seven years old, reflected Manyu indigenes of various socio-
economic status, and came from Mamfe Central and Eyumojock sub-divisions. Attempts at requiting a female individual research participant was not successful because no woman opted to participate.

In Eyumojock Sub-Division, two interviews were conducted in Eyumojock town, one in Taboh village, and one in Mbakem village. In Mamfe Central Sub-Division, three interviews were conducted in Mamfe town and one in Egbekow village. In all situations, I ensured that the interviews were conducted in a convenient location that was quiet and free of distractions to both myself and the research participants. Whereas I can speak Bayang, Ejagham, and Pidgin English widely spoken by the indigenes, the interviews were conducted in English and Pidgin English which the participants were more comfortable with.

I also conducted semi-structured, open-ended focus group interviews with participants at the palace of the Paramount Chief of Mamfe town. The goal of the focused group interview was to capture the view of those that could not participate in the individual interview, either because of shyness or time constraint, to give their view and to ensure I captured multiple perspectives of the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution and its impact on Manyu indigenes. In total, thirteen people took part in the focused group discussion; three of whom were women and three youths. Where necessary, I used probing questions to enable participants better explain what participants said that I did not fully understand.

Before the beginning of each interview, I did explain the purpose of the study to the participants. I explained what was expected from research participants, their right to withdraw from the studies at any time during the course of the interview with no cost to
them, as well as how the interview would be analyzed. Participants were also asked to sign the consent forms and a copy was handed to them for their records. The interview guide consisted of ten questions relating to the demographics of the participants, their perceptions and experiences about the Ekpé model and process of conflict resolution. In order to ensure I capture everything research participants said and to ensure the accuracy of the interview data, interviews were recorded with a digital recorder. I also took notes in the course of the interviews. Interviews were later transcribed personally by me, and participants were shown the transcripts to make sure all they said, or meant to say, was captured accurately and to make corrections where necessary.

**Data Management and Analysis Procedures**

The process of data collection, analysis, and writing report are intertwined, interrelated, and often goes simultaneously in a qualitative research study. Creswell (2007) further looks at data analysis process as a spiral that goes on continuously throughout the process. In this section, I will discuss the manner in which data for the study was managed, analyzed and presented.

**Data management.** Data management is the first stage of data analysis (spiral process) in which researchers organize data collected in the field into file folders, index cards, or computer files. During the data management phase, researchers read through texts, made notes at the margin, form initial codes, and give brief or detailed description of the phenomena under study, by hand or with the use of a computer (Creswell, 2007, p. 150). At the onset of analysis, I had to create files in my computer for observation, interviews, and archival documents. In the observation file, I downloaded and saved all pictures I took and notes that I made during the process of my observations. The date the
pictures were taken, their purpose and significance as well as my personal interpretation were saved in the observation files. Also, I saved notes of what I observed, the date and time I did the observation, the significance, as well as my personal comments.

Besides, the audio recordings of each interview were downloaded electronically and stored on my computer, with the research participant’s acronyms, age, gender, date, and place where the interview was conducted. With the help of headphones, I transcribed each interview personally and the transcripts were saved in the interview file section of my computer, along with the name of the research participant with whom the interview was conducted. Personally transcribing the interview transcripts made it possible for me to begin familiarizing myself with the data.

Furthermore, archival materials, including maps of Cameroon, Manyu Division, Mamfe Central, Eyumojock Sub-Division, and other documents I collected in the field were scanned and saved on the archival file section on my computer. In storing data on my computer, special attention was given to the way it was organized for analytical purposes. Thereafter, I developed a list of the types of information that were stored in the respective files. My personal computer was protected with a personal password that only I had access to. The computer was stored in a drawer in my room that was locked with a key whenever not in use.

**Data analysis procedures.** Data for the study was analyzed with the use of thematic analysis as well as the structural analysis approaches. While all narratives are principally focused on what is said, written, or visually shown, thematic analysis focuses exclusively on the content of the study. In other words, the main focus is on what is said, rather than how it is said, to whom it is said, or the purpose of which it is said. As stated
by Riessman (2008), thematic analyses method can be used in a variety of narrative texts including stories that develop in interview conversations and group meetings, as well as those that are found in written documents.

My thematic analysis method was focused exclusively on the research participant’s reports of events and experiences, rather than just aspects of the story. The data was interpreted in light of themes that I developed from my observation of the Ekpe indigenous method and process of conflict resolution. Limited focus was given to how research participants said what was said in the interview. I followed Braun and Clarke’s (2006) step-by-step thematic analysis guidelines.

The main purpose of the qualitative study was to describe the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution as practiced by the Manyu indigenes. To be successful, the interview questions were designed to give responses that described the Ekpe model and the Ekpe process of conflict resolution (Yin, 2003). My observations were also focused on that. At the beginning of the data analysis, I had a list of pre-existing codes that I had developed from the literary review, my observations, and by analyzing documents to guide my coding process (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). During the process of data analysis, I read the interview transcripts several times to familiarize myself with the data and marked emergent codes and phrases. Exact words that research participants used to describe the Ekpe indigenous model and process of conflict resolution (in vivo codes) were marked as codes and added to the list of pre-existing codes (Creswell, 2007). Each transcript was read many times line-by-line to make sure that it was accurate. The data was analyzed to determine the pattern in which the codes emerged and the number of times that the codes emerged. The emergent codes were then clustered together to form
themes and the themes were reviewed and finally reported as the process that describes the Ekpe process of conflict resolution.

Both the focused group interview and the individual interview transcripts were read and recurrent words, phrases, or patterns were identified, marked, and selected as codes. In total, I came out with a list of about 65 codes after coding all the transcripts. The codes were then grouped into categories of themes. The codes were grouped to present events in a chronological order, in which each theme described each step in the evolution of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. Data was analyzed in categorical aggregation in which instances from the data emerged as themes. In total, nine themes emerged from the data that described the Ekpe model, officials involved, parties, and the process of conflict resolution.

The intrinsic case study approach utilized multiple data sources to corroborate the findings and to ensure greater confidence in the outcome of the study. Data from multiple sources, including observations, individual and focused group interviews, video recordings, and archival records, were collected, compared, and the findings were corroborated. In circumstances where new themes emerged from either the documents, observation, or interview transcripts, I had to go back to the other data sources to verify and corroborate the source before publication. By triangulating the sources of data, I was able to instill greater confidence in the outcome of the study. In the final stage of the analysis, the emergent themes were reviewed and generalizations were made by identifying possible meanings and explanations to produce an in-depth picture of the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution.
**Data presentation-findings.** Upon completion of the data analysis, the final stage in a research study is reporting and presenting the findings of the study. Case studies methods may generate theory, analyze the case they studied and display cross-case, or describe the case that was studied (Creswell, 2007). Whereas Merriam (1988) states that “there is no standard format for reporting a case study research” (p. 193), Creswell (2007) on the other hand states that it is the overall intent of the case study that “shapes the larger structure of the written narrative” (p. 195).

In the qualitative section of this study, I used a combination of narrative and descriptive format to present the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution as practiced by the indigenes of Manyu Division. Direct quotations were mostly used to bring out the perspective of research participants. Where possible, picture, maps, figures and diagrams were also used to give a vivid picture of the scenario and phenomenon of the study. My goal was to ensure that I came out with a vivid, clear, and concise picture and description of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution for readers to grasp. The findings of the study as well as the discussion are presented in separate chapters.

**Quantitative Inquiry**

This study employed surveys to capture the opinion of Manyu indigenes in Manyu Division as well as other cities in Cameroon to understand what they think of the role of administrative officers in the selection of chiefs and resolution of chieftaincy disputes, the role of the administrative officers and the Land Consultative Boards in the allocation of land titles and resolution of land disputes, the role of the courts in the resolution of succession to property disputes, and the role of Ekpe in resolving disputes in Manyu Division.
Method of Data Processing and Analysis

Data were entered in Microsoft Office Excel and exported to SPSS for analysis. Consistency, data range, and validation checks were also performed in SPSS version 20.0 (IBM Inc., 2012) to identify invalid codes and entries. Variables were given numerical dummy codes for nominal variables like ‘Gender’ (1= Male; 2= Female), ‘Who do you think successfully resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon?’ (1= Administration, 2= Court, 3= Ekpe), ‘Understand how the Ekpe society resolve conflicts’ (0= No, 1= Yes) etc. Numerical codes were also given to the categories of ordinal variables, but in that case the codes were numerically meaningful. Such variables were ‘Highest level of schooling attained’ (0= No formal education, 1= Primary, 2= Secondary and 3 tertiary or higher education), ‘Level of satisfaction with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division’ (1= Very unsatisfied, 2= Unsatisfied, 0= Neutral, 3= Satisfied, 4= Very satisfied), ‘Level of satisfaction with the way the courts system resolve succession to property disputes’ (1= Very unsatisfied, 2= Unsatisfied, 0= Neutral, 3= Satisfied, 4= Very satisfied).

For analytical suitability, some categories were collapsed when they were poorly represented and when there was no risk of losing vital information in the study context; for instance, technical school, secondary school and high school were grouped under secondary, while Bachelor Degree, professional degree, Master’s degree and PhD were grouped under higher/tertiary, no formal education and primary were grouped, very
unsatisfied and unsatisfied under unsatisfied, and satisfied and very satisfied under satisfied.

Given that the variables were essentially categorical, scale variables like age and duration of stay were equally categorized and dropped from scale to ordinal level of measurement. Age was grouped as: 18-35 years = 1; 36-45 years = 2; 46-55 years = 3; 56 years and above = 4. Duration of stay was grouped as: 5-15 years = 1; 16-30 years = 2, 31-45 years = 3; 45 years and above = 4.

The process of exploratory statistics used Boxplots to identify outliers/extreme values for scale variables like age and duration of stay in Manyu Division while frequency analysis was used for categorical variables. Extreme values like 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 were observed for duration of stay and were trimmed out. Those who had stayed 4 years were also trimmed out because they were just 4 and it was equivocal that 4 years of stay in community is not enough to have a satisfactory understanding of that community. Only those who had stayed 5 years and above were validated for the study. Data were made essentially of categorical variables and they were analyzed using frequency and proportions. Cramer’s V test was used to measure the association between the categorical variables, for instance Gender vs Who do you think successfully resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon?, Age vs Who do you think successfully resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon?, Highest level of school attainment vs Level of satisfaction with the way the courts system resolve succession to property disputes, to compare proportions for significant difference. Hypotheses were discussed using Chi-Square test of equality of proportion.

Below is the formula for Cramer’s V.
Figure 4. Formula for Cramer’s V

\[ V = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2}{N \cdot \min (r-1, c-1)}} \]

Where \((\min r-1, c-1)\) is the minimum value of either the number of rows -1 or the number of columns -1 and \(\chi^2\) the statistical value of the Chi-Square test.

The magnitude of effect size is determined by the V values based on the standard scale (Rea & Parker, p. 203). For instance, the V values of 0.217 and 0.244 fall within 0.20 and 0.40 therefore implying moderate associations.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect Size</th>
<th>V Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.60 or Higher</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.20 - 0.40</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.00 - 0.20</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The V value, as explained, determines the effect size while the p-value determines how consistently the variation in the independent variable affects the dependent variable.

As a result, it is possible to have a weak but significant association.

For instance, whenever the value of the independent variable increases by 1 and that of the dependent variable increases by 2 or by a value slightly different from 2 consistently across all the pairs, we are more likely to have a significant association. That is an association or relationship with p-value <0.05 at the 95% CL. On the other hand, in a situation whereby an increase in the independent variable of 1 causes an increase of 2, at times 3 and for some pairs even 4 in the independent variable, we are more likely to have strong association, but with higher p-value given the inconsistency in change caused
to the dependent variable following variation in the dependent variable. In this second case, as well as in the first case, an increase in the independent variable causes an increase in the dependent variable. So in both cases, we are faced with a positive association.

**Multinomial Logistic Regression Model Depicting Significant Predictors of Perceived Ability of Ekpe to Resolve Disputes**

Regression procedures are very widely used in research. In general, they allow the researcher to find the best predictor to a given dependent factor or indicator as well as to measure the sum effect of all the predictors.

When the measurement level of the variable is scale, Multiple Linear Regression applies. When the dependent variable is dichotomous and the predictors categorical, it is advised to use Binary Logistic Regression (BLR) instead of linear regression. Multinomial Logistic Regression is different from Binary Logistic Regression Model only because the dependent variable in the former has more than two categories and that is the case in this study as the dependent variable, ‘satisfied with the way Ekpe resolve conflict’, has more than two response options.

In this study, data were presented using tables and charts. All statistics were presented at the 95% confidence level (CL), Alpha = 0.05.

**Triangulation and Reliability**

Triangulation is the use of many sources of evidence in a research study to ensure validity, reliability, and to reduce the risk of manipulation of the results of a study (Stake, 2003). Using multiple sources of evidence may help the researcher clarify the meaning by identifying different perspectives of the phenomenon under investigation. Yin (2003)
regards triangulation as one of the strengths of a qualitative case study research method; saying that, multiple sources of evidence makes it possible for the investigator to address a wider range of historical, attitudinal, and behavioral issues as well as develop congregating lines of inquiry, and thus make the study more convincing and accurate.

In this intrinsic qualitative case study, multiple methods including archival records, official government records, observations, interviews, audio visual materials, as well as previously published research reports and theoretical literature were employed to gather evidence during the course of data collection. Yin (2003) further discusses three principles for data collection and analysis that case studies method researchers should follow to ensure reliability, accountability, and validity. These include the use of multiple sources of evidence, creation of a case study database, and maintenance of a chain of evidence. All these principles were adopted to ensure the study findings were trustworthy.

Furthermore, I kept a record of all the sources of data that I collected for the study including files, interview transcripts, analyzed transcripts, observation field notes, and transcriptions in a database since Yin (2003) advice researchers to keep a record of all the sources of data because it “highly increases the validity and reliability of the entire case study” (p. 102). Finally, the conclusions of the study were documented. The conclusions (reports and findings) of the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution (qualitative case study) were reported chronologically following a chain of evidence from the study database to the original research questions, and joined with data that was collected through quantitative studies as part of a broader multimethod study.
Ethical Issues and Considerations

Another issue that I had to grapple with was ethical issues that I could face in the course of my observation. As stated by Murphy and Dingwall (2007), “Questions about the right way to treat each other as human beings within a research relationship are not wholly distinct from questions about the values which should prevail in a society, and the responsibility of social scientists to make, or refrain from, judgments about these” (p. 339). One ethical issue of concern to me was that of consent. Being a member of the community, obtaining consent for observing the group was relatively easy. However, I had to consider whether those I observed will be harmed in anyway, and if so, whether the benefit they would obtain would outweigh the harm or not.

In order to make sure that my research was not unethical, I did not record anything that would harm the participants and ensured that the results of my research would be beneficial to the community as a whole rather than me. Murphy and Dingwall (2007) talks about this saying that, it is the responsibility of ethnographers to protect research participants from harm and also to make sure that their rights are protected (p. 339). My intention was to bring to light the rich cultural heritage of the Manyu people, and to show how successful the Ekpe society can be in managing conflicts and in community building. In doing that, I made sure that the values and decisions of the participants were respected and protected. Murphy and Dingwall also talk of this saying that, research participants have certain rights, notably to privacy, respect, or self-determination that should not be infringed, and that rights of research subjects will not be deemed to have been respected simply because a consent form has been signed (p. 342).
Besides, I was conscious not to exploit my position as a researcher to impose my interpretation of what I observed in the data. Murphy and Dingwall (2007) talk about this when they say: “The issue is not the validity of the interpretations, but the question of control over the interpretative process” (p. 345). They propose that, it is only by sharing control of interpretation that the hierarchical relationship between researcher and the researched can be broken down and the exploitation of participants avoided.

In the course of taking my fieldnotes, I had to go to the community so as to record events myself and give a first hand and more reliable descriptive account of what happened. Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (2001) talk of the importance of going to the field when they say, “fieldnotes are writings produced in or in close proximity to the field” (p. 353). By observing and taking notes, I was in essence reducing just-observed events, persons, and places to written accounts. Also, I was selective in taking my fieldnotes during the period of my observation; jotting down certain things that I saw and heard I think would be of importance to my research and leaving out others. Emerson et al. talk about this when they say that, “The ethnographer writes about certain things that seem significant, ignoring and hence leaving out other matters that do not seem significant” (p. 353). The notes that I took of no doubts helped me subsequently in writing my final project.
Chapter 6: Findings

This section is about the findings of the document analysis, observations, interviews, as well as the outcome of the quantitative studies.

**Thematic Interview Questions**

I have attached the detailed list of interview questions that I designed to investigate the Ekpe indigenous model and process of conflict resolution of the Manyu indigenes in Appendix B. The questions were designed to investigate the following thematic issues: a) the situation of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property dispute in Manyu Division, b) the weaknesses of the formal legal and administrative process of conflict resolution, c) the Ekpe structure, d) the Ekpe process of conflict resolution and reconciliation, e) the participation and acceptance of the Ekpe model of conflict resolution, f) forgiveness and healing, g) conflict of laws, h) symbols and significance of the Ekpe model, and i) strengths and challenges to the Ekpe model.

**Consent and Language**

Before conducting interviews, I read and explained the consent form to the interview participants in English, or in Pidgin English, stressed their rights not to take part in the study at any time if they so wished, and asked them to sign the consent form. Whereas most of interviewees requested that I used their real names, I decided not to do so for ethical reasons.

Each interview took between forty-five to ninety minutes. The interviews were conducted in English, and sometimes Pidgin English. The interviews were recorded with an audio recording device upon obtaining the permission of the interviewees. I later transcribed the interviews personally, with the use of my personal computer that is
protected with a password known only to me. In certain cases, I did take notes during the interview.

**Primary Documents from Archives**

In order to fully investigate the effectiveness of the formal and indigenous process of resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division, I conducted research at the Archives Office in Buea, the Senior Divisional Office in Mamfe, and the sub-divisional offices in Mamfe Central Sub-Division and Eyumojock Sub-Division. I collected information related to chieftaincy disputes, land disputes, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division from 1948 - 1996. Sources included notes, letters, surveys, tables, and other forms of documentation. The data I collected concerned the number of chieftaincy disputes in Mamfe Central sub-Division, the number of chiefs that are not residing in their area of jurisdiction contrary to the 1977 chieftaincy decree, and the number of land disputes in Mamfe Central Sub-Division.

The documents I collected from the Sub-Divisional Office in Mamfe revealed the number of chieftaincy disputes that are on-going, the number that have been resolved officially, the number of existing land disputes in Mamfe central Sub-Division, and the number of land disputes that have been resolved by the administration. I also went to the Mamfe High Court, but there was only one case file on succession to property dispute and I could only lay hands on the judgment. On inquiry, I realized most succession to property disputes were handled by the customary courts which are guided by the native rules and customs of the indigenes, with judges selected from among the indigenes. Since the justice system of the customary courts was embedded in the customs and practices of the indigenes, I decided not to devote much time to it.
Legal Case Study

Being a case study research, I collected data using numerous methods including analysis of documents, observations, interviews, and quantitative surveys. Creswell (1998) refers to case study as an in-depth exploration of a “bounded system” (a case) or “multiple bounded systems” (cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports), and reports a case description and case based themes” (p. 73). The case must be situated in a social and historical context, with a focus either on the uniqueness of the case or on the way it illustrates larger issues that are examined in the research. As stated by Creswell, a case study writer has a wide array of choices to choose from in deciding on the sources of investigation in conducting a case study. Yin (2003) further espouses both qualitative and quantitative approaches to case study.

In this case study, I did a research of the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution. It involved analyzing documents on the nature of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Cameroon and Manyu Division, a review of existing literature about the Ekpe institution and model, observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, and interviews with indigenes that have expert knowledge on the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution. I observed the Ekpe process at the Ekpe Supreme Council held at the Paramount Chief of Mamfe’s compound in Mamfe town and at Eyumojock Town Halls.

I also conducted quantitative studies with Manyu indigenes in Cameroon to find out their opinion of the formal process of administration and conflict resolution as well as
the Ekpe model of conflict resolution. Furthermore, I observed a consultative meeting organized by the Divisional Officer for Eyumojock Sub-Division, the selection, and enthronement of a third class chief by the Sub-Divisional Officer for Eyumojock Sub-Division, held at Mbakem village.

**Contribution to Area and Discipline**

It is my hope that this study will contribute to the scholarship of anthropology and to research in post-colonial and indigenous people studies. The study helps in the preservation of the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution, and in understanding the meaning of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division, and Cameroon as a whole. It therefore contributes to the literature with regards to the relationship between chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes and the formal system of conflict resolution (the administration and the courts) on the one hand, and to the relationship between the Ekpe indigenous institutions and the resolution of conflicts in Manyu Division on the other hand.

By making reference to indigenous peoples studies and the theory of nationalism and taking into consideration the mechanisms and practices that include Manyu customary law into consideration in indigenous conflict resolution practices, this research provides new insights to understand the role of indigenous institutions in resolving disputes in Manyu Division in particular, and Cameroon as a whole. This study describes the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution and accessed the opinions of Manyu indigenes to find out which institutions will be more effective in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division, and in Cameroon as a whole.
Qualitative Findings

After reviewing documents, observing the Ekpe conflict resolution process, and interviewing Manyu indigenes people, I came out with the following findings.

Findings from Archival Documents Review

I collected documents and archival records from the Senior Divisional Office in Mamfe, Sub-Divisional Office in Mamfe, Sub-Divisional Office in Eyumojock, and the Archives Office in Buea on chieftaincy and land disputes in Manyu Division. I also analyzed court documents on succession to property disputes. Documents and records by the Ekpe Manyu were also collected and analyzed. In total, more than 2000 pages of documents, books, and a video on the Ekpe process of conflict resolution were reviewed.

In order to fully investigate the effectiveness of the formal and indigenous processes of resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division, I conducted research at the archives office mentioned above. I collected information relating to chieftaincy disputes, land disputes, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division from 1948 - 2003. Sources included notes, letters, surveys, tables, and other forms of documentation. The data I collected concerned the number of chieftaincy disputes in Mamfe Central Sub-Division in Manyu Division, the number of chiefs that are not residing in their area of jurisdiction contrary to the 1977 chieftaincy decree, and the number of land disputes in Manyu division.

The documents I collected from the Sub-Divisional Office in Mamfe revealed the number of chieftaincy disputes that are on-going, the number that have been resolved officially, some existing land disputes in Mamfe Central Sub-Division, and the number of land disputes that have been resolved by the administration. I also went to the Mamfe
High Court, but there was only one case file on succession to property dispute and I could only lay hands on the judgment. I realized the people didn’t seem to bring fort litigations for succession to property disputes but could not understand why.

**Chieftaincy disputes.** Table 6.1 presents findings about chieftaincy disputes.

Table 2

*Chieftaincy Disputes in Mamfe Central Sub-Division*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Document reviewed</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>No of pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Minutes if consultative meetings on the selection of Chiefs</td>
<td>To understand the process of selection of a chief</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Petition letters from opponents of the appointed Chief</td>
<td>To understand the reasons for petitioning the appointment of chief and nature of the conflict</td>
<td>226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Communiques from the Senior Divisional Officer on guidelines for consultative talks and for selection of a chief</td>
<td>To find out if the administration is aware of the problems and what they are doing to resolve it</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Documents listing the names of the respective chiefs, where they reside, and the state of mind of the indigenes</td>
<td>To find out the number of chiefs residing away from the villages, and the state of mind of the indigenes</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>A Video on consultative talks for the selection of chief</td>
<td>To understand the process of selection of a chief</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chiefs are traditional leaders either of a clan, village, or hamlet in most communities in Africa. Traditional authority existed prior to the colonial period (Cheka, 2008, p. 69). In Cameroon, the terminology used to refer to traditional rulers varies from region to region and from village to village. For example, in the Far North, North, and Adamawa Regions, a traditional ruler is called Lamido; in the Center, South, and portions of the Eastern Regions, he is referred to as Nkunkuma; in the North West region, the terminologies used are Fon and Mbe; the Bamouns call him Sultan; the Bakossis use the terminologies Nhon and Khen; while the Bakweris, Bafors, Bayangs and Ejaghams refer to him as chief (Metiege, 2012).
In the aftermath of colonization, chiefs emerged as a symbol of tradition, as well as endeavoring to serve as agency for modern projects (Cheka, 2008, p. 69). The authority to collect poll taxes was bestowed on chiefs in the jurisdiction in which they controlled. Chiefs also constituted a House of Chiefs and served as advisors to the Southern Cameroonian House in Parliament (Section 40 of the Federal Constitution of Cameroon of 1961). Chiefs also served as members of Land Commission (Section 12 of Decree No 76-166, of April 1976). With the reintroduction of democracy in the 1990s, political authorities started using the office of traditional rulers to canvas for votes from their subjects (Fisiy, 1995; Nyamnjoh, 2002).

Generally, the role of a chief is considered very important, especially in the rural areas where they work with or assist administrative officers in governing and in resolving conflicts between their subjects. Appointed by the government, chiefs throughout the territory enjoy the same facilities and prestige. However, the extent of their authority depends on the nature or culture of the ethnic group, the region they come from, and the size of the population in the jurisdiction they control. In the rural areas where there is limited government presence, the chief assumes most of the functions of the administration and sends correspondence periodically to the central government.

**Responsibilities/duties of a chief.** In Cameroon, the chief is placed under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Territorial Administration and Decentralization and assists the administration in governing the subjects. As auxiliaries of the government, chiefs perform the following duties:

- Transmitting the directives of the administrative authorities to their people and ensuring that such directives are implemented;
• Helping as directed by the competent administrative authorities in the maintenance of law and order and also ensures the economic, social and cultural development of the areas under them;

• Helping the taxation officials in collecting taxes and fees for the state and local authorities like councils under conditions laid down by the regulations;

• In addition to the aforementioned duties, the chiefs must carry out any other mission that may be assigned to them by the local administrative authority;

• In accordance with the native laws and customs the chiefs may where the divisional or sub-divisional administrations do not operate, be mandated to settle disputes or arbitrate in matters arising between their subjects with the exclusion of criminal matters (Articles 20 and 21).

Guarantees and discipline. The presidential decree about chieftaincy protects chiefs against threats, contempt, assaults, interference, abuse, or defamation to which their functions as chiefs may expose them to. In this context, chiefs are compensated by the state if they are subjected to injury in the performance of their duties. In such situations, the offender is held liable by the state, which reclaims damages in restitution for the loss suffered (Article 27). Also, the competent administrative authority in the jurisdiction where chiefs serve evaluates the efficiency, output, and ability of the chief to encourage economic and social development within his jurisdiction on an annual basis. Where a chief is deemed to be inefficient, a number of disciplinary measures may be invoked against him such as formal warning, ordinarily reprimand, reprimand with salary suspension, or an outright ousting from office (Articles 28 and 29).
Process of appointing a chief. The process of selection of a chief begins with a vacancy in a chieftaincy title as a result of death, or incapacity of the chief of a village.

Vacancy of the chieftaincy title. Article 8 of the chieftaincy decree stipulates that chiefs are chosen from families that are called upon to exercise the traditional customary authority of a chief in the area of jurisdiction and should be educated enough to read and write (Article 8). A chieftaincy throne becomes vacant with the death, deposition, abdication, or permanent physical disability of the person who was acting as chief. Such incapability must be recorded by a medical officer. In the case of a vacancy in the throne, the administrative officer in charge of the jurisdiction is required to immediately start organizing consultative talks to find out the next person entitled to the throne of a chief (Article 9).

Consultative talks. The Decree makes it obligatory that the administrative officer consults the elders of the area, and the appropriate customary public figures, before a new chief is appointed (Articles 10 and 11). The consultation meetings are mandated to be held in public, and chaired by the Senior Divisional Officer in the case of a first class and second class chiefdom. A Sub-Divisional Officer presides over the consultative talks in selecting a third class chief. In the minutes of the consultative talks that I analyzed, I realized that the entourage of the Divisional Officer included the Sub-Divisional Offer for Mamfe, the Brigade Commander of Mamfe, the Assistant Commissioner of Special Branch Police force, the Assistant Commissioner of Public Security, a representative of the LB/DGR, and some staff of the Sub-Divisional Officer’s office.

In the course of the consultation, the various candidates vying for the post of chief are viewed and are asked to give presentations to all present. Thereafter, the elders and
king makers of the respective quarters (families in other villages) are asked to consult in private, select their chief, and present the nominee to the administrator. The minutes of the meeting, a copy of the certificate confirming the vacancy of the chieftaincy title occupant, the name of the candidate selected, and the file of the person selected (birth certificate, police clearance, and medical certificate), as well as objections made if any, are then forwarded to the competent authority (see Appendix C for a copy of minutes of consultative talks).

Appointment of chiefs. Presidential Decree No 77/245 of July 15, 1977 re-organized the law governing chieftaincy in Cameroon. The decree organized traditional chiefdoms throughout Cameroon into first class, second class, and third class chiefdoms. A first class chiefdom is one in which the area of jurisdiction incorporates two or more second class chiefdoms whereas a second class chiefdom is one in which the area of jurisdiction covers a minimum of two third class chiefdoms. The boundaries of second class chiefdom is restricted to a sub-division. Finally, the jurisdiction of third class chiefdom is limited to either a village, a quarter in a rural area, or a quarter in urban areas. The size of a village can also be used in determining the class of the chiefdom (Articles 2 and 3 of the Presidential Decree No. 77/245).

As per the same presidential decree, chiefs are chosen from families that are called upon to exercise the traditional customary authority of a chief in the area of jurisdiction, and should be educated enough to read and write (Article 8). A chieftaincy throne becomes vacant with the death, deposition, abdication, or permanent physical disability of the person who was acting as chief. Such incapability must be recorded by a medical officer. In the case of a vacancy in the throne, the administrative officer in
charge of the jurisdiction is required to immediately start organizing consultative talks to find out the next person entitled to the throne of a chief (Article 9).

The decree makes it obligatory that the administrative officer consults the elders of the area and the appropriate customary public figures before a new chief is appointed (Articles 10 and 11). The consultation meetings are mandated to be held in public and chaired by the Senior Divisional Officer in the case of a first class and second class chiefdoms. A Sub-Divisional Officer presides over the consultative talks in selecting a third class chief. In the course of the consultation, the various candidates vying for the post of chief are reviewed and one is selected as the next chief. The minutes of the meeting, including a copy of the certificate confirming the vacancy of the chieftaincy title occupant, the name of the candidate selected, and the file of the person selected (birth certificate, police clearance, and medical certificate), as well as objections made if any, are then forwarded to the competent authority (see Appendix C for a copy of minutes of consultative talks).

The Prime Minister is responsible for appointing first class chiefs while the Minister of Territorial Administration is in charge of appointing second class and third class chiefs. The decree also entrusts the authority competent to appoint successors to chieftaincy thrones the powers to either set aside or override the decisions of the elders during the consultative talks and select another candidate deemed better qualified to serve the interest of the administration. If such a circumstance in fact arises, the decree requires the person selected to come from a chieftaincy lineage (Article 15).

Article 17 of the presidential decree mandates chiefs to reside within the jurisdiction of the chiefdom they serve and prohibits them from cumulatively holding any
other public duty. Exception to this requirement can only be provided by the authority invested with the powers to appoint the chief, even in situations where chieftaincy titles rotates among the families that were founders of the village or town.

**Chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division.** Chieftaincy title contentions have become rampant in Manyu Division with almost every village descending into chaos with the death of the incumbent. Parties contending the title do not give up if they are not appointed by the administration. The Senior Divisional Officer for Manyu Division acknowledged this in a communique to Sub-Divisional Officers issuing guidelines for consultative talks on August 2, 1999 stating that;

> It has come to my notice that there are numerous and prolonged chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division. In essence, it has been observed that during consultative talks, aspirants to the chieftaincy stool are dead set against each other and eventually refuse to back down when finally a decision is taken to enthrone one party. The losing candidate usually avows himself to disregard and disrespect the chosen chief. This endangers division in the village with each person creating his own sphere of influence in the village and consequently holding village development hostage. This unfortunate trend in village administration is not likely to change in the near future. (Ref: No. G36/C.42/378)

The Senior Divisional Officer in the communique sites the inadequate exploitation of Presidential Decree No 77/245 of 15 July 1977 bearing on the organization of traditional chiefdoms during consultative talks as reasons for this contestations. He reminds sub-divisional officers to adhere to Article 17 (1) and (2) during consultative talks which stipulates as follows:
1. A chief must necessarily reside in his area of competence.

2. The function of a traditional chief are incompatible with any other public function. However, the authority invested with power to designate a chief may authorize cumulative functions, notably when the person resides within the particular chiefdom concerned.

Of the eleven villages that make up Mamfe Central Sub-Division, 4 had chieftaincy disputes within the years 1972 to 2012, including Besongabang, Nchang, Okoyong, Bacho Ntia and Eyangntui. Besongabang is a more intriguing case as the conflict continues to rage despite the deaths of the protagonists. The causes of the dispute range from allegations that the selected person is not the choice of a large faction of the indigenes of the village to that the person appointed by the administration is not from the family that is called upon to be chief (Cheka, 2008).

Another reason that causes conflict is that people seem to be disappointed with the authority given to administrative officers to appoint chiefs by the presidential decree (Cheka, 2008). The feeling is that some educated, wealthy, and influential people corrupt the administration into appointing them as traditional rulers in violation of the tradition of the indigenes. This feeling of corruption seems to be justified in that the presidential decree gives the administrative officer the authority to bypass the recommendations of the elders of the village during the consultative talks, and select any other person they believe can better serve the interest of the indigenes (Article 16).

Furthermore, the chiefs in eight of the eleven villages that constitute Mamfe Central Sub-Division do not live in the villages in which they were appointed to serve in violation of article 17 of the Presidential Decree Q38/03/D3/1/044. Most of them hold
influential political or administrative positions in the government including cabinet ministers and directors (see table 6.2 below). These people were appointed chief by the administration irrespective of the fact that the administrative officer in charge knew they hold other offices, contrary to the presidential decree. These chiefs appoint regents to rule the village in their absence (Report of the Sub-Divisional Officer for Mamfe Central Sub-Division, 2012). In reality, these regents are not respected by the people, and cannot carry any meaningful developmental projects in the village. Such situations have resulted in the feeling of disappointment and frustration among the indigenes in the affected villages. Indigenes complain that the chief has abandoned his functions as chief (Report of Divisional Officer for Mamfe, 2012).

The result has been conflicts in once peaceful communities. The administration uses the police, gendarmes, and the military to quell or suppress violence or possible fears of violence. However, the underlying issues are left unresolved. As a result, the peace that once existed in the community is destroyed, friendly relationships are disrupted, and developmental projects in the community are stalled.

**Chieftaincy in Mamfe Central Sub-Division.** Mamfe Central Sub-Division comprises eleven (11) villages. Table 6.2 below shows the respective villages of Mamfe Central Sub-Division, name of the chief, where the chief is resident, if the chieftaincy title is being contested, and the state of mind of the indigenes.
Table 3

Chieftaincy in Mamfe Central Sub-Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Chief</th>
<th>Residence</th>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Regency</th>
<th>State of Mind of Indigenes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Egbekaw</td>
<td>Eta John Agbor</td>
<td>Douala</td>
<td>Working in Douala</td>
<td>Enthroned 1979</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Population is disgruntled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>Orock Mbi John</td>
<td>Limbe</td>
<td>Ill Health</td>
<td>Enthroned 1/25/2008</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Disgruntled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Nchang</td>
<td>Tanyi Mbianyo Clarkson Tabetando</td>
<td>Yaounde</td>
<td>Civil Servant (Formal Minister Practicing Lawyer)</td>
<td>Enthroned 1998</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Two factions. One opposing Chief, one supporting Relative good state of mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Bacho Ntai</td>
<td>Ntai</td>
<td>Douala</td>
<td>Civil Servant</td>
<td>Enthroned 1983</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Relative peace but face challenges from contestant and supporters Relative Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nfaitock II</td>
<td>Ntai</td>
<td>Douala</td>
<td>Civil Servant</td>
<td>Enthroned 1990</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Relative Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Etemetek</td>
<td>Egbe Takaw Francis</td>
<td>Yaounde</td>
<td>Works with US Embassy</td>
<td>Enthroned 1999</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Relative Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Eyanchang</td>
<td>Taku Mbi Daniel</td>
<td>Bamenda</td>
<td>Works with Chamber of Commerce No reason/Farming</td>
<td>Enthroned 2002</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Divided in two Factions. One supporting and the other opposing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Eyang Ntui</td>
<td>Assam Ntuijock</td>
<td>Mamfe</td>
<td>Medical Doctor</td>
<td>Enthroned 1955</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Mamfe Town</td>
<td>Dr. Godson Oben</td>
<td>Mamfe</td>
<td>Medical Doctor</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Relative Peace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Besonga bang</td>
<td>No Chief</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Since 1972</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Divided in two camps all contesting title</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Eshobi</td>
<td>Ojong J. Abang</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>02/20/197</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Relative Peace</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. REF. No. 036/03/D3/1/044 - Global situation of traditional rulers in Mamfe Sub-Division. Communication from the Divisional Officer of Mamfe to the Senior Divisional Officer of Manyu Division. Dated 14th January 2005.
Contrary to Article 17 (1) and (2), almost all the appointed chiefs in Manyu Division do not reside in their respective villages. Therefore, they have appointed regents to rule on their behalf and in their absence. The Senior Divisional Officer advised in the aforementioned communique that, contrary to what happens in Manyu Division, there is no provision for regency in chieftaincy law. However, the trend of appointing regents is ongoing and nothing has been done to redress the situation.

**Chieftaincy in Eyumojoyock Sub-Division.** Eyumojoyock Sub-Division is comprised of over 65 villages. Because of the number of villages, I could not conduct a complete study of the chieftaincy situation throughout the sub-division since most of the villages do not have access to motorable roads and phone network; making communication difficult. However, the chieftaincy crisis in Kembong, one of the villages in Eyumojoyock Sub-Division is worth mentioning. The dispute in Kembong village has gone unresolved since 1972 when the then chief died. This crisis is still on going with nobody enthroned as the chief of the village.

**Effects of chieftaincy title contestations.** The continuous contestation of the chiefs appointed by the administration, and the fact that most of the appointed chiefs reside away from their respective villages, has resulted in division, conflicts, and lack of development in most villages. Whereas the chiefs appoint regents to govern in their absence, some of these regents are administratively weak and do not always have the support of the indigenes. The Divisional Officer for Mamfe Central stated that the inability of the chief to govern effectively has seen land disputes skyrocketed. The regent chiefs do not always enjoy full powers and are unable to take prompt decisions when the situation require prompt action. Occasionally, the administration is forced to intervene to
resolve village disputes that would normally fall under the competence of the chief. The Divisional Officer for Mamfe further stated that some of the regents are contested because they are arrogant and lack the skills of governance. Some even go out of their way to write threatening letters to their subjects or even neighbors all in ignorance (REF. No. 036/03/D3/1/044).

**Land tenure policy in Cameroon.** Article 28 of the Amended Cameroon Constitution of 1996 (Article 20 of the 1972 Constitution) gives the President of the Republic mandate to pass ordinances, in the areas of legislative competence of the National Assembly. Article 28 states that: “… The following shall be reserved to the legislature: … (2) The law of persons and property. Including: … law of movables and immovable property”. Section 21 establishes:

1. Provided that with regard to the subjects listed in Article 20, the National Assembly may empower the President of the Republic to legislate by way of Ordinance for limited period and for given purposes. (2) Such ordinances shall enter into force on the date of their publication. They shall be tabled before the National Assembly for purposes of ratification within the time limit fixed by the enabling law. (3) They shall remain in force as long as the Assembly had not refused to ratify them.

During the 1970s, the president used the powers given to him by the constitution to bypass the National Assembly on many occasions, and passed ordinances to enhance the speedy introduction of legislation and to promote national integration. As a result, the 1970’s is considered the period of consolidation of national unity in Cameroon (Fisiy, 1992). An example is the rules governing land tenure in Cameroon. The Head of State,
relying on Section 21 of the 1972 Constitution, enacted Law No. 73-3 and established rules governing land tenure. On the basis of this law, the 1974 Land Ordinances were then enacted. This section will examine the changes brought about by the 1974 Land Ordinances. The emphasis will be on the contents and procedure for the application of the reforms.

**Historical background to the Land Law reform in Cameroon.** Attempts by the State of Cameroon to appropriate and control land has been long standing. The history of the struggles for control over land goes back to the time of the German occupation of Cameroon, the period after the First World War during which the territory was annexed by the French and the British as Mandated and later trusteeship territories, to the post-colonial era (Tjouen, 1982).

**The period of German colonial rule (1884-1916).** At the time that the Germans signed the treaty of annexation with the Douala chiefs on July 12, 1884, they knew that the land around the foot of Mount Cameroon (the South West Region of Cameroon) had rich volcanic soil and was going to be very good for plantation agriculture. Moreover, German businessmen had started buying land from the local chiefs (Clarence-Smith, 1989). Local chiefs were cajoled into selling vast areas of their land. For example, a German businessman, named Adolf Woermann, gave instructions to his local representative in Cameroon to secure as much land as he could in a letter dated 6 May, 1884. The letter in parts stated that:

> At the same time as the cession of sovereignty, you should by all means get the cession of very extensive lands as private property – especially those suitable for plantations. There is no doubt that if the country becomes German, there will be
many attempts to establish extensive plantations, and so it is always a good thing if the land is already in our private ownership, so that we can re-sell it later. You must naturally try to buy as cheaply as possible. One can get the land for nearly nothing. (Ardener, 1968, p. 85)

When Puttkamer served as the German governor in Cameroon, between 1895 - 1906, the value of land multiplied because he encouraged the purchase of land by German traders. Puttkamer preferred plantation agriculture over other forms of land use (Fisiy 1992, p. 27). As a result, plantation agriculture flourished during the period of German annexation and colonization. By the time the Germans were defeated in Cameroon in the First World War, they had secured more than 300,000 acres of agricultural land divided into 58 estates located in the present day South West Region of Cameroon. As stated by Fisiy (1992), such extensive acquisition of land needed legitimization and legal protection.

To satisfy the need for legitimization of land, the German Imperial government passed the first land tenure act known as the “German Crown Lands Act”, on July 15, 1896. The law assimilated all unoccupied land “as part of German overseas dominions”; except those lands that were occupied by the local chiefs and the local communities. However, since effective occupation of the territory was centered on the coastal regions, they also limited the plantations at the coastal regions around the fertile volcanic soils of the South West region.

The Germans further introduced a land register called the “Grundbuch” to complete their plans on managing land. By the Grundbuch, all interests in land, dimensions and location, were stated and recorded. By registering land in the Grundbuch,
the German Royal government guaranteed protection and certainty of the title of the piece of land for plantation agriculture. The Grundbuch also required all German companies that had acquired land from the local chiefs to pay, Crown land fees to the German monarchy for the purchase (Fisiy, 1992, p. 29). According to this author, the 1896 law was the harbinger of the 1974 Land Ordinances, for it paved the way for land registration and provided the same economic arguments that the 1974 Ordinances do. That is that certainty of ownership makes it possible to raise capital and that it promotes plantation agriculture. Fisiy (1992) further states that it also shares the negative feeling of the inhabitants during the respective periods. That is, the poor and uneducated indigenes see the laws as something that is alien to them and crafted to take over control of lands from the indigenes and place it in the hands of the German Imperial government and the state in present time.

*The British period of colonial rule or annexation (1914-1961).* Whereas the Germans surrendered to the British and French in Cameroon in 1916, the British were effectively in control of the section that became British Cameroons by 1914. However, it was only after the signing of the Treaty of Versailles on June 29, 1919 that sovereignty rights over Cameroon were conferred to the British and the French as a reward for being victorious, while Germany ceded all its interests as colonial masters under Article 119 of the treaty (Fisiy, 1992). In any case, the actual partition of Cameroon took place upon the signing of the Anglo-French Declaration of July 10, 1919, when the borders of the two parts were drawn and accepted by both parties. The British administered their portion of Cameroon in reference to Article 9 of the League of Nations Mandate Agreement, which provided the British with full powers of administration and legislation. The mandated
agreement also gave the British rights to administer the territory in accordance with British laws as was the case with other British colonial territories (Fisiy, 1992).

To prevent the permanent settlement of the colonizers in the mandated territory, and excessive seizure of the lands of the indigenes, the League of Nations included provisions in the mandate agreement that:

In the framing of laws relating to the holding or transfer of land, the Mandatory shall take into consideration native laws and customs, and shall respect the rights and safeguard the interests of the native population. No native land may be transferred, except between natives, without the previous consent of the public authorities, and no real rights over native land in favor of non-natives may be created except with the same consent. The Mandatory shall promulgate strict regulations against usury. (Article 5 of the Mandated Agreement)

The Trustee Agreement of the United Nations adopted the same provision stating that:

In framing laws relating to the holding or transfer of land and natural resources, the administering authority shall take into consideration native laws and customs, and shall respect the rights and safeguard the interests, both present and future, of the native population. No native land or natural resource may be transferred, except between natives, save with previous consent of the competent authority. No real rights over native land or natural resources may be created except with the same consent. (Article 8 of the Trustee Agreement of 13 December, 1947)

The British preferred to use the land tenure laws that existed in Northern Nigeria because they thought those laws were more in compliance with the Mandate Agreement.
than the laws that were in existence in Eastern Nigeria, to which the British had affiliated the southern portion of British Cameroons for administrative purposes. In that vein, the Land and Native Right Ordinance of Northern Nigeria was made to apply to Southern Cameroon in 1927 (Fisiy, 1992, p. 31).

Section 3 of the Land and Native Rights Ordinance stated that “the whole of the Lands in (West) Cameroon, whether occupied or unoccupied are hereby declared to be native lands”. The only exception that was made was with the 84 estates that had been previously registered during the period of German annexation, and which were considered as freehold estates by the British in 1922. Section 4 of the Land and Native Rights Ordinance further stated in Article 4 that:

All native lands, and all rights over the same, are hereby declared to be under the control and subject to the disposition of the (Governor) Prime Minister, and shall be held and administered for the use and common benefit of the natives: and no title to the occupation and use of any such lands shall be valid without the consent of the Prime Minister.

As stated by Fisiy (1992), the law gave control of land to the British and meant that the British could do whatever they wanted with the land, and prevented the indigenes that rightfully occupied land from selling, transferring, bequeath, or estrange hid title to a foreigner without first seeking the consent of the British Prime Minister (pp. 31-32). The ordinance thus relieved the indigenous landlords of their right of ownership over their land, and turned them to merely occupiers of the same land. In the same vein, “the rights of first settlement and ownership, albeit corporately, were converted into ‘customary
rights of occupancy’, defined as the title of the native community lawfully occupying native lands in accordance with native law and custom” (Fisiy, 1992, p. 32).

Whereas the British colonial administration was not allowed to sell or dispose of land as per both the Mandate Agreement and later the Land and Native Rights Ordinance of 1927, they were however allowed to sell formal German estates and lands that they held. The sales of such estates started in 1923. The British sold 34,250 acres to Elders and Fyffes Ltd, 3,625 acres were sold to the missionary churches, and about 3,820 acres were sold to other foreigners. Some plantations were sold back to their previous German owners because the British could not find other buyers and were not prepared to manage the plantations themselves. In total, about 100,000 acres of plantation land was sold to former German farmers in the period between the two world wars (Fisiy, 1992, p. 32).

Private individuals were also engaged in the sale of land by manipulating the Land and Native Rights Ordinance in lieu of raising capital for economic and other purposes. Whereas the law prohibited the sales of land, a land market quickly developed in the growing urban centers. Lands that had certificate of occupancy had a higher value as banks and other economic operators considered the certificate of occupancy as proof of title, despite the fact that it was in contradiction to native lands that did not have certainty of title (Fisiy, 1992).

The Certificate of Occupancy, that was initially intended to be used as a control mechanism to facilitate the acquisition of land by foreigners in return for the payment of rents to the government, became considered by the indigenes as a valuable proof of title document. Banks and other financial institutions recognized it as valid collateral for loans. Whereas the 1927 Ordinance was created to protect native lands from
expropriation by foreigners, the law was looked at as an obstacle to the full exploitation of the economic potentials of the land; that is, land that did not have a Certificate of Occupancy could not be leased, mortgaged, or sold by the indigenes for production purposes. As stated by Fisiy (1992), “this brought about a total transformation of the notion of the Certificate of Occupancy” (p. 33). In the case ‘Fayez Olabi & Toufig Olabi v. Sam Ebolo Mandessi Bell, Gwanmesia, J.’ in the court of appeal the Certificate of Occupancy was defined as a “lease of 99 years during which the holder pays rents to the Government on Government land” (Civil Appeal CASWP/19/78 of 1978, Buea - unreported). The consequence was that the state had effectively taken over control and administration of land in the territory.

**Land legislation under French rule (1916-1960).** Whereas the British instituted the policy of indirect rule in British Southern Cameroons and relied heavily on the indigenous institutions for governance, the French instituted a policy of assimilation (Fisiy, 1992, p. 33). To ensure that the policy was pursued, the French were more interested in implementing mainland French legislations in their colonies. Also, to ensure that French legislations were effectively instituted and implemented in the colonies, the French introduced a dual system of administrative law whereby the uneducated indigenes, who were the majority of the population, were governed by a system of laws known as the indigènat. The system of indigènat called for the application of native laws and customs only to a category of citizens that were uneducated and do not understand the French culture. Irrespective of the fact that the policy of indigènat was initiated in 1917 by the French for its African colonies, it only became effective in Cameroon in 1924, following the Decree of 4 October, 1924 upon the introduction of the Decree of
August 1923 that instituted “La justice indigène”. The other category of people was known as “les assimilés”; that is, those that were educated or trained in French and Western cultures and institutions were governed by the French civil law (the Napoleonic Code of 1810). The French Civil Code was introduced in Cameroon by the Decree of December 29, 1922 (Fisiy, 1992, p. 33). However, no distinction was placed on the individual in dealing with the question of acquisition or appropriation of interest in land. The French, just like the other colonial powers, were very interested in taking over the control and administration of colonial land. In this regard, they adopted the approach of acquiring land by concessions. They also preferred small scale concessions of not more than 1,000 acres of land (Fisiy, 1992, p.34).

The French legislation on land tenure was crafted around the 1932 decree that called for the registration of all lands. By that decree, any land that was unoccupied was considered vacant, and the administration of the said land was by implication the property of the colonial masters. That meant the colonial administration could simply allocate or seize land whenever it was needed. As stated by Fisiy (1992, p. 34), French colonial administration had no reason to alienate large portions of land when it was not needed because there was always land available whenever it was needed. The notion of ownerless lands crept in to rehabilitate the abandoned German notion of “Crown lands”.

At the commencement of the Mandat administration, the French did not have a well-defined land tenure policy, so they decided to apply the French Law of 23 May, 1855 to their mandated portion of Cameroon by a law created on 24 July, 1921 and implemented by an Order of 15 September 1921 (Fisiy, 1992, p. 34). However, in order to ensure total control over land without offending the indigenes, the French were willing
to change the land policies many times. The first was in 1921, which was considered to be for transition purposes only, and was repealed by Law No. 59-47 of 17 June, 1959.

France enacted two decrees that brought about a remarkable change in land tenure policy in French Cameroon on 12 July, 1932. The first called for corporate groups to collectively record their land rights for lands that did not have a document of title. This document was regarded as proof of evidence of their land rights. The second decree focused on land registration similar to the model of the Australian Torrens Act. The decree called for the registration of interest in land by individuals. Those that had interests in land were called upon to register such and were issued a document of title. The two decrees were meant to provide certainty of title. While the first dealt with corporate title, the second was focused on individual interests (Mbah, 2008; Fisiy, 1992).

Another decree was passed on 12 January, 1938. It stipulated that “au Cameroun, les terres vacantes et sans maître appartissent au territoire”. That is “in Cameroun, all vacant lands belonged to the territory”. Some chiefs and land owners were against the decree and protested saying that, the fact that most of the lands had not been occupied does not mean that they do not have owners.

Based on the analyses above, the land tenure policy of both the British and the French colonial administrations were mostly the same. But for some minor differences in the manner of administration and implementation, they were geared towards total control of the land by the colonial masters. That is, except for few acres of land (86 freehold estates), the British classified all lands as Native Lands, including those that had been occupied and acquired Certificate of Occupancy; just as the French administered “les terres vacantes et sans maître” as state lands.
At the eve of the independence of French Cameroon, the issue of land tenure became a major political issue. It became important for politicians to attract the support of the local chiefs and customary authorities. To win their support, Law No. 59-47 of 17 June, 1959 was passed by the Territorial Assembly (created by Decree No. 57-501 of 16 April, 1957). The law re-instituted customary rights over land tenure as supreme. As per Article 3 of the 17 June, 1959 Law, ownership of all lands was placed under customary jurisdiction, except for those lands that have been recognized as public or private lands under the provisions of the law. That is, land that had been registered under the Napoleonic Civil Code (Fisiy, 1992). As further stated by Fisiy (1992), the subsequent recognition of the primacy of customary rights of land tenure was bound to pose great challenges to the territorial claims of the new leaders that governed the country into independence.

**Post-colonial land registration.** Upon the attainment of independence, the new independent state of French Cameroun decided to pay more attention on controlling the population and the resources of the country. As a result, Décret-Loi No. 63-2 was signed on 9 January, 1963 and ratified by the East (French) Cameroon House of Assembly by Décret-Loi No. 63-3 of July, 1963. The decree gave control over all vacant land to the state, and the indigenes became merely holders of rights to land. Fisiy (1992, p.37) states that:

The driving force behind the 1963 Décret-Loi was the State’s overriding quest to take over land administration. Consequently, the notion of "les terres vacantes et sans maître” was re-invented in the 1963 law as “le patrimoine collectif national”. Of course, its’ administration was conferred to the State.
Furthermore, Law No. 66-3-COR was passed on 7 July, 1966 to repeal the 1932 decree that provided for the “constatation des droits fonciers sans titre écrits” that made it possible for the collective registration of customary rights in the “livret foncier” (Fisiy, 1992). Decree No. 66-307 was enacted on 25 September, 1966 to provide new procedures called “la mise en valeur des terres” that should be followed by people wishing to apply for land title. In the words of Fisiy (1992):

The laws on land tenure were changing so rapidly that this conjures up the metaphor of the law maker as a master chess player, who under the constraints of time and the “development imperative”, had to make quick and sudden moves to gain a comparative advantage over the forces of stagnation that were epitomized in his vision by the ultimate move to strip traditional authorities of their claims over land ownership, and control. (p. 38)

**The 1974 land ordinances.** After the unification of Cameroon, and the subsequent referendum of 1972 that took away Federalism and made Cameroon a unitary state, the President of the Republic enacted another law on land tenure reforms that became known as the 1974 Land Ordinances.

Acting under the guidance of the 1972 Constitution and Law No. 73-3 of 7 July, 1973 that gave the President powers to rule by ordinances, the President of the United Republic of Cameroon enacted three ordinances governing land tenure in Cameroon on 6 July, 1974 including:

- Ordinance No. 71-1 of 6 July, 1974 establishing rules governing land tenure;
- Ordinance No. 74-2 of 6 July, 1974 establishing rules governing State lands;
- Ordinance No. 74-3 of 6 July, 1974 concerning the expropriation procedure.
These ordinances, to be further examined later, could only be implemented upon the enactment of a decree of application. A Decree of Application was published by the President of the Republic on 27 April, 1976. It dealt with the following issues:

- Decree No. 76-165 of 27 April, 1976 establishing the conditions for obtaining land certificates;
- Decree No. 76-166 of April, 1976 concerning National Lands management;
- Decree No. 76-167 of 27 April, 1976 concerning State lands management.

Whereas these ordinances were supposed to be ratified by the National Assembly within a specified time period, Article 21 of the 1972 Constitution stated that decrees and ordinances signed by the President of the Republic continue to apply as long as they were not repealed by the National Assembly.

In the course of implementation of the 1974 ordinances, it was realized that there were loopholes and flaws in the concept and the procedural requirements of the land reforms. The result was a series of amendments and legislations to fix the loopholes and facilitate application of the law. Fisiy (1992) counts “more than 57 normative tests relating to land tenure that were published in the Official Gazette” (p. 39).

*Private property rights under the 1974 land ordinances*. The main purpose of the 1974 ordinances was to split the country into private and public land estates while the unoccupied lands were converted to national lands and managed by the state. Figure 6.1 shows the patterns of access to and management of private and public property interests in land rights. This section shows the various patterns of access, procedure for registering land, and the allocation of national lands by concessions.
**Figure 5.** Land Management Ordinance 74-1, 74-2, and 74-3 of July, 1974. *Note:* Taken from Fisyi, 1992, p. 40.

**Patterns of access to land: Ordinance 74-1.** Ordinance 74-1 put in place the various categories of estates in land. That is, it differentiated between private and public property rights. It also made the State the guardian of all lands, and gave the State powers to intervene and ensure the use of land for economic purposes and to defend the interest of Cameroon. The law stated that:

The State shall be the guardian of all lands. It may in this capacity intervene to ensure rational use of land in the imperative interest of defense or the economic policies of the nation (Ordinance 74-1, Section 1(2). Section 15 further made all unoccupied lands and occupied lands that are not registered “National Lands”. Lands that were registered prior to the 1932 Act in the French Cameroon colonial administration and lands registered in the Grundbuch in the British speaking Cameroon were the only lands that were excluded from national lands. That is because these lands were already registered under preceding State Land Laws, or that the procedure for registration had already been initiated. A time frame of ten years was given to those holders of documentary title in land beginning from 5 August, 1974 to allow them to convert the old deeds, failure of which the land
will be converted of “National Lands”. For those that did not have title, their lands were converted into “National Land”. (Fisiy, 1992, p. 41)

Decree No. 76-167 of 27 April, 1976 gave the State powers to declassify national land, and laid in place the various procedures through which private estate in land could be acquired. Private estate in land could also be obtained by purchasing a registered land. The common procedure was to partition a large piece of land into smaller parcels before selling. However, the process had to be in compliance with the terms of Decree No. 79-194 of 19 May, 1979. The Decree also required that the transaction was done by a notary (Fisiy, 1992, p. 42).

**Procedure for registering land in Cameroon and obtaining land certificate**

*(Decree No. 76-165).* Section 1(1) of Decree No 76-165 of 27 April, 1976 makes a land certificate the official certification of real property rights in land. It requires the applicant to file and deposit four copies of land registration forms, of which the original must be stamped at the Sub-Divisional Office in the locality where the estate is located. The application forms must have the full names of the applicant/applicants, parentage, place of domicile, profession, marital status, nationality, and the name in which the property is to be registered. The situation, area, nature of occupancy or exploitation, estimated value, details of liabilities with which the property is encumbered should also be described.

Applications for lands which are completely unexploited are forbidden by the law. Also, the application should cover only one parcel of land, and must be signed by the applicant. In a situation where a road or water-course crosses the parcel of land, the number of applications should be equal to the number of separate parcels of lands.
Upon receipt of the land title application form, the Sub-Divisional Officer is required to issue a receipt to the applicant using the address on the file (Section 12). Also, the Sub-Divisional Officer is required to forward the documents to the Divisional Office of Lands that is in charge of serving the sub-division. Thereafter, the Senior Divisional Officer is required to publish a summary of the application by posting it in the premises of his office, Sub-Divisional Office, town halls, and in the village where the purported land is located. The Senior Divisional Officer is also required to fix a date on which the occupancy or exploitation of the land is assessed. The assessment is made by the land consultative board. In a situation where the land concerned falls within two divisions, the Land Consultative Boards of the two divisions are to meet conjointly to do the assessment. In cases where the land is effectively occupied or exploited, the board is required to immediately demarcate the property by a sworn surveyor of the Surveys Service in the presence of the neighbors. The law requires the applicant to be responsible for the costs of the surveys of the land.

On completion of the surveys and demarcation, a plan and detailed report is drawn up and signed by the surveyor, stating the full names of the parties concerned, and a description of the recognized boundaries with the lengths of the sides. The angles of the polygonal areas of the land are to be marked with a serial number. Within the same thirty days of the meeting of the Land Consultative Board, the Senior Divisional Officer is required to transmit the application documents (including the reports of the Land Consultative Boards), five copies of the plan, and the detailed report of the demarcation of the landed property to the Department of Lands. The Department of Lands makes sure that the documents are in order, assigns a number to the documents, countersigns if it is
approved, and draws up a notice of final demarcation which is published in the Official Gazette (Section 15). The application is then transmitted to the provincial Lands Service for further consideration if approved, or to the Divisional Office of Lands for registration if the application has not been approved (Section 16).

**Objections to registration.** As per Section 16 (1) of the 1974 Land Ordinance, any interested party may object to the application for land registration. The objections are to be addressed to the Sub-Divisional Officer in the sub-division where the land is situated, and deposited at the Sub-Divisional Office. The objection can be filed from the date the application for land registration is filed at the Sub-Divisional Office to the expiration of 30 days from the date the notice of final demarcation was published in the Official Gazette, Senior Divisional Office, and the village concerned.

A physical stamp should be placed on the objections for registration, and the full name and domicile of the person or persons that are in objection to the issuance of the land certificate. The grounds for the objections must also be stated with a list of the deeds and certificates or documents on which the objection is based. Objections that are filed prior to the assessment of occupancy are examined by the Land Consultative Board at the time that the assessment is done (Section 17 (1). Objections filed after the assessment and objections that were not settled on the day of the assessment of occupation are transmitted to the Head of the Regional Lands Service, who enters the objection in a registry chronologically as he/she receives the objections.

If there are no objections after 30 days of publication of the notice of demarcation in the Official Gazette, the Regional Head of Lands Services registers the landed property in the Land Register in accordance to Section 35 of the 1974 Land Ordinances. In case of
objections that are not resolved or withdrawn, the Regional Head of Lands notifies the objecting party to furnish reasons for the objection within 30 days of notification or to withdraw the petition for objection. Objections not withdrawn are transmitted to the Minister in charge of Lands together with the recommendations of the Lands and Consultative Board on the expiration of the 30 day notice.

Upon examination of the petition, the Minister of Lands may request the Regional Head of Lands to register the land in the applicant’s name, excluding the disputed portion of the land from the title of registration, register the land in join possession of the parties, or deny the application for registration. Appeals against the Minister’s decision are to be filed at the administrative court (Section 20-1).

**Land disputes in Manyu Division.** In Manyu Division, there are Land Consultative Boards in Mamfe, Eyumojock, Akwaya, and Tinto Towns, to serve Mamfe Sub-Division, Eyumojock Sub-Division, Akwaya Sub-Division, and Upper Bayang Sub-Divisions respectively. These boards are headed by the Sub-Divisional Officers of the respective sub-division who are answerable to the Senior Divisional Officer for Manyu Division. My goal was to gather documents on land disputes in Mamfe Central and Eyumojock Sub-Divisions. However, during the duration of my stay in Manyu Division, there happened to be a heated and ferocious land dispute in Taboh village in Eyumojock Sub-Division (where my family comes from) between the chief of the village and the indigenes, in which the people were against the sale of 1000 hectares of land by the chief without the consent of the villagers. The campaign against the sale was championed by prominent members of my extended family and the matter was both at the judicial level and at the office of the Divisional Officer. To avoid not being looked at as meddling in
the legal proceedings of the case and also to avoid the possibilities of my biases
influencing the research, I decided not to conduct a study on the nature of land disputes in
Eyumojock Sub-Division. Also, I could not conduct a research on the nature of land
disputes in Akwaya and Upper Bayang Sub-Divisions because the sub-divisions are vast
and not motor-able, making it difficult for me to complete a research in the limited time I
had to stay there. In any case, the results of my findings in Mamfe replicates what is
happening in the other sub-divisions in Manyu Division.

Mamfe Central has witnessed a tremendous increase in the number of land
disputes since 1998. The conflicts range from disputes between two individuals,
individuals against an entire village community, as well as disputes between two villages.
The table below contains a list of land disputes in Mamfe Central Sub-Division between
1997 to 2003. Almost all the cases involving land disputes are not registered, making it
difficult for the Land Consultative Board to fully understand and resolve them. Because
of the sensitivity nature of the disputes and possible tensions that could arise, the
Divisional Officer for Mamfe could not release details of land disputes from 2004
onwards. The Land Consultative Boards are understaffed and the duration it takes to
register and resolve land disputes is unprecedented.

**Land disputes in Mamfe Central Sub-Division.** Table 6.3 presents the land
disputes in Mamfe Central Sub-Division.
Table 4

*Land Disputes in Mamfe Central Sub-Division*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Parties</th>
<th>Village</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Resolved</th>
<th>Situation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>W.S.B Agbaw vs. Joseph Agbor</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>7/24/2002</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Conflict continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Okoyong Village vs. Tambe Johnson Tambe</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>10/10/2002</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Conflict continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Okoyong vs Alexander Agboryong</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>12/17/2002</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Okoyong vs. Agbaw Samuel Eyong</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>04/29/2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Okoyong vs. Egbe Simon Besong</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>06/24/2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>E. J. Agbor vs. Okoyong</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>07/8/1970</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Batey Alexander Agbor vs. Agbor Peter Ashu</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>09/14/1989</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Conflict continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Okoyong Village (Non Natives) vs. Batuo Ntai</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>7/1/1997</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Conflict continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>R. A. Oben vs. Okoyong</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>06/27/1997</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Okoyong vs. Takor Alexander Eta</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>10/6/1999</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Conflict continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Ebot Augustine Eyong vs. Tabot Joseph Ebot &amp; Orock James Tabot</td>
<td>Okoyong</td>
<td>10/12/2000</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Nfaitok II vs. Bachuo Ackagbe</td>
<td>Nfaitok II</td>
<td>12/18/1996</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Resolved by Ekpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nfaitok II vs. Nchemba Village</td>
<td>Nfaitok</td>
<td>10/16/2002</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Conflict continues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Nfaitok vs. Bachuo-Akagbe Land Dispute</td>
<td>Nfaitok</td>
<td>06/13/2003</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The land ordinances established Land Consultative at the sub-divisional level. In this vain, disputes from the respective sub-division are handled by the Land Consultative Board located in Mamfe Town.

**Succession to property disputes.** Black’s dictionary defines succession as “1) The act or right of legally or officially taking over a predecessor’s office, rank, or duties” and
“2) The acquisition of rights or property by inheritance under the laws of descent and distribution” (Garner, 1999). In Cameroon, the law on succession has been narrowed to succession to property probably to delimit the scope of application of the term. As stated by Ebi (2011), “The term succession is appropriate because it is malleable and could permit the assumption that a person takes only as intermediary or trustee on behalf of other persons” (p. 2). Ebi further states that, as applied in Anglophone Cameroon, “Property generally denotes anything tangible or intangible that is capable of ownership, and which for the purpose of succession is of such permanence that it continues to exist and be used beyond the death of the owner” (p. 2).

**Grounds for claims to succession.** In as much as there is always a handful of people that could possibly be beneficiaries, English and customary laws have come out with priorities which has resulted in the exclusion of some meritorious relatives of a deceased person. Under Muslim law for example, maintenance seems to be the basis for succession. This is evident from the fact that both male and female can benefit as well as those who are not limited to the deceased nuclear family.

Under most customary laws in Cameroon, females are excluded from the list of beneficiaries, and generally, seniors are given priority. Under English law, the spouse of the deceased is given priority as against blood relatives of the deceased. The customary and modern laws applicable in Cameroon have recognized the obligation of the spouse to maintain certain members of his family by providing them with education, food, shelter, clothing, and medical care (Ebi, 2011, p. 6).

The primary obligation is geared to the nuclear family of the man, which includes the kids and spouse or spouses. Whereas the primary responsibility is towards the nuclear
family, it could however be extended to other immediate family members that are in need including parents, siblings, and grandparents (Ebi 2011, p. 7). Ebi s thus estimates that all these groups of people could qualify as beneficiaries, taking into consideration that the duty to maintain them does not cease with the death of the breadwinner; death which on the other hand could aggravate their circumstance. While the personal needs of the deceased person ceases upon his death, the extra income that was used to support him/her could thus be used to furnish other needs, including claims to succession by family members, both immediate and extended. Unsurprisingly, there is generally a long list of possible intestate beneficiaries.

However, by the rules of the Common Law of succession, priority of succession is given to only a handful of persons closest to the deceased, to the exclusion of some of the long list of dependents (Ebi, 2011, p. 8). While in the English common law only members of the immediate family of the deceased are considered in succession, most Cameroonian customary laws are patrilineal inclined and favor male members of the immediate and extended families in exclusion of women (wives and daughters) from the list of beneficiaries. The widows of the deceased are not considered to be family members, while the daughters are considered to be destined for marriage and go to another family (Ebi, 2011, p. 8).

As a result of the desire to meet the needs of those depending on the deceased for their existence, it is common for them to get into a rush to take the property or to dispossess those that they consider are in possession of deceased’s property when they are not entitled to succeed the decease. In cases where the deceased was married, the immediate family members of the deceased usually direct their anger to the spouse and
the children. Attempts to resist in most cases results in violence against them. Female children and relatives of the decease mostly receive such treatments from their male counterparts who believe that women should leave their father’s house, go marry, and stay in their husband’s house. Most patrimonial customary law traditions believe that females should not be around upon their father’s death to claim the property of the deceased (Ebi, 2011, p. 9).

In many instances, the victims of succession-based violence refrain from seeking legal redress in court due to fear of losing the minimal benefits they get from the male relatives of the deceased when they are in need. Also, the majority of these women are uneducated and are uninformed of the legal processes of submitting a petition. Others are unaware they can have a redress and protection if/when they take the matter to court. As such, there is a general belief that the successor of the deceased, who is in charge of managing the property on behalf of the family, will continue to provide for the family (Ebi, 2011, p. 9).

Sources of succession law in Cameroon. The law on succession to property in Cameroon consists of received English and French laws, Nigerian Law, customary law (including Muslim law, recognized as an adjunct to customary law), which are indigenous to the various ethnic groups.

The reception of English law. As pointed out above, Cameroon was administered by the British and French after World War I, in accordance to Article 9 of the League of Nations and Articles 4 and 5 of the UN Trusteeship Agreements. The agreements gave the Allied powers to introduce their systems of governance into their respective areas of influence.
The British decided to administer their territory as an integral part of Nigeria. Therefore, the laws that were applied in Nigeria were extended to British Cameroons by Proclamation No. 1 of 1916, pursuant to the Jurisdiction Act of 1890, which made English laws applicable in British foreign territories (Ebi 2011, p. 12). In this regard, Nigeria and British Cameroons shared the same court systems and laws until the attainment of independence in 1960. Currently the laws that were applicable in Nigeria prior to the date of independence are still applicable in Anglophone Cameroon. For example, the preamble to the Nigeria (Protectorate and Cameroons) Order in Council 1946 that replaced Cameroons under British Mandate Order 1932, provided that:

Whereas the intention has been expressed that, notwithstanding the termination of the existence of the League of Nations, the Cameroons shall continue to be administered in accordance with the obligations of the said Mandate until other arrangements have been agreed between the Mandatory Power and the United Nations…

Also, there was a constitutional reform in Nigeria in 1954 that caused the creation of a High Court in Southern Cameroon through the Southern Cameroons High Court Law of 1955, Section 11- providing that:

Subject to the provisions of any written law and in particular of this section and of sections, 10, 15, and 22 of the law:

1. The common law;
2. The doctrines of equity; and
3. The statutes of general application that were in force in England on the 1st day of January 1900 shall in so far as they relate to any matter with respect to which the
legislature of the Southern Cameroons is for the time being competent to make laws, be in force within the jurisdiction of the court.

*Intestacy rules in English law.* The statutory rules governing intestacy in Anglophone Cameroon were taken from English and Nigerian statutes. The Wills Act of 1837, Wills Amendment Act of 1852, and the Administration of Estates Act 1925, were the most important English Statutes on intestacy (Ebi 2011, p. 30). The Administration of Estates Act 1925 repealed and consolidated all prior legislations on intestacy; some of which put aside customary law. The Administration of Estates Act 1925 generally govern the administration of estates. Also, there was the Non-Contentious Probate Rules of 1954 that was repealed and replaced by the Non-Contentious Probate Rules of 1987 that govern the designation of personal representatives. Furthermore, there is the Supreme Court Act of 1981 that is applicable as far as the provisions dealing with probate are concerned. These are applied together with Administrator-General Ordinance, Cap 4 of the 1948 Laws of Nigeria, and Order 211 of the 1948 Laws of Nigeria and the Evidence Ordinance Cap 62 of the 1958 Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (Ebi, 2011, p. 30).

The status of the estate before it is distributed is governed by the Trust of Land and Appointment of Trustees Act 1996. The Inheritance (Provision for Family and Dependents) Act 1975 makes it possible for dependents of the deceased to apply for financial assistance provision from the estate that is reasonable for their sustenance. Other sources includes the Intestate Estates Act of 1952 that greatly expand the rights of the surviving spouse, and the Law Reform (Succession) Act 1995 that adds to the category of persons that are liable to apply for a financial provision that is reasonable
under the 1975 Act and also establishes twenty-eight days as the definite period of survivorship between commorient spouses.

Statutes such as the Legitimacy Act 1976, Adoption of Children Act 2002, and Family Law Reform Act 1987 and the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1973 can also be alluded to when dealing with matters involving the determination of succession rights of legitimated children, adopted children, and illegitimate children respectively, and in determining amounts of reasonable financial provision for a surviving spouse in application of the 1975 Act. The Fatal Accidents Act of 1976 is also called into since it complements the definition of “cohabitants” under the Law Reform (Succession) Act of 1995 (Ebi 2011, p. 30). Case Law drawn from England, Nigeria, Ghana, and Cameroon can also be alluded to when dealing with succession to property rights.

Courts with original jurisdiction to administer the English law of succession.
The Southern Cameroon High Court Law of 1955 did create a single High Court in the whole of Anglophone Cameroon with responsibilities to exercise both appellate and original jurisdiction as it was exercised in England (Ebi, 2011, p. 40). However, Section 16 (b) of the Judicial Organization Ordinance No. 72/4 of 26 August, 1972 removed the appellate jurisdiction and created High Courts in all the Administrative Divisions of Cameroon. Section 16(b) of the Judicial Organization Ordinance of 26 August, 1972 was amended by article 16(c) of Law No. 89/019 of 29 December, 1989; which states that: “The status of persons and especially to civil status marriage, divorce, filiation, adoption, and succession … subject to the legal provisions applicable to traditional courts as regards ratione personae jurisdiction”.

Law No. 89/019 of December, 1989 was subsequently amended by Section 18(1) of the Judicial Organization Law, No. 2006/015 of 19 December, 2006 that states that: “The High Court shall have jurisdiction … in civil matters to hear suits and proceedings relating to the status of persons and especially to civil status, marriage, divorce, filiation, adoption, and succession”.

The new provision removes or omits the one of the previous provisions in which the jurisdiction of the courts is “subject to the legal provisions applicable to traditional courts as regards ratione personae jurisdiction”. In Ebi’s view, this was a translocation of the French situation, in which the Tribunaux de Grand Instance were basically courts of original jurisdiction and established in administrative divisions (Ebi 2011, p. 40). Since the law is not retroactive, the latest amendment applies only to matters brought to court from January, 2007. In this connection, it can be said that the High Court has jurisdiction to entertain all matters of succession; except in cases for which the customary courts are competent as in cases where the deceased was married under customary law.

However, there have been cases where the High Court has entertained matters dealing with polygamous marriages and marriages that were contracted under customary law. For example, the case Christiana Etombi vs. Ndive Woka John (Suit No. CASWP/CC/09/2001-unreported) was held by the South West Court of Appeal. Whereas the High Court has exclusive jurisdiction to hear divorce matters dealing with monogamous marriages, it also has concurrent jurisdiction with customary courts to entertain divorce matters dealing with customary/polygamous marriages. Ebi (2011, p. 42) further states that “even with respect to customary marriages, the overall jurisdiction of the customary courts is subjected to the approval of the parties”.
Although the Judicial Organization Law No. 2006/015 of 29 December, 2006 omits the provision “subject to the legal provisions applicable to traditional courts as regards ratione personae jurisdiction”, the omission does not necessarily mean that the High Courts have been given jurisdiction to entertain matters reserved for the customary courts. This is especially so as the new judicial organization law refrained from defining the rationale jurisdiction of the High Courts, and does not abolish the customary courts that are still operating on the grounds of the laws that were put in place by the colonial masters. Now the assumption is that the High Court is competent to entertain matters concerning the general public, except in those cases that are subject to customary law. That is, the High Court is primarily competent to entertain matters between Cameroonians, who would normally have been subjected to customary law, if they contracted monogamous marriages or left wills in English form, and in all matters dealing with foreigners (Ebi, 2011, p. 43).

**Customary law.** Customary law was encouraged by the British colonial policy of indirect rule, as the British found out it was more convenient and beneficial to administer the colonies through the local chiefs and using traditional institutions (Ebi, 2011, p. 19). The term “customary law”, as applied in Anglophone Cameroon, includes indigenous laws as well as customs and Muslim law.

The concept “customary law” has been defined differently by various actors in the field. For example, the Cameroonian Supreme Court in *Dame Dada Balkissou v. Abdoul Karim Mohamed* (Arrêt No. 2/L du 10 Octobre, 1985 in Juridis info. No. 8, 1991, p. 54) defined customary law as: “manifestation of the Cameroonian genius in its diversity, excluding all religious and foreign influence”. (p. 54). Ngwafor (1993) also defines the
concept as “generally accepted usage in any given ethnic group” (pp. 78). Gluckman (1955) on his part defines customary law as:

A set of rules accepted by all normal members of the society as defining right and reasonable ways in which persons ought to behave in relation to each other and to things, including ways of obtaining protection for one’s rights (p. xv).

Obi (1966) defines customary law as “a rule (or body of rules) which the members of a given community recognize as binding on themselves, and which the courts will enforce if and when called upon to do so” (p. 7). Ebi (2011) on his part defines customary laws as “a set of long standing customs and usages of a given community, accepted by its normal members as regulating their individual conducts and interpersonal relationships, the breach of which ultimately results in sanctions by duly constituted organs” (p. 24). Finally, Section 2 of the Customary Courts Ordinance, cap 142 of the 1948 Laws of Nigeria, as amended by the Adaptation of Existing Laws Order 1963, defines customary law as:

A rule or body of rules regulating rights and imposing corrective duties, being a rule or body of rules which obtains and is fortified by established usage and which is appropriate and applicable to any particular cause, matter, dispute, issue, or question.

Whereas these definitions defer in the way they are coined, they all look at customs as norms, or a group of norms that the indigenes generally accept as morally upright and binding upon them, in violation of which can result in consequences. Customs become binding because the normal indigenes generally give their consent to the norm as binding to all of them. It is not imposed on them, but they seem to openly
and freely accept to respect and be bound by the norm or norms. To Ebi (2011), the term “normal indigenes” refers only to those individuals that have adequate knowledge of the native laws and customs of the community in question. That is, “they are the ones whose evidence on particular points of customary law would be admissible in a court of law” (pp. 20-21). That excludes the members without adequate knowledge as well as foreigners that might know or presume to know the rules and respect them. However, Ebi adds that consent alone is not good enough to make a custom a law. There must be a general conviction by members of the community that a rule is observed because it is obligatory and that those who fail to respect the rule should expect to receive some form of punishment. It is believed that most customary rules are said to have been in existence from time immemorial and handed over from generation to generation. This view expresses essentialism. In the pre-colonial era in almost all the ethnic groups of the present day Cameroon, the family council or the chief-in-council was responsible for enforcing the rules of succession depending on the nature of the dispute (Ebi, 2011, p. 22).

Currently in Anglophone Cameroon, a custom that is generally accepted as law, that is not repugnant to natural justice, equity, and good conscience is enforced by the courts of law in cases dealing with succession to property rights.

**Intestacy in common law.** Most of the ethnic groups in Cameroon are patrilineal, and the common future with them is the honor and respect of men who are seen as the source and originator of all property. It is widely held that property must be preserved in the family to ensure future generations benefit from it and keep honoring the life of the person that originally acquired the property. To allow women to inherit is also believed
could conflict with the goal, since upon marriage, women usually shift their allegiance to the husband as well as the husband’s family (Ebi, 2011, p. 88).

However, some ethnic groups including the Bakundu Balue in the South-West Region and the Aghem, Buh and Kom in the North-West Region practice the matrilineal system of succession whereby the woman is honored and allowed to inherit property for reasons particular to the respective ethnic groups. In the matrilineal system, when a person dies intestate, his property is not transferred to his paternal family and his children but to his maternal family. In the Bolue ethnic group of the South-West Region, for example, the classic pattern is followed whereby the closest maternal relative succeeds the deceased. In the Mbonge ethnic group, priority is given to the maternal nieces of the deceased. In the North-West Region, ethnic groups that practice the matrilineal system however display a system of succession that is similar to the patrilineal systems. Howard J.A (1972) calls it “patrilineal tribes with matrilineal emphasis.” (p. 16).

**Courts with original jurisdiction to administer customary law of succession**

*The High Court.* Customary law is administered both in customary and modern courts in Cameroon. Section 27(2) of the Southern Cameroons High Court Law of 1955 mandates the High Court to administer customary law in matters relating to succession in Anglophone Cameroon. The provision empowers the High Court to apply:

Such native law and custom as shall be deemed applicable in causes and matters where the parties thereto are natives and also in causes and matters between natives and non-natives where it may appear to the courts that substantial injustice would be done to either party by a strict adherence to the rules of English law.
The term native was defined by Section 3 of the Interpretation Ordinance (Colony and Protectorate), and Chapter 94 of the 1948 Laws of Nigeria as consisting of a native of Nigeria (Cameroon) and a native foreigner. A native of Cameroon is:

Any person whose parents were members of a tribe indigenous to Cameroon and the descendants of such person, including any person one of whose parents were members of a tribe indigenous to Cameroon and the descendants of such persons, including any person one of whose parents was a member of such a tribe.

“Native foreigner” consists of “any person (not being a native of Cameroon) whose parents were members of a tribe or tribes indigenous to some part of Africa and descendants of such persons, and shall include any person one of whose parents was a member of such a tribe (Ebi 2011, p. 62). It can be gathered then that any person whose ancestors once practiced indigenous system can be subjected to customary law.

Rules governing the application of customary law at the High Court. As aforementioned, Section 27(1) of the Southern Cameroons High Court Law of 1955 governs the application of customary law in the High Court and Section 18(1) (a) of the Native Courts Ordinance, Cap 142 of the 1948 Laws of Nigeria governs its application in Anglophone Cameroon. The ordinary courts of law are required to apply only the rules of customary law that are not repugnant to natural justice, equity, and good conscience.

Section 27(1) of the 1955 Law provides:

The High Court shall observe, and enforce the observance of every native law and custom which is neither repugnant to natural justice, equity, and good conscience, nor incompatible with any written law for the time being in force, and nothing in this law shall deprive any person of the benefit of any such native law or custom.
Section 18 (1) (a) of the Customary Courts Ordinance 1948 also states that:

Subject to the provisions of this law a customary court shall administer the native law and custom prevailing in the area of the jurisdiction of the court or binding between parties, such as it is not repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience nor incompatible directly or by natural implication with any written law for the time being in force.

**Customary courts.** In Cameroon, customary courts includes the ordinary customary courts that administer native laws and customs and Alkali courts that administer Muslim law (Ebi, 2011, p. 91). While the first Alkali Court was established in Ndop in 1946 by the Alkali of Yola (Nigeria), the Native Courts Ordinance Cap 142 of the 1948 Laws of Nigeria was established in 1950. The ordinance did not invalidate the decisions of the Alkali court, but Section 2 of the Validation of Acts Law 1960 validated previous decisions of the Alkali Court stating that for previous acts of the court established by the Alkali of Yola:

Anything which had been done by an Alkali’s Court (which expressly means an Alkali acting with or without assessors) in Southern Cameroons before the commencement of this law in purported exercise of any such powers as are conferred on Native Courts by the Native Courts Ordinance and which would have been lawfully done if the Alkali’s Court had been a Native Court lawfully established under the Native Courts Ordinance shall be deemed to have been lawfully, validly and effectively done.

The Alkali Courts apply Muslim law which has been classified as native law. By 2011, there were seven other Alkali Courts in existence in the North-West Region and the
Alkali of Ndop serves as the Chief of Alkali. The Alkali of Ndop goes to the South-West Region periodically on court sessions (assizes) because there is no Alkali Court in the South-West Region. On the other hand, Muslims litigants in the South-West Region have a discretion of taking their cases to the customary court of the area in which they reside, or the local Muslim Chief or Ardo (in the Bororo ethnic group) who attempts to reconcile the parties. In situations where the Muslim Chief fails, the case is transmitted to the Alkali Chief for hearing during the Alkali assizes (Ebi, 2011, p. 92).

Previously placed under the Ministry of Territorial Administration, the Alkali Courts were attached to the Ministry of Justice by Law No. 79-4 of 29 June, 1979 and it made the Alkali Courts part of the main stream courts in Cameroon alongside the Magistrate’s and High Courts. Presently, the composition of the courts is made up of people that are not formally trained in the law. With the exception of the Clark of the Court, the members are not required to have any formal education or training (Ebi, 2011, p. 62). Members of the court are appointed by recommendation from the Chief or Fon, and based on the knowledge that the appointee has of customary or Muslim law (Ebi, 2011, p. 62).

During the course of my research, I realized that only one case on Succession to Property disputes (Enochong vs. Enochong) was commenced and decided by the High Court of Mamfe. Most of the cases were heard and judged by the customary courts in the respective divisions. Since the customary courts are guided by the custom of the people that are not repugnant to natural justice, equity, and good conscience (repugnancy test), I did not to pay a lot of attention to it since I will be examining the Ekpe process of conflict resolution.
The Ekpe Society

In this section, I will present the findings based on archival documents related to the Ekpe society.

**Origin of the Ekpe society.** The Ekpe institution is an ancient institution that existed during the pre-colonial period, and known to exist in many communities in West and Central Africa. Ekpe incorporates art forms and performance styles of dance, music, and esoteric knowledge. Despite the fact that Ekpe has been existing for centuries now, the origin of the institution remains mysterious. While Miller and Ojong (2012) allege that Ekpe was invented by communities inhabiting the forest region of West and Central Africa, Leib and Romano (1984) believe that the Ekpe institution originated in the Ejagham heartland of the middle Region.

However, The Manyu Ekpe Supreme Council hold the view that the Ekpe institution originated from among the Orokos and the Balondos in Ndian Division, South West Region of Cameroon. Because of the successes Ekpe recorded in governance, conflict resolution, and social activities, the Ekpe institution was embraced by the riverine villages that share boundaries with Nigeria (Cross River state), the Ejaghams and the Bayangs in Manyu Division of Cameroon (The Ekpe Supreme Council, 2012).

The Ekpe culture was transferred from Ekpe lodges (houses) in Ndian villages and neighboring Ejagham speaking villages that share borders with Ndian Division to the Cross River State of Nigeria. The Manyu Ekpe Supreme Council identifies the villages (lodges) in Ndian Division from which Ekpe was transferred as “Echoko, Ayuikol Berva and Eshkutan” (2012, p. 9). During the transatlantic slave trade era, slaves taken from the region transferred the Ekpe culture to the Latin American countries of Brazil, Cuba, and
Surinam, where traces of the institution is known to have prevailed (Miller & Ojong, 2012).

In Manyu Division, the Ejaghams were the first to buy the Ekpe institution, from where it was later adopted by the Bayang speaking people in Mamfe Central and Upper Bayang Sub-Divisions. Thereafter, the Anyang and Boki speaking villages in Akwaya Sub-Division also embraced the institution (Miller & Ojong, 2012). The Ekpe institution was later acquired by the Bangwas and the Grassland people of the North West Region. The Ekpe institution functioned as the government of in the community, in resolving disputes, educating the young males in the culture and preparing them to take on the activities of their fathers upon their death.

**Ekpe titles.** These are the main titles of the Ekpe society.

**Ekpe.** Ekpe is generally referred to as the tiger in the various communities that have the institution. For example, in Ndian Division, the Balondos call it Nyamkpe and the Orokos Nyiamkpe. In the Cross Rivers state in Nigeria, the Ejaghams and the Efiks call it Ekpe. The Ejaghams and Bayang speaking villages of Manyu Division call it Mgbe/Nyamkpe. Irrespective of the name, the Ekpe association performs the same functions in the respective communities.

**Sessekou/Iyamba/Tata.** The Sessekou is the highest rank in the Ekpe house. He is the chief in an Ekpe house and is consulted in making final decisions. Also, he must first be served food and drinks before any other member in the house. The Sessekou sits down while making a speech in the Ekpe house or wherever Ekpe is sitting in session.

**Osongoribu/Etobetobe Ntui.** The Osongoribu as called by the Ejaghams, or Etobetobe Ntui as called by the Bayangs, is the second in command. He is the person that
takes over the title of Sessekou upon his death in an Ekpe house. The Osongoribu is also permitted to talk in an Ekpe gathering while sitting down. He can also be elected from the ranks and families that jointly bought the Ekpe house. He is permitted to talk or act while sitting. Should a Sessekou become incapacitated, the Osongodibo/Etobetobe Ntui assumes the position as head and manages the Ekpe house until the death of the Sessekou (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).

**Decaba.** The Decaba is the mouth piece of Ekpe. The Decabas run special errands and are the discipline masters. To be considered for the title of Decaba, the applicant must be much schooled in Ekpe matters. He acts as the accepted/agreed voice of the Ekpe house. Decabas also share food and drinks in an Ekpe gathering and they are responsible for visiting disputed pieces of farm lands, give and receive Ekpe summons, runs special Ekpe (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).

**Okini Dibou.** He is the forerunner. His duties include announcing the arrival of Ekpe, hands out Ekpe summons, and makes sure that order is maintained during Ekpe sessions. In general, the Okini is the errands man. He is accompanied by the Decaba whenever he runs errands (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).

**Ekpe symbols.** The following are the main symbols of the Ekpe society.

*The Okat (Ekat).* The Okat is a special cloth (curtain) that is used to control entry into the area where the Ekpe (leopard) roars. The name of the confinement differs with the respective communities. Only members of the lodges are allowed to enter their respective area where Ekpe roars (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).
Etem Emgbe. The Etem Emgbe is the forest from which the leopard is tamed, while the Ejaghams call the restrictive area Etem Emgbe, the Bayangs call it Ebue Mgbe, and the Efiks and Calabarians of Nigeria call it Ekot Ekpe (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).

Ascension to Ekpe titles. A person can only ascend to the rank of Sessekou when he has served in the following capacities: from a Decaba to the ordinary Mmu Membo mgbe, to Osongoribo, and finally Sessekou. No individual is allowed to skip any of the ranks before becoming a Sessekou. The only exception is when a person buys his own Ekpe. However, even in those cases, he must be initiated into the various stages, in which he has to cook the required food for the various positions. The reason being that he person is required to evoke all the respective stages during greetings (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).

A Sessekou may however decide to transfer the title to his son or brother while still alive; thereby depriving the Osongoribo/ Etobetobe Ntui of the right to inherit the Sessekou title. In such situations, the said Sessekou relinquishes his title of Sessekou (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).

The Ekpe attire. The Ekpe attire includes a white long-sleeved shirt for all members, a loin cloth, and a cap for initiated members who have acquired the voice to clap their hands. Depending on their rank in the Ekpe society, a person claps standing (for ordinary members) or sitting (those from the Ntu Mgbe and above).

A towel. A towel is used by all the initiated Ekpe members. However, while the Sessekous and Iyambas hang their towels on their left shoulder from the back, all other members hang their towels around their neck. The positioning of the towel distinguishes
a Seskekou from all other Ekpe members in an Ekpe gathering as well as other public events where members of the Ekpe society are gathered (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).

**The staff.** The staff serves as an instrument of authority. A person attains the rank of handling a staff only after he has been initiated into the rank of clapping hands and acquiring the voice to call attention during an Ekpe sitting. The person must have studied the Ekpe and passed a test by answering questions that Ekpe puts to him in the open (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).

**Some paraphernalia of the Ekpe.** The following are other important elements of Ekpe.

**The drum.** The drum is used to call attention. In Ekpe, many drums are played and each in a different style to bring out the melody. Ekpe also uses the drum to communicate to the members. The various manner in which the drum is beaten informs the Ekpe members of the reasons they are being rallied. These may include but not limited to social gathering, to settle a dispute, or death of a member (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).

**The tortoise.** Ekpe uses the shell of a tortoise as a drum to send messages that only Ekpe members understand.

**The masquerade.** There are three different Ekpe masquerades.

**The Emma Nyamkpe.** This masquerade is usually displayed during death celebrations or other occasion which Ekpe is invited to animate.

**The Ebhong.** This is a masquerade that is used only on solemn occasions like death celebration of a member.
The Okpwi Mgbe/Achui Mgbe/Ekpae Mgbe. The Okpwi Mgbe also known as the Achui Mgbe and the Ekpae Mgbe is regarded as the elephant that comes from the forest. It comes out when a member is schooled and initiated into the rank of Sessekou. During the occasion, members from other Ekpe houses of the same lodge are allowed to partake. The Okpwi Mgbe can also come out when an Ekpe member has a huge fellowship, and many of those initiated have never been schooled in the Ekpe secrets. In such situations, members of other Ekpe houses belonging to the same lodge are also invited to register and participate in the occasion. The Okpwi Mgbe celebration can last from one to two weeks, period in which both the young and old members are schooled into Ekpe language and writings (sign language). This is considered the most important period in the Ekpe society. Also, during the Okpwi Mgbe, the newly initiated young people are educated into the discipline required of members. Usually, the life style of the newly initiated changes after the occasion (Mgbe Manyu Handbook).

Ekpe ascension ladder. Figure 6.2 illustrates the steps Ekpe members has to follow to ascend.
Membership into Ekpe society and organization. Membership and advancement into Ekpe is purchased by means of initiation fees and the cooking of Ekpe food. Various stages or ranks into the association can be attained through acquisition. However, in most cases to acquire a particular grade, it must first be ascribed to the individual by tradition. In that vein, nobody can promote himself beyond general membership, unless he is entitled to reach the grade by right of birth (Lieb & Romano, 1984, p. 50).

Lieb, & Romano (1984) mention four grades in the Ekpe society including: Ebyongbe, Eyomngbe, Achingbe, and Ayingbe. The ruling council of chiefs, Ebyongbe,
is made up of the senior members of the patrilineages and is headed by a head priest called Iyamba (p. 50). Usually, the eldest son inherits the rank of Ebyongbe as a birthright, while the rank of Iyamba rotates among the original families. The Eyomngbe also enjoys the privilege as chief political and judicial officer (Lieb & Romano, 1984, p. 50).

Those who have attained the Eyomngbe rank can "speak with the Ekpe voice"; that is, they are given or thought the wisdom to interpret the codes of the leopard, understand the language of the leopard, and to communicate with the spirit of their Ebyongbe elders during the initiation process. That makes it easy for them to communicate with the leopard spirit. The Eyomngbe members are given the privilege to enter the Ekpe lodge with their shoes on and have special places to sit in the lodge, portraying their status in the society (Lieb & Romano, 1984, pp. 50-51). The rank that follows the Eyomngbe is called Achingbe. The Achingbe rank members are full members of the Ekpe society that serve as messengers.

Finally, the Ayingbe is the lowest rank and it includes young men from 18 years old. Men of this rank are considered novices and have very little privilege. However, they fully participate in Ekpe affairs (Lieb & Romano, 1984, p. 51).

Behrendt et al (2010) states that, one of the earliest observations of Ekpe society were recorded by Holman (1828) and Waddell (1846), wherein Holman observed five grades or steps of Ekpe with the fifth and highest rank being Yampai in the Old Calabar area. In order to rise to the rank of Yampai, the person must first purchase and be admitted into the other four lower ranks of “Abungo”, “Aboko”, “Makaira”, and “Bakimboko” (p. 33). This record was however contrasted by Waddell who found out that
Ekpe was made up of ten branches of various degrees of stages and powers. Some stages were so low that young boys and slaves were allowed to purchase it and be initiated into the society, while others were so high that only “freemen from the family of the founders of the community and of higher rank could be allowed to purchase them” (Behrendt et al, 2010, p. 33).

It is alleged that Ekpe leaders increased the number of steps in the ranks of Ekpe from five to ten so as to calm the social tensions caused by traders and those who made money in the trade that sprang up with the end of slavery. By lowering the requirements, many slaves were initiated into the society, but the greater numbers of high ranks distinguished between established lineage and wealth from those that acquired high ranks as a result of wealth. For example, Nkamkpe is a top rank that was reserved only for free and wealthy men from the old families that controlled Ekpe positions and offices of obong and king Calabar (Behrendt et al, 2010, p. 33).

As of now, the existing literature seems to be uncertain about the exact number of stages or ranks in the society. Lieb and Romano (1984) attribute that to the secret nature of the society and circumstantial factors. It is my intention to fill in that gap in this study.

**Role of Ekpe in governance and conflict resolution.** The Ekpe society played an important role in the social and political organization of the community in the pre-colonial era. Ekpe was in charge of governance in the community. It made very important decisions and enforced traditional laws. Ekpe performed executive, legislative, and judicial functions in the respective communities in which Ekpe operated. Those who caused disorder in the community were punished by the members of Ekpe who served as agents; that way, Ekpe ensured that the customs and authority of elders of the community
were upheld. In the first entry of the diary of Antera Duke (January 18, 1785), it was recorded that men in Ekpe, including himself, adjudicated a dispute between Egbo Young Ofiong and Little Otto, and fined each man (Behrendt et al, 2010, p. 14).

Ekpe regulated the lives of members of the community in many ways including debt collection, keeping the community clean, and other activities that would improve the livelihood of all in the community. As stated by Nwaka (1978) “Ideas of loyalty to each other and of discipline were inculcated and social cohesion maintained” (p.188). Behrendt et al (2010) corroborates this when they say that many of the members initiated into Ekpe in February 1787 worked as “runners” who helped in enforcing the laws for the interest of the entire community (p. 34).

In the Old Calaber, Ekpe operated as a governing council in resolving disputes between the various members of the Efik communities as well as non Efiks, including Europeans. Decisions made by Ekpe were considered legal and binding to all. The Ekpe society could seize the property of those who refused to pay Ekpe fines as bailiffs do in recent times (Behrendt et al, 2010, p. 34). In conclusion, it can be seen that Mgbe was and perhaps is still an exclusively male society that passed and enforced laws governing the entire community. Ekpe assisted in resolving disputes and tensions between individuals and families and helped in creating a stable business environment both for locals as well as overseas traders (Behrendt et al, 2010, p. 35).

**Role of Ekpe in economic development.** The Ekpe society also performed economic functions. In the course of their development, Ekpe served as an agency for trade. With the help of Ekpe, thieves, debtors, and serious offenders were often punished.
They also constituted a form of credit institution in which the older members depended on income via the fees of new members (Nwaka, 1978, p. 188).

With the development of the Old Calabar Township into an important market for the transatlantic slave trade by the eighteenth century, the Efiks that were then residents of the area also extended their control into the Cross River Region. With the increase in the slave trade, the Efik modified the structure of their society and adopted Ekpe institutions, which gave them a “genuinely African capitalist institution of an elementary kind” (Latham, 1973, p. 28).

As a result of the incorporation of Ekpe, European slave traders started giving credit facilities to Efik slave-trading houses during the 1760s. This was because the European traders were able to rely on the sanctions of Ekpe in situations where an Efik trader defaulted on their debts. The reliance on Ekpe to facilitate trade made the Ekpe institution spread rapidly to other parts (Ruel, 1969, pp. 250-58).

The ability of Ekpe to force Efik merchants to pay debts greatly increased the confidence of European traders and made it possible for them to give credit, which also reduced the cost of credit. In addition, ship captains were scared of Ekpe fines being levied on them, since such fines could bar them from trading in the area until the dispute was settled (Latham, 1973).

**Ekpe and gender.** The Ekpe institution represented the entire community and its decisions were expected to be respected by all in the community. Notwithstanding, the institution was and still is a male dominated society. Ekpe society as per tradition initiates the male children only. Usually, the first son is expected to take the title and position his father held in the community upon the latter is dead (Miller & Ojong, 2012, p. 3).
However, there are some variances in the way women are received in the institution. For example, in the Cross River Region - among the Êfic, Êfüü, Eket, Ibiobio, Qua-Ejagham, and Úrúán - women were banned completely from participating in Ekpe activities.

Whatever the case, it was possible to allow the daughters of a chief in Ekpe to be initiated into the society. Such initiation was merely honorary, as they could only be allowed to enter the Ekpe lodge and associate with men freely without being fined. In practice, this act granted them access to the Ekpe playground. That is, the patio of an Ekpe lodge and association with its members without fear of intimidation. In the upper Cross River regions of Ikom, Etung and Okuni, only very old women past menopause were welcome inside the Ekpe lodge to take part in the entertainment activities (Miller & Ojong, 2012, p. 3)

On the other hand, women in the Northern Cross River regions of Ogoja, Boki, and Obanliku have a greater level of participation in Ekpe activities inside the Ekpe lodge. Among the Upper Bayangs and in the Bangwa area in Cameroon, every Ekpe chief “Mfor Mbge” assigns one of his daughters to serve as a female member ‘Manyang Arong,’ who assists the father in the Ekpe lodge (Miller & Ojong, 2012, p. 3). However, there are conflicting reports about that.

Findings from Observation

This section presents the results that derived from the observations of the Ekpe model made for this study. Table 6.4 presents a summary of them.
Table 5

_Ekpe Model Cases Observed_

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case No.</th>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Venue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ojong Peter vs. the People of Mbakang Village</td>
<td>Mamfe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Mfia Nchang Ekpe vs. Tabe Quinta Egbe</td>
<td>Eyumajoock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Ekpe Nchang vs. Tanyi Cosmas Mbi</td>
<td>Mamfe</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* There were another three cases, but they were omitted to preserve the identity of the participants.

**Arrival in Cameroon.** I arrived Cameroon on February 20th 2015, and drove to Buea, the Capital of the South West Region on February 21st to begin distributing my surveys. A week later, I went to Yaounde the Capital to meet with the Elites from Manyu, to brief them on my research and to request permission to distribute questionnaires to Manyu indigenes in Yaounde during their monthly meeting that was to hold on March 1st, 2015. Their response was very positive and my request was granted unanimously approved. On the said meeting date, I distributed surveys myself during the Manyu Elements Cultural Association (MECA) Yaounde meeting. I also had conversations with some Manyu elites and I requested to have qualitative interview with some about the Ekpe (Nbghe) indigenous process of conflict resolution, which they accepted and a date was scheduled for the event. Two days later, I left Yaounde for Manyu Division via the North West Region by public transport.

**Arrival in Mamfe Town.** I arrived the Mamfe motor park situated at the out sketch of Mamfe (mile two) at about 3:30 pm. But I could not find a taxi to take me to the town. Upon enquiry, I was informed by a bystander that there are no taxis nor buses in Mamfe Town, and that the only means of public transportation were motor bikes (locally called bend-skin). Irrespective of the fact that I was concerned of safety, because the bikers and their passengers did not have helmets on, I had to assimilate and use the motor
bike. I took a bike to my uncle’s house in Mamfe Town (mile one), which happened to be just over a mile away from the park. After settling down, I asked neighbors and old friends about the best possible ways to distribute surveys in Mamfe Town. An old friend told me that going to meetings would be the most effective and less strenuous way to distribute surveys because the meeting venues bring together people of all walks of life and ages. I also enquired about the venue of the radio station and the cost of making a radio announcement. Thereafter, I decided to take a tour of the town of Mamfe.

**Description of Mamfe Town.** Mamfe is the capital of the Manyu Division and is located around its center. Many streams and rivers run across Mamfe and its main river - the Cross River- runs into Nigeria. The Badi River (locally called Doctor Mamfe) is at the entrance of the town of Mamfe. It empties into the Cross River and a suspended bridge has been constructed to access the town. At the entrance of the city center, there is a roundabout and a couple of storied building houses housing some government offices. The road to the left of the roundabout leads to the once Government Residential Area (GRA), which houses most government employees including the Senior Divisional Officer for Manyu and the Divisional Officer for Mamfe Central. However, I was informed that most of the government plots have been sold to individuals who have now constructed private houses. None the less, the area is still called GRA. To the left of the roundabout, it is the road going to Eyumojock Sub-Division and the boarder with Nigeria (Ekok and Nfum), which happens to be just about 45 miles away. The road across the entrance to Mamfe leads to the city center that houses stores, the main market, and some residential areas. The road also leads to Egbekow village, the Cross River, and a bridge that crosses the Cross River to Akwaya Sub-Division.
The Senior Divisional Officers Officer’s office is situated at the roundabout, to the left of the entrance of Mamfe and to the left of the road leading to Eyumojock Sub-Division. A police post is also situated close to the Senior Divisional Officer’s office. The Mamfe Post Office is situated at the right side of the entrance and to the right of the entrance to GRA. The Legal Department and the Taxation and Finance Divisional Delegation offices are each located at the right to the entrance of the city center and to the left of the road leading to the GRA. In front of the post office, there is a large pillar painted in the colors of the flag of Cameroon (green, red, and yellow) and the date of Cameroon’s independence is visibly printed on the pillar. At the circle of the roundabout, there is a carved lion, which also happens to be the official symbol of Cameroon.

Observation of Ekpe in Mamfe and Eyumojock Towns. I met with the Paramount Chief of Mamfe Town and informed him of my presence and desire to observe the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. The Paramount Chief approved and directed me to consult the Secretary General of Mgbe Manyu to schedule an appointment to observe the process of Ekpe conflict resolution. I called the Secretary General of Ekpe Mamfe Town and informed him of my research studies and wish to observe the Ekpe process of conflict resolution in Mamfe. He informed me that the Ekpe process of conflict resolution takes place on Saturdays and requested that I came on March 7th, 2015 at 10:00 am, at the Palace of the Paramount Chief of Mamfe. That palace is located at Small Mamfe, (a quarter in Mamfe, that is the village of the original indigenes of Mamfe). It is located just about 100 meters from the Mamfe Central Market, on the way to Egbekow Village and Egbekow beach.
Description of the Ekpe conflict resolution hall. The Ekpe hall is a large room in a building located in the compound of the late father to the Paramount Chief of Mamfe. The building is painted blue, with brown at the bottom. To get into the hall, one has to climb a few couple of steps, up to a large veranda. A large door leads to the entrance of the hall, which is located at the middle. There are also two double windows on each side of the entrance door. I arrived at the venue at exactly 9:50 am and met a couple of people (most of them men) standing outside of the hall. They were all dressed in traditional Manyu outfit.

On climbing the steps, I greeted the men and asked if I could talk to the Secretary General of Ekpe Manyu who was to serve as my gate keeper. I was told that the Secretary General was still to come and that I should hold on for a little while. Standing outside the hall, in the veranda, I could see a lot of people seated in the hall. They were all dressed in traditional regalia, and discussing among themselves. A man of about 50 years old, wearing only a white inner wear -a loincloth tired around his waist, was standing on the veranda. He held a stick, carved in an “N” shape around the middle, in his hands, and hung a woven brown bag over his neck that stretched to his side. I could see the horns of some animals attached to the bag. He wore a red and white woven hat on his head. I also saw a small fresh tree branch with green leaves hung on the entrance facing downwards. Not knowing what to do, I decided to wait outside for the arrival of the Secretary General. He arrived at about 10:15 am and the man with the “N shaped walking stick shouted some words in a dialect, probably to announce the presence of the Secretary General. He nodded in approval, went into the hall, and sat on a special table to the left. From where he was sitting, I could see him from the window where I was standing. He
was also dressed in the traditional regalia of the Manyu people, and hung a towel over his left shoulder. As he entered, those sitting in the crowd rose to their feet, assumable in respect of his presence. He sat down on a seat which seemed to have been reserved for him, opened a bag which he was carrying on his hand, took out some files and placed them on the table.

The Secretary General sat at a table on the left to the entrance of the Ekpe Hall, directly facing the door where three men were sitting. Later on, I found out that the President of Mgbe Manyu sits on one of the chairs, while the most senior Sessekous present sit on the other two chairs. On the left of the three chairs, there was a special traditional chair. A portrait of the Paramount Chief of Mamfe was placed on the chair. On enquiry, I was told the chair was reserved for the Paramount Chief only, and that no other person is permitted to sit on the chair. I was also told that the chair symbolized his presence in the hall. Other Ekpe members sat across the wall. They all were dressed in traditional regalia, and had a towel hung on their shoulder or across their necks. (I had a feeling these people were either judges or members of the jury). Facing them, there were two empty chairs that I figured were kept for the parties of the dispute. Other people sat on the chairs that were arranged in the room and those, that could not find seats inside, had to either sit or stand outside. I asked a member to inform the Secretary General that I was around, and he immediately asked me to come inside the hall. As I entered the hall, I was asked to sit on a special seat that I presumed had been reserved for me. I was also given a second chair to place my tape recorder, note pad, computer, and my bag.
As I sat down, I observed that the walls in the building were painted in blue and
were decorated with skins and horns of various animals, traditional drums, and swords of
indigenous warriors. I could also see some indigenously decorated bags, decorated
calabash, and the flags of Cameroon hung on the wall. The crowd became silent and the
Secretary started with a speech in which he apologized for coming late. He also
announced that in their midst was a researcher who wanted to observe the Ekpe process
of conflict resolution and that he would give the floor to the researcher to tell the Ekpe
court who he was and why he had come there. Thereafter, I was called to address the
Ekpe council. I stood up, introduced myself by name, where I come from originally,
where I am presently based, where and what I was studying, and why I wanted to observe
the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. I also informed them of their rights to refuse me
from observing and that they had the right to ask me to leave at any time during the
course of their observation if they became uncomfortable of me being there.
Upon finishing with my introduction, a member took the floor and asked if I was an initiated member of Ekpe, which I accepted. I then told them the Ekpe house to which I belong and the family I come from. Thereafter, he said, coming originally from Manyu and being a member of Ekpe, I was supposed to dress in traditional outfit before coming to the Ekpe court, especially for the fact that I was a member of Ekpe. Another member rose up, clap his hands, and requested that I was excused because I was coming from out of the country and might not have been aware that members were supposed to dress in traditional attire. There was a unanimous acceptance that I observed the Ekpe process of conflict resolution.

Figure 8. The Ekpe Lodge at the Paramount Chief’s Compound, Mamfe Town

Observation in Eyumoject Town. Eyumoject is a smaller town where people seem to know everybody. Upon arrival in Eyumoject, I asked a relative to tell of the Sessekou and later on he took me to his residence. On arrival at the residence of the
Sessekou, he welcomed us and offered to buy us drinks and I requested the locally brewed palm wine. In the course of the entertainment, I introduced the reason of my visit and requested permission to observe the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. He accepted and told me of the day and venue.

On the appointed day, I arrived on time and realized all the members were expecting me already. The Ekpe cases were judged at the Ekpe hall located in the center of the town. The hall was also decorated with skins of animals, a drum, some benches, a table, and the Ekpe signs. Upon arrival at Ekpe hall, I was introduced by the Sessekou whom I visited. However, some members were a little hesitant when I told them they were supposed to sign a consent form to acknowledge their approval of my observation. Some felt that I might use it against them sometime in the future. The parties I had to observe and the judges all signed the consent forms before the process began. I did guarantee them that their names would not be revealed and then informed them, so as to protect them, they could use their thumbs and ink, in case they thought that their signatures could reveal their identity. The session began with a recap of what had happened during the last Ekpe meeting. Thereafter, cases that were adjunct to come up were called.

*Case one: Ojong Peter vs. the People of Mbakang Village.* The first case was a land dispute between people of the same family. The case was once tried by the Ekpe of Mbakang and the appellant decided to appeal to the Ekpe Supreme Council of Mamfe Town. The case was about a young man that had contracted to lease a coca farm for a period of time, but had refused to pay the money he was supposed to pay as agreed by the contract. The people were pleading that Ekpe should put an injunction in the farm, so the
man should not enter the farm unless he paid the money he had agreed to pay. The man was given time to pay the money. The man had paid 400,000 francs CFA and promised to pay the balance of 900,000 francs CFA. However, the family failed to brief Ekpe Manyu of the amount they had been paid. The accused refused to pay the balance and when he was asked to pay continuously, he (the accused) decided to take the matter to the State Counsel’s office (known as State Prosecutor in the United States). The appellant said that, during the investigations, the man accepted he had erred and the State Counsel did order him to pay the balance within six months or risk being locked up. The man had accepted that he would pay in installments, but was yet to make a payment.

The Ekpe Supreme Council had asked the accused to pay Ekpe’s summons fee of 7,000 francs CFA and a fine of 60 bottles of beer (equivalent of 50,000 francs CFA), and the balance of the 900,000 francs he had contracted to pay. The man did fail to pay the balance. Since they did not know what else to do, they had decided to come back to Ekpe Manyu with the case and pleaded that Ekpe should make the accused pay. Taking into account that the Legal Department deals only with criminal matters and not with breach of contract cases, I think these people did not understand the legal procedure and, as a result, were lost as to how to resolve the issue. This case also brought to light the conflicts of law between the indigenous system and the legal system in Manyu Division and Cameroon as a whole.

Ekpe court was not happy about the fact that the case had been first brought to them and later the parties had decided to take the case to the Legal Department even though they had succeeded to make the accused pay part of the money, and despite the fact that Ekpe had asked the parties to brief Ekpe of the outcome. Ekpe was not also
happy that the appellants consumed the 60 bottles the accused had paid as fine without informing/bringing the fine to them. (My observation: The appellant brought 20 bottles of the 60 bottles to present to Ekpe as their entitlement, as required by tradition).

Ekpe Manyu decided that since the matter was now at the Legal Department, the parties should come and close the case file by paying the normal fee they were supposed to pay within sixteen (16) days (the 21st of March) so Ekpe should not call the matter going forward. The appellant confessed that the judgment that Ekpe passed was the same as the State Counsel passed, but lamented that the accused had not complied with the judgment and that the only money the accused paid (400,000 francs) was paid by the orders of Ekpe and that the pressure from the State Counsel did not yield results. The Secretary General lamented the fact that Ekpe Manyu is being trampled on by Manyu people. He used the fact that Ekpe was able to collect 400,000 francs, but since Ekpe did not have a police or gendarme, the people belittled Ekpe. He advised/hoped that the case serve as an example for those underrating the indigenous institutions of conflict resolution.

My judgment was that the people decided to go to the State Council because they knew they had police power and could press the accused to pay the money by locking them up in jail. In another case which I witnessed, the State Counsel jailed a man for breach of contract for a couple of days and the person, out of pressure of sitting in jail for a long time, complied with the wishes of the appellant before he was released from jail.

I observed that the appellant was a Sessekou (senior member of Ekpe/elder) and was told to sit down where other Sessekous were sitting, and not in the witness/accused chair. This shows the respect that Ekpe has for elders in the society. However, in their
judgment, they do not or are not supposed to favor anybody irrespective of their rank in the society.

All people present were advised that the society is called Mgbe in all of Manyu Division and that it is the Efiks in Cross River of Nigeria that call it Ekpe. All were encouraged to refrain from referring to the society as Ekpe. Despite that advice, I observed that many people from time to time still called it Ekpe.

Case two: Mfia Nchang Ekpe vs. Tabe Quinta Egbe. The appellant was not present, but sent a man to represent her and a letter to present to Ekpe Manyu. The representative was asked to bring cola nut, snuff, and a crate of beer (12 bottles) amounting to 8,700 francs as summons fee for the case to commence in Ekpe Manyu. The appellant said he had a letter for Ekpe Manyu and he was told to bring the summon fees before he could hand the letter. He brought the summons fee. Thereafter, he was told to hand the letter to the Secretary General of Ekpe Manyu. The Secretary opened the letter and read the contents to the Ekpe Supreme Council. The letter informed Ekpe Manyu that the matter had been taken to court and the author wanted to find out if a matter that was in court could be tried at the same time at Ekpe? There was another letter from a law firm purporting to represent the accused, Quinta Egbe, in the case. The letter advised that the land case between the parties was at a pre-litigation phase and was requesting the other party to vacate the land or face legal charges. However, Ekpe Manyu reminded the parties that the matter in the Ekpe Court was about the violation of an injunction by Tabe Quinta Egbe, who went into a land with an injunction without authorization from Ekpe. Since Quinta was not in sitting, the court decided to adjourn the matter for sixteen days (21st of March) and requested that Quinta should come and
answer the charges against her on the said date. Quinta was also asked to bring 30 bottles of beer for adjourning the matter to a later date. The defendant complied and the case adjourned.

I observed that there was a lot of order in the proceedings of the cases.

*Case three: Ekpe Nchang vs. Tanyi Cosmas Mbi.* The accused was asked to bring kola nut, snuff, and 12 bottles of beer in order for Ekpe to read him the summons against him. He complied (he paid 8,700 Francs CFA) and the matter was read to him.

The appellant of the case (Ekpe Nchang Village) was asked to state their case. The appellant stated that the accused was asked by his mother’s family members not to clear a piece of land and he refused. The matter was reported to the Ekpe of Nchang and the accused was found guilty and asked to pay 20 bottles of beer. Ekpe also placed an injunction in the said piece of land and the accused was warned not to enter the land going forward. The accused disrespected the injunction, continued clearing the land, and subsequently burned the Ekpe injunction. Because of the violation of the Ekpe injunction, Ekpe Nchang summoned the accused to appear before the court, but he refused to come. As a result, Ekpe Nchang brought the matter/ appealed to the Supreme Ekpe Council of Manyu, sitting in Mamfe, to look into the matter.

The accused was called to state his case. He stated that he did not judge a land matter with the members of his mother’s family represented by one Mr. Mbi. The President of the Ekpe Court reminded all present that an Ekpe injunction does not necessarily mean that the person who orders the injunction to be placed is right. However, whenever an Ekpe injunction is placed, even if it is in a person’s legal abort (residence), the person cannot/should not go into the house. He has to first of all find out
who placed the injunction, get some wine, inform the elders, and take it to the person that placed the injunction. There, he will ask the reason for the injunction. He/she has no right to neglect the injunction. Whoever fails to respect an Ekpe injunction is said to have disrespected the laws of the customs (broken the neck of Ekpe) and must pay a fine.

The accused said that he had been farming in the disputed farm land for 21 years and that the farm land was given to him by his maternal aunt who was a leprosy patient. He also said that he did not know that Ekpe had placed an injunction into the farm land. But Ekpe fined him for violating an injunction and he paid the fine. Thereafter, the matter was tried and Ekpe told him that he should not farm the land anymore because the mother’s family had decided it. He refused saying that, since the land was given to him by his aunt, he would not vacate. He went and cleared the farm and was fined by Ekpe for doing it. He was going to refuse paying the fine, but his uncle asked him to pay the Ekpe fine. He said he paid the fine and, since then, he had not gone to the farmland again.

However, it was reported that members of his mother’s family decided that he should not go into the farm land anymore and that the farm had been given to the cousin by the family. Ekpe Mfia Nchang sited with the family and told the accused not to go into the farm land, but he disrespected Ekpe injunction for the second time and, when he was called to Ekpe Mfia Nchang, he refused to come but rather took the matter to the State Counsel’s Office. He further stated that the matter was then in the State Counsel’s Office.

The President of the Ekpe Supreme Council reminded the accused that the case at hand was the violation of Ekpe injunction and that he was accused of entering the land, irrespective of the fact that there was an Ekpe injunction on the said land. Ekpe found out that both parties entered the farm land and that both, Regina and Mbi, had violated Ekpe
injunction by entering the farmland. For lying that he did not enter the farm land after
Ekpe injunction had been placed in it, the accused was fined 20 bottles of beer by the
Supreme Ekpe Council. However, Ekpe Nchang stated that the matter was judged and
when the head of the family declared that the farm land belonged to Regina, they gave
her the go ahead to enter the farm land.

The Supreme Council was then reminded that Mbi was fined once for violating an
Ekpe injunction, which he refused to pay. Two days later, he came and paid the fine.
However, he decided to go into the same farm land, despite the fact that he had paid a
fine once for violating the injunction. When summoned to appear in front of Ekpe
Nchang for the second time, Mbi Cosmas refused to appear before the body. Mbi did not
report/appeal the matter to any other Ekpe house in Manyu Division and contrarily
decided to violate the injunction and, when summoned for the second time, he refused to
appear to the body. It was in frustration that the Ekpe Nchang decided to report the matter
to the Supreme Ekpe of Manyu, as tradition requires. Mbi was ordered to pay a fine of 60
bottles of beer (3 x 20 bottles of beer) for violating the Ekpe injunction. Mbi was fined to
bring kola nut and snuff (7,800 Francs CFA) for the violation. Mbi wanted to make a
statement, but was told that he could only talk after he paid the fine. Mr. Mbi paid the
fine. Thereafter, he was advised to go and meet members of his mother’s family and try
to resolve the matter with them amicably because the conflict is just a family conflict.
Mr. Mbi was also asked to pay the summons money of 25,000 Francs CFA before the
actual fine he would pay would be read to him. The President of Ekpe Manyu pleaded
with Mbi to go and make peace with the mother’s family members. The president said
that, from what he had seen, the family did not want Mbi to farm in the land and, as per
tradition, there was nothing Mbi could do and that, since the aunt who allowed him to farm in the land is no longer living, those who were leaving did not want him in the land and had a right as per tradition to evict him from the land. However, Mbi insisted that he would take the matter to court and did not mind how much it would cost him; that money was to spend and he would spend it. Unfortunately, I wanted to interview Mbi to get what he thought of the Ekpe model and process, but he was not willing to give an interview at the conclusion of the case. Also, I was scheduled to have a group interview with the members of the court and some Sessekous present and could not get opinions of other participants about the process.

Mammy Regina was also fined guilty for entering the farm land and burning the injunction of Ekpe. They were both fined for entering a land that had an Ekpe injunction on it. Mammy Regina was fined 20 bottles of beer (7,300 Francs CFA) for burning an Ekpe injunction.

I observed that the elders and the judges did sympathize with Mbi, wanted him to make peace with members of his family, and regretted the fact that he was insisting to take the matter to court. One made a statement that he was still growing up and would soon learn and regret the part he wanted to take.

**Findings from Focused Group Interviews**

I conducted a focused group interview with indigenes in Mamfe Town. The focused group discussion was organized by some Sessekous who wanted me to get the opinion of those that were either shy, did not have time, or could not be in the list of those to conduct individual interviews with me. The purpose of the discussion was to
ensure that I got a view of the cross section of the indigenes of Manyu. The findings of
the focused group discussion are discussed below.

**Structure of the Ekpe model.** Participants in the focused group interview said
that Ekpe is an ancient institution that existed prior to colonialization and it acts as the
government of the community and resolves disputes that members of the community
face. They said that Ekpe institution is based on the tradition of the people and the goal
in conflict resolution is to ensure that there is peace in the community and that members
live in harmony with each other. They also said it is expected that, whenever two or more
people have conflict, they report the issue to Ekpe and it will summon the parties to hear
the various sides of the dispute, settle the conflict, and ask the party at fault to pay a fine
in the form of food and drinks. On the day that the fine is paid, all members of the
community are called upon to eat, drink, and celebrate. The goal is to reconcile the
parties and to ensure that peace reign between them and members of the community.
Whereas the role of Ekpe in governance and conflict resolution has dwindled, the
institution is still being relied on and is effective in resolving disputes among members of
the community that cannot afford the cost of the formal justice process as well as those
that want their dispute to be resolved fast and amicable.

The participants in the focused group interview said that the Ekpe institution is
structured in a way that everybody in the community is free to participate in the process.
Also, members of other Ekpe lodges are welcome to participate in any case that is
brought to Ekpe. The openness in the conduction of the affairs of Ekpe process
encourages indigenes to believe in and rely on the institution for a peaceful resolution of
their disputes.
The Ekpe process of conflict resolution. Throughout the focused group
discussion, the participants said the goal of the Ekpe model is to resolve disputes
peacefully, reconcile the disputing parties, and ensure that peace reigns in the
community. According to the participants in the focused group discussion, whenever
people feel that another people have wronged them -for example, encroaching into their
farm land, they will take a jar of palm wine and snuff and go to Ekpe to report the issue
through the Decaba. Upon receiving the palm wine and snuff, the Decaba will present
them to the Sessekou and inform him of the nature of the dispute. The Sessekou will then
order that the Ekpe drum be beaten to summon all participants to the Ekpe lodge, during
which the members will drink the palm wine and later ask the purpose of the wine.
Thereafter, the Decaba will inform all present of the dispute. Then, Ekpe will fix a date
to hear the parties to the dispute and issue a summon to the respondents with conditions
that they must fulfill in order for the Ekpe to inform them of the charges against them and
hear their side of the dispute.

The members of the focused group discussion further stated that, on the date fixed
by Ekpe to listen to the dispute, the respondents are called and asked to present what
Ekpe has requested. Upon the presentation of the items, the appellants are then asked to
state the claim in the presence of the accused. Upon conclusion, the accused are asked if
they have heard the case against them and if they have questions to ask the
appellants. The audience is also given the floor to ask questions to the appellants upon
the conclusion of the respondents’ questions. Thereafter, the respondents are also asked
to state their own side of the case, which is followed by questions to the respondents from
the appellants and the audience.
Witnesses are then called to state what they know about the dispute and the parties are all asked to go out for Ekpe to deliberate on the issues raised. Upon the conclusion of the deliberations, the parties of the conflict are summoned into the hall and the Sessekou will tell them who Ekpe has considered to be the at-fault party. Thereafter, the chief *Decaba* is asked to pronounce the fine the persons at fault have to pay and that party is again given the floor to state what they think or like to say, if they are okay with the judgment, and when they will pay the fine if okay with the verdict. At the conclusion of the case, all persons present will feast on what Ekpe had requested the respondent to bring and a date is fixed for the payment of the fine to Ekpe and the reconciliation feast. The focused group participants further said that, in a situation where the at-fault party is not happy with the judgment of Ekpe, they are told they have the freedom to “cross water” and go to any other Ekpe lodge they feel will give a fairer judgment and the matter is closed.

**Participation in the model.** The focused group discussion participants said that all members of the community are free to be present during an Ekpe model. However, the process is male dominated since Ekpe is a male institution. Also, to ask a question to the parties, one must be an initiated Ekpe member and have acquired the rank of clapping before addressing Ekpe. Otherwise, the person will have to ask a person that has attained the rank to clap on his behalf and request him to ask his question or make a statement. The participants in the focused group discussion also said that the *Decabas* play a vital role in the Ekpe model. They are the ones to whom conflict parties go to commence a case with Ekpe. They also do fact finding mission to find out who the person at fault is, and pronounce the fine that the guilty party has to pay.
The participants also pointed out that, while the roles of elders are vital in the Ekpe model, they mostly serve to guide the process to ensure fairness and effectiveness. Elders do not go on fact finding missions or proclaim fines that partiers have to pay. They follow the process keenly, pronounce judgment, and can either reduce or increase the fine that is requested by the Decaba. Elders are the only ones that sit to ask questions to the parties of the dispute while sitting and in cases where an elder or Sessekou is a party to a dispute, he is given the privilege to sit down while all other parties are required to stand up.

**Acceptance of the Ekpe model.** Almost all the participants in the focused group discussion said that they were satisfied with the Ekpe model of conflict resolution. Participants said that the Ekpe model is fast, less expensive, and those that give judgment are indigenes, aware of the nature of disputes, and understand the culture of the community. Participants further said that the goal of the Ekpe model is to reconcile conflicting parties and ensure peace reigns in the community. Most participants preferred the Ekpe model to the formal administrative and judicial process whose main focus is to send people to prison, divide the indigenes, and cause chaos in their community.

**Effect of modernization.** The focused group discussion participants acknowledged that colonization, the post-colonial era, and modernization have brought a lot of changes to the role of Ekpe in governance and conflict resolution. The powers that Ekpe has to enforce its decisions have been weakened in the community. They said that the government has taken away most of the governance functions of Ekpe, and the police power of the formal administration is limiting the relevance of Ekpe in modern times. Focused group participants further said that those that have money frequently undermine
the Ekpe institution and take their dispute to the administration, the police, and the court system.

**Lack of trust.** The focused group discussion participants said there is a lack of trust in the formal administrative and legal process in Cameroon. Participants said that the formal administrative and legal process is corrupt, the process is lengthy, and that they do not fully understand the process. They further said that the formal process is very expensive for them as they have to hire the services of a lawyer in most cases, pay transportation to the courts on numerous occasions, and pay people to write their statements for them since most of them are illiterate. Most of all, participants lamented the fact that the administrative officers and judges are most often from other regions of Cameroon and do not understand the customs of the indigenes. They said the effect is that they sometimes pass judgments that cannot be enforced and lack a means of ensuring that their judgment is enforced.

**Findings from Interview Analysis**

A set of one-on-one interviews was conducted and the details of the participants are described in Table 6.5.

Table 6

*One-on-one Interview Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>No. of participants</th>
<th>Average years of experience</th>
<th>Hours of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sessekou</td>
<td>Eyumojock</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Egbekaw</td>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
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<td>Achi Mgbe</td>
<td>Mbakem</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achi Mgbe</td>
<td>Taboh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In Eyumoock Sub-Division, two interviews were conducted in Eyumoock town, one in Taboh village, and one in Mbakem village. In Mamfe Central Sub-Division, three interviews were conducted in Mamfe Town, one in Egbekow village. I ensured that the interviews were conducted in a convenient location that was quiet and free of distractions to both myself and the research participants.

The results of the interview analysis are presented below.

**Ekpe institution defined.** The Ekpe institution acted as the government in resolving conflict and social activities, by coming together to drink the wine that a person was fined for a wrongful deeds. As stated by *Research Participant No. 1*:

Ekpe society as I know in our environment hmmm,… formally the Ekpe society… when ehh, during the pre-colonial times as I know, when there was no formal government of the state, ehh… when there was no formal development, ehhh, when we were still at the old settlement… with our Grandfather, the Ekpe society acted as the government of the of the village (community), like, the administrative body that was in charge of resolving matters like settling cases, debt collection, and bringing other social gatherings among friends in the villages. Ekpe is a lovely group that our fathers were living with. During the raining seasons, when the rains were too much, they will ask one person (Mr. John) that had been fined by Ekpe (usually one bottle of hot hot wine) to bring the fine so they can keep themselves warm, and together discuss other issues that are going on in the village and our own group in the Ekpe society.

*Research Participant No. 2* further describes those that are members or allowed to become members of Ekpe saying that:
Ekpe society hmmm, is a group of people, elders and hmm young boys that have come together to settle disputes. Like, when somebody has a problem with an opponent, the person will summon the other party so they can go make peace. If it is about a farmland, the person will come to Ekpe and together with Ekpe, they will go take a look of the disputed farmland. If the defending party wants to cheat the appellant, Ekpe will settle the dispute, demarcate the real boundary, and make sure the case is resolved amicably. Ekpe is also a society where the youths try to become members. To become a member, the individual may give either a jug of wine, cook food with about two, three, four, or five legs of bush meat to join the Ekpe society. Another purpose of Ekpe is that if a person commits a crime, hmmm, Ekpe society is not a witch hunting group, they do not kill people, is not an evil group, it is a group of hmmm, hmmm, village society where they animate. There are days which Ekpe dedicates for dancing and other cultural animation. So Ekpe is not a place where witch hunting takes place. It is a society for animation and to settle disputes.

**Membership into Ekpe society.** Membership into the society is reserved only to men, both old and youths upon maturity, who are initiated and schooled into the Ekpe teachings and morality. *Research Participant No. 2* described the process of membership and initiation in the Ekpe institution and how the youth is thought to dance the Ekpe dance and traditions saying that:

In a situation where a youth wants to become a member of Ekpe, for example, a youth that have lived out of the village for a long time that comes back home and want to join the Ekpe society, the youth will give a jar of palm wine, Ekpe talking
drums will be beaten in the village to invite Ekpe members to the Ekpe hall, and inform them of the intent of the youth to become a member. The Ekpe members will then tell the youth that he will bring 10 litters of palm wine or two jars of palm wine, will cook two legs of bush meat. If the youth brings the demands, the Ekpe members will open the room where the Tiger/leopard is kept and the youth will see the leopard (The initiation process). The youth will then see the leopard/tiger that shouts whenever Ekpe dances in the village. The Ekpe members will show the youth the Leopard/Tiger that should each time Ekpe is dancing that nobody who is not a member cannot see. The Ekpe members will also show the youth the whey to dance traditionally to Ekpe songs, and the various signs that Ekpe members use to communicate among themselves. Just as the teach kids to wear a pant as they grow up, it is the same way that Ekpe teaches the youths the culture, tradition, and dances of Ekpe. Like how to wear a pant, and tie a belt on the pant.

Research Participant No. 3 also confirmed the role of Ekpe in governance and conflict resolution before the advent of colonization. He said that:

Yeah, in the old days before colonialization, before the coming of the government, Ekpe served as the government where they had their laws. For example, if you steal, commit adultery or had sex with another person’s wife, you will be taken to Ekpe. In short, if you commit any crime, we were taken to Ekpe. Also, if a person clears a farmland and another person comes to seize the farmland, you will take some palm wine to Ekpe and report the matter that somebody wants to seize your farmland.
Research Participant No. 4 further describes the origin and functions of the Ekpe Institution, saying:

Hmmm, the Ekpe society is the local government of the people. It started when the white man did not bring his administration here. And emm, it is a law enforcement ehhhhh society. And so, those who break the law, for instance in the community, a gong is sounded for people to come out after having given a certain date, for people not to go out, there will be some, emmmm, community work. Now, those who fail to adhere to Ekpe rules are charged emmmm, why they should fail, and emmm, when they are found guilty, hmmmm, you know, most of our fines are probably drinks and food and so on. Emmmmmm, but if you, emmm, if somebody intervenes a law some sort of emmmmmmmmm, say some money raised in the village and so on, emmmmm, say take something which belongs to the people, like, emmmm, you pluck eru, emmmmm, illegally and they say you should pay and you refuse, Ekpe intervenes and emmmm, you pay. Ekpe is also responsible for keeping order in the village. You don’t have too emmmmm, you see, sometimes you enter… you go to the bush of your friend and you make problems. Either you beat him up and so on, when you come to the village, you report, emmm, the man that inflicted the assault will come and report to the Ekpe. The Ekpe will look into the matter, emmmm, and say but how? If they find you guilty, the find the person either in cash or food, and emmm, a man is not allowed to beat his wife in the bush. If you beat a woman in the bush, Ekpe will say no, the life of a woman has to be protected. You do not have to do that, she is a weaker partner, why did you fight in the bush? So, they will find you guilty and
charges are levied on you and have to be paid. So emmm that is what is available in my place. Emmmmm.

*Research Participant No. 4* further said that:

Ekpe is the culture that our first parents, at that time, there was no government. It was Mgbe that was governing us. It was Ekpe that was governing our people, to make sure there is peace and orderliness in the village. And emm, Ekpe has its principles. You are not supposed to fight in the community. When people fight, Ekpe holds them responsible and ask them to pay a fine to make sure that peace reigns in the village.

From what the interviewers said, it can be gathered that Ekpe is an association where both the young and old men come together to socialize, educate the youths into the culture to preserve the culture, and gradually transfer power to them to govern the community and to resolve disputes whenever it arises in the community.

Having discussed what Ekpe society is all about, I will next talk about the Ekpe process of governance and conflict resolution of Ekpe.

**Ekpe process of governance.** During the pre-colonial period, Ekpe was the main governing body in the community. It made laws that the indigenes respected and observed. Failure to respect a law put by Ekpe resulted in fines to the person. *Research Participant No. 6* described the Ekpe process of governance as:

Hmmmm, now, when I mean governing the people, is emmm, when it comes to government, yeah, Ekpe also has emm, its own ways of doing things. There are roles that they play within the society. Yeah, to see into it that nobody, the people
do respect themselves and respect the culture. Like, that doing, it keeps
everything smooth going. That is everything I can tell you about Ekpe.

Since I was more concerned about the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, I did
not pay much attention to the Ekpe process of governance. In this vein, I will focus more
on the Ekpe process of conflict resolution.

**Ekpe process of conflict resolution.** Ekpe also served as the principal organ of
conflict resolution. This function has continued, despite the end of colonialization and the
advent of the central government and the courts. However, Ekpe is relied upon in
resolving disputes mostly at the village level and by those that cannot afford the cost of
the legal process; such cases include: fighting, stealing, cheating, adultery, land dispute,
and covetousness, gossip, blackmail, backstabbing, trespass, beating a wife, throwing
your wife’s food on the floor or outside, the use of vulgar language -especially towards a
woman, discussing Ekpe matter with uninitiated people, abusive language, and meddling
with boundary marks. The process differs with the nature of the dispute to be resolved.

**Ekpe process of resolving land dispute.** In the case of a land dispute, when two
people have disagreement over a piece of land, one of the parties must first summon the
other to Ekpe for the process to begin. The Ekpe summon procedure requires the
appellant to take a jar of palm wine to the Achi Mgbe and inform him of the dispute. The
Achi Mgbe will in turn take the palm wine to the Sessekou and inform him of the dispute
and the request that an Ekpe injunction be placed on the disputed piece of land. The
Sessekou summons the members of Ekpe to brief them of the dispute and examination of
the matter at hand. Upon the approval of the Ekpe members, the Achi Mgbe goes and
puts the Ekpe injunction on the disputed piece of land. The injunction bars the general
public, including the appellant, from entering into the piece of land until the matter is resolved or the suit is withdrawn. Upon the implanting of the injunction in the disputed piece of land, the defending party claiming the land is also required to take a jar of palm wine to any of the Achi Mgbe, and inform him that he has come to find out why the injunction has been placed on the piece of land and that he is requesting a settlement of the dispute.

Upon receiving the palm wine from the defending party, the Achi Mgbe also takes the palm wine to the Sessekou and inform him that the defending party has come and is requesting that the matter be resolved. The Sessekou will again summon all the members of Ekpe, wherein they will drink the palm wine, brief them of the willingness of both parties to proceed with the case, and then a date is fixed for the hearing of the matter. It is only after the palm wine has been presented that the party is formally informed of the person that requested the injunction be placed on the piece of land. A date is set for resolving the matter and the disputing parties are informed to be present.

On the day of hearing, both parties are requested to state their case, beginning with the appellant. Upon hearing the appellant, the defending party is called and asked if he has heard the complaint against him or not. If he accepts it, he is then asked if he has questions he wants the appellant to answer. The appellant is required to answer all the questions post to him by the defendant. When he is done, the audience is also given the floor to ask questions. Upon the conclusion of their questioning, the defending party is also requested to state his case and, after that, the appellant is also requested to ask questions to the defendant. That is also followed by questioning from the Ekpe members present. The parties are given the opportunity to call in witnesses to substantiate their
claims if they have them. Thereafter, the Ekpe members will decide on the fate of the disputed piece of land. As stated by Research Participant No. 1:

Yeah, Ekpe, when Ekpe wants to judge a case, like, when, eh, two people are fighting for the same piece of farm land, with each person claiming the same piece of land, like when somebody goes and clears another person’s land, the man whose land was cleared against his wish has, to go and put that symbol of Ekpe on that land. Not the person that cleared the land, but the man who believes that someone has trespassed into his farmland will go and plants that symbol of Ekpe. When he/she puts that symbol of Ekpe there, the person that trespassed into the land will buy a jug of palm wine, and now goes to the Ekpe society, of any of the chiefs of Ekpe in the very community or village. Because, before Ekpe goes to put this Ekpe symbol, this injunction, all the Ekpe chiefs must sit together and take the decision to implant the Ekpe injunction in the disputed land, and then send a messenger of Ekpe to go and plant an Ekpe injunction in the land. When the injunction has been placed, the person that cleared the piece of farm land will also carry a jug of palm wine and go to the Ekpe chiefs, presents the wine to them, and then asks for the reasons why an Ekpe injunction was implanted on the piece of farm land that he cleared. It is only after he/she comes with a jug of palm wine that he will be informed the name of the person that sued him and why he was sued (reasons for the Ekpe injunction), so that the issue should be resolved and so that peace should reign between them, and so that Ekpe should see who the piece of land actually belongs to.

Research Participant No. 1 further states that:
It is after the accused brings the jug of wine that members of the Ekpe society will sit, listen to the disputed parties, and resolve the dispute over the piece of land. The elders (Sessekous) will call other members of the Ekpe society by playing the Ekpe talking drum for everyone to come together. When they come, they will sit together and as a group try to determine who actually owns the disputed piece of farmland. At the final analysis, they will go to the disputed farmland, where the two disputing parties will state their case again, and showing proof that they are the ones that first cleared the piece of land, or if they inherited the land from their fathers. If they inherited the disputed land, they will say they inherited it. Since the Ekpe members are people that have lived in the village, and with the fact that the community in which they leave in is a collectivist community, members usually know of when and where others cleared a farmland at any particular time, and where the boundary was since it was the community as a whole that use to go clear the land for each person. That is, when a person wants to clear a piece of farmland, he gathers all in the community, and ask them to go help him clear his farmland. As a result, at list one of the Ekpe members present must know the boundary of the disputed farmland. They will then declare the rightful owner of the disputed piece of land. That is all I can tell you about the process of settling land disputes in Ekpe.

This process was confirmed by the Research Participant No. 2 when he said that: After the injunction is placed, the person that is accused of trespassing will also carry a jug of palm wine, go and meet the “Achi Mgbe”, and inform him that he has seen Ekpe injunction on his farmland, and wants to know who and why the
injunction was placed there. It is thereafter that the appellant is called to come and explain why he requested the Ekpe injunction to be placed on the farmland. It is thereafter that the process of resolving the dispute begins.

Research Participant No. 3 confirmed the process of resolving land dispute and went further to describe the nature of the Ekpe injunction as “a symbol made from the young fronts of a palm tree by Ekpe members.” He further said that:

Once the Ekpe symbol is planted on a piece of land, nobody is permitted to enter the land. It is forbidden to enter a piece of land that has the Ekpe sign. Once the sign is planted on the land, the other party is required to get a jar of palm wine, take it to the “Achi Mgbe” (Ekpe Emissary) and request that he/she wants to find out who ordered the injunction, and why the injunction was placed on his farmland. The “Achi Mgbe” will in turn take the jar of palm wine to the Sessekou and inform him that the other party has brought wine, and wants to find out who and why an injunction was placed on his farmland. The purpose of the palm wine is to summon all Ekpe members together. The Sessekou, will give orders for Ekpe members to sit. Upon the gathering of Ekpe members, the person who requested the Ekpe symbol to be placed is informed to appear in front of the Ekpe court, that the person with whom he is disputing the farmland with has come to find out from Ekpe why the Ekpe symbol was placed on the farmland. It should be noted that by bringing a jar of palm wine to Ekpe, the person who brings the palm wine is asking that a case be brought against the other person. The parties are then listened to and the case is tried and resolved.
In cases, where the matter is complicated, the Achi Mgbes are requested to pay a visit to the disputed piece of land, together with the parties and owners of the neighboring piece of land. This was further discussed by Research Participant No. 1 when he said that:

When Mgbe goes to see the disputed farmland, Mgbe will do everything to settle the dispute. In the process, Mgbe will ask the parties to give statements as to why they believe that the disputed farmland belongs to them. After Mgbe has listened to both parties, it will then decide on the person that actually owns the farmland, and settle the dispute. If a party wanted to seize the farmland of the other, Mgbe will refuse and give back the farmland to the rightful owner. Also, if the appellant was not the rightful owner of the said farmland, Mgbe will refuse to rule in his favor and proclaim the defendant as the rightful owner of the disputed farmland. Mgbe will tell the parties the truth about the farmland, and will resolve the matter in an amicable way. Ekp will tell both parties where their actual boundary is and tell them not to trespass going forward.

Research Participant No. 1 vividly described the process of the visit of the disputed piece of land and the resolution of the dispute stating that:

On the day of the site visit, all the parties must also be present at the disputed farmland. The Ekp members will go to the farmland with boundary sticks, and the parties will express themselves how and why they think they own the disputed farmland. Since the Ekp members are member of the same village, they usually know where the actual boundary of the disputed farmland should be. After hearing from the disputed parties, they will demarcate the farmland, plant the
boundary sticks and put an injunction stating that irrespective of the fact that they are taking off the Ekpe injunction physically, the injunction is technically still there, and none of the parties have a right to temper with the boundary sticks that are planted on the Ekpe defined boundary. If any of the parties tempers with the boundary sticks, it is considered that the person has broken the neck of Ekpe (violated an Ekpe order). These boundary sticks are called Etusinee. These boundary sticks grow and cannot be removed easily. Thereafter, the disputing parties together with the Ekpe members that visited the farmland will come to the village. From the money that the parties paid as locus fee, part of it will be used to buy drinks for all the members including the disputed parties to drink … one of the Ekpe elders (Sessekous) will rise up, clap (calling for attention of all present) and will ask those that went to the disputed farmland to tell them what happened in the farmland. Since only the strong and active members of the Ekpe Society usually go to the disputed farmland, they have a duty to explain to the elders what happened and who the guilty person is. The Members that went to the disputed farmland will then explain what happened to all present. The elders will then inform the guilty person that he/she is the at-fault party. The locus fee of the guilty person is not given back, but that of the person that Ekpe determines rightfully owns the disputed farmland is refunded. This money is refunded to the person that rightfully owns the land to serve as prove that he is the rightful owner of the land. That is how Ekpe settles a farmland dispute.

The process was corroborated by the Research Participant No. 3 when he stated that:
In some cases, the matter is decided there in one sitting, but there are other cases that require Ekpe members to go to the disputed farmland to see for themselves. In situations where Ekpe members have to go to the disputed farmland, the parties are required to cook food and get drinks so that the Ekpe members should eat and drink while observing the farmlands. After the visit, the party that is at fault will lose his contribution, and is asked by Ekpe to re-reimburse the victorious party the contribution that he made towards the purchase of the food and drink. The cost of the food and drink is burn by the party that is at fault. That is how Ekpe resolves land disputes.

Research Participant No. 6 also confirmed it stating that:

Okay, normally when it comes to land dispute, ehh conflicts, now, ehhhh, the offender… normally, the procedure is, the offended normally comes to ekpe, meets the ehhhh, because, normally in Ekpe, we have many people that the offended has to pass through before the Ekpe people can be assembled to the hall. Now, this offended will meet now the fore men of the Ekpe with a Jug of palm wine. This jug of palm wine will be taken to the Ekpe hall. There now, one of the Ekpe foemen has to beat the Ekpe drum to assemble the members. They have a particular way of beating the drum (talking drum) and every member who hears the drum will know that there is a burning issue at hand, and is needed in the Ekpe hall. So after the Ekpe members have gathered themselves in a hall, after drinking the palm wine, the Ekpe chief (Sessekou) will clap his hands and ask that they have drank, and now want to know the reasons of the palm wine. It is hear that the offended will rise up and state his/her problem. Like that, so they have now to
consult or convoke the other party that is accused of causing the problem. It is upon the arrival of the accused person that Ekpe goes into the details of the matter. They will ask the two parties to state their cases and anyone that does not give a good reason for doing what they are accused of. For example in a land dispute, a party might claim that the disputed piece of land once belonged to the his grandfather, and the opposing party may say no, it is his own. In that case, Ekpe may tell the two of them, this is what Ekpe is going to do. Ekpe will tell them that Ekpe will have to go into that disputed piece of land to see, and by so doing, Ekpe cannot go into that piece of land by itself. Ekpe will call all those that own land in the neighboring surrounding because the truth can only come from the neighbors and not from the disputing parties.

Research Participant No. 6 further stated that:

They will set a date will call the neighbors to go to the disputed farm land and take a look. After visiting the disputed land, the Ekpe members will come back home, and assemble at the Ekpe hall. The disputing parties are required to prepare food and drinks. At the hall, the Ekpe foremen will explain what happened in the farm, and will give their findings. Thereafter, everybody present will eat and drink the food that was prepared. Ekpe will then ask the at-fault party to reimburse the cost of the food spent by the party that rightfully owns the disputed land. The encroacher will have to pay back everything that the rightful owner of the land spent in taking the case to Mgbe/Ekpe.

**Process of obtaining an Ekpe injunction.** To obtain an injunction, the applicant has to take a jar of palm wine to an Achi Mgbe in the village that he or she wants the
injunction to be issued and the case heard. The Achi Mgbe takes the palm wine to the Sessekou who orders the Achi Mgbe to summon all the Ekpe members to a meeting that usually takes place in the evening hours. The meeting is opened to every person belonging to Ekpe irrespective of the Ekpe house or village. Together, they drink the palm wine before calling on the appellant to tell them the purpose of the palm wine. It is at that point that the Achi Mgbe will introduce the matter and sometimes call on the appellant to state his case if he happens to be present. The Ekpe members will ask the appellant what he or she wants Ekpe to do. The appellant will then inform them that he/she is pleading with Ekpe to put an injunction on the disputed land to stop the other party from proceeding and to resolve the matter.

**Effects of violating an Ekpe injunction.** Violating an Ekpe injunction could bring about serious fines to the person. As stated by Research Participant No. 5:

> When you violate an Ekpe injunction, nobody summons you to Ekpe. In that case, it is the discipline men of Ekpe, we call them the Publicity Secretaries of Ekpe that comes to Ekpe and tell Ekpe that this person has violated the tradition. Then, the person is called to order and Ekpe will fine the person.
Process of resolving other disputes. As with land disputes, the appellant is required to take a jar of palm wine, kola nuts, and snuff to the Achi Mgbe, inform him of his grievance and request that Ekpe intervene to resolve the matter. Research Participant No. 3 stated the proceedings saying that:

Okay, for example, if somebody owes you or somebody abuses you, or steals your stuff, you will bring a jar of palm wine, kola nut, and snuff to the emissary of Ekpe called the “Achi Mgbe”. The “Achi Mgbe” will in turn take the palm wine to the head of the Ekpe society (Sessekou), and tell him that a person has summoned a case with Ekpe. The Sessekou will give the go ahead that the Ekpe drum be beaten in the Ekpe hall summoning all Ekpe members to assemble. After all the members have assembled in the Ekpe hall, the person accused is called and asked to also bring a jar of palm wine, kola nuts, and snuff as the accuser did. It is
only after the accused brings the demands that he/she is briefed of the case against him. Thereafter, the accuser is called to state his/her case, after which members of the Ekpe society take turns in asking him questions. Thereafter, the accused is asked to ask the accuser questions as well. After which he is asked to give his statement related to the issue at stake. This statement is also followed by questions from the Appellant and the crowd. Thereafter, the members of Ekpe will decide on the person that is at fault. If they find out that the accuser is at fault, the palm wine that he brought to summon the case will be lost and the palm wine of the accused will be refunded to the accused. Also, if the accused is found guilty, he will lose the palm wine that he brought to Ekpe while that of the accuser is returned to him. The guilty or wrongful person can also be fined to pay more palm wine, depending on the severity of the issue at stake. Ekpe does not ask for money but food and drinks.

It is the wine that the parties bring that the Ekpe members drink on the date that the matter is judged. This was stated by Research Participant No. 1:

… since the appellant brings a jug of palm wine to report a matter and an injunction is placed on a piece of land, the accused must also bring a jug of palm wine to Ekpe to find out the reason why an Ekpe injunction was placed on the piece of land that he believe is his own. It is that wine that the accused brings to find out why an injunction has been placed on the land that he believes he owns that will be drank by all the members when they come together to settle the matter. Like formally, when there was no money, it was only that jug of palm wine that will be cost of settling a dispute at Ekpe.
The roles of the Sesskou and the Achi Mgbe. These are the descriptions of the roles of these two important positions of the Ekpe.

**The Sessekou/Iyamba.** A Sessekou is the highest rank in the Ekpe society. He serves as the president and must approve decisions and orders taken by Ekpe. A person can only climb to the rank of Sessekou after having served in various capacities as Decaba, Ntui Mgbe, and Osongoribo (in Bayang: Decaba, Ntui Mgbe, and Etobetobe Ntui). The title of Sessekou can only be inherited along family line. The only exception is where a person buys his own Ekpe. Even in such situations, the person that buys his own Ekpe must still be initiated into the various positions in which he has to cook the food that the ranks require. That must be done because a Sessekou must invoke all his ranks when he is greeting Ekpe or before he addresses an Ekpe gathering. The oldest Sessekou in an Ekpe lodge is called Iyamba.

**The Achi Mgbe.** The Achi Mgbes are young and very active members of the Ekpe society with the ability to run very fast. They act as the messengers or emissaries of Ekpe, perform the activities of Ekpe, and beats the drum to assemble Ekpe members. It is to the Achi Mgbe that parties first make complain, present the palm wine, kola nut, and snuff, in requesting Ekpe to listen to and resolve their dispute. Upon presenting the requirements to the Achi Mgbes, they are required to inform the Sessekou of the matter and impending suit. The Achi Mgbes are also charged with implanting the Ekpe injunction on a disputed farm land. Before becoming a Sessekou, one is required to first serve as an Achi Mgbe. The role of the Achi Mgbe was defined by Research Participant No. 1 saying that:
Now, after you present the palm wine, kola nut, and snuff to Ekpe Society and present your case, the Ekpe Elders (Sessekous) will then appoint a delegation of people called the “Achi Mgbe” (Messengers of Ekpe/Emissaries of Ekpe). The people that perform the activities of Ekpe. These are usually very young and active men of Ekpe, who can run very fast and active. The Elders will give the “Achi Mgbe’s the injunction and the authority to go to the disputed farmland and place the injunction on the piece of land. The “Achi Mgbes” are the ones that implant the Ekpe injunction on the piece of land.

*Research Participant No. 2* also stated the responsibilities of the Achi Mgbe stating that:

Ehhh, you have a person called in the tradition “Achi Mgbe”. The “Achi Mgbe” in English means a messenger of Ekpe. You have to take the palm wine to the “Achi Mgbe” who intends take the palm wine to the Ekpe house, and beats the Ekpe drum. The beating of the Ekpe drum calls all the Sessekous. You beat the drums calling the Sessekous, Sessekous, who are the chiefs of Ekpe to come to the Ekpe hall. Upon the assembly of all the Ekpe members, the chiefs will sit down and the “Achi Mgbe” will tell them why he summoned all the Ekpe members to the Ekpe house. The Achi Mgbe will then inform them of the case, and the plea of the appellant that an Ekpe injunction be implanted on the disputed piece of farmland.

**Process of resolving a dispute in criminal matters and when two people fight.**

Ekpe vehemently prohibits disorder in the community. Fighting is purported to cause disorder and causes the Ekpe (the Tiger) to run from its abbot. When two people fight in
the presence of an Ekpe member or if reported to an Ekpe member, the Ekpe drum is beaten to inform the community that the parties have disturbed the peace and Ekpe members are summoned to a meeting. In the meeting, both fighting parties are summoned and asked if it is true that they fought or not. If they acknowledge the fight, they are held responsible for disturbing the peace of the community and are asked to first pay a fine before the matter is heard by Ekpe. The standard fine that the parties have to pay is a big jar of palm wine (called “erib a taparee” in the dialect), kola nuts, and snuff. Both parties are expected to pay the fine immediately.

Upon paying the fine, Ekpe will listen to the matter to find out the person that started the fight, how the fight started, and why. During the hearing process, the parties are free to call in witnesses if they have them to substantiate claims they make. After listening to the parties and witnesses, the Ekpe members will ask questions to better understand the cause of the situation. After deliberations, the Sessekous present will pronounce the person that is at fault, and that person is asked to pay additional fine in the form of drinks and food. The person can be given a time frame to pay the fine. Also, the parties are called upon to reconcile their differences and share in the ceremony after the case have been tried. In a situation where the fight is between family members, the parties will pay the fine for fighting and Ekpe will listen to them to resolve the matter. Ekpe will not ask the at-fault party to pay an additional fine, but will make peace between them and advise them not to fight again.

*Research Participant No. 6 explains the Ekpe process of resolution of a case involving two people fighting:*
Okay, in the case of two people fighting, as a conflict, now since Ekpe has a forerunner, that is, the middle men that are like the eyes of Ekpe, now, when they hear that two people are fighting, they just go directly to the Ekpe hall and beat the Ekpe drum. The drum calls on the members of Ekpe to rally including the chiefs. Now, a fine has already been put in place that anybody that fights have to pay. That fine is fixed and nobody can change it. Anybody caught fighting has to pay the fine. Now, when the Ekpe people are gathered in the hall, they will ask the people that fought to first of all pay the fine. Thereafter, they will try the matter to find out who is the cause of the fight. When Ekpe determine the person that caused the fight, he/she will further be asked to pay more fines. By so doing, it will make the others in the society to avoid causing problems because the fines can be too much. Problems like fighting, the parties are both going to be losers. That is how Ekpe settles disputes. By so doing, it causes others not to cause problems anymore.

He states that, when two people fight, the “Achi Mgbe” will beat the Ekpe drum, summoning Ekpe members to the Ekpe hall. There, the fighting parties will be summoned and asked to pay the fixed fine for fighting before the matter is listened to.

This was confirmed by Research Participant No. 3 who further said that, in situations where parties are quarreling very loudly that could result to a fight, any Ekpe member could pronounce an Ekpe chant “dibo, dibo” to call their attention that Ekpe is around and that they could be fined if they continue. In such a situation, the parties are supposed to stop immediately or they could be fined for disturbing the peace of the community. He stated that:
Hmmm, Ekpe, in Ekpe, we sat down, in short, there is a general law in Ekpe that if two people fight, they are called to bring 12 thousand francs (20 bottles of beer). Each of the person that took part in the fight must pay that fine first, before the matter is tried by Ekpe. After paying the fine, Ekpe will listen to the parties to find out who was wrong. When the party that is at fault is determined, he/she is then fined to pay more depending on the severity of the case. Again, when people are quarrelling in a manner that Ekpe determines can result to a fight, Ekpe can decide to bind the parties with an Ekpe chant (voice) “dibo, dibo”. If the parties fail to stop upon the pronouncement of the Ekpe chant, they are fined. Both quarrelling are fined if they fail to stop. That is because Ekpe does not like noise. Ekpe wants piece to reign at all time and those who fail to keep the piece are fined.

However, the process of resolving a matter involving two people fighting was vividly discussed by Research Participant No. 1 saying that;

In the case of fighting, in the Ekpe law, when two people fight, it is considered that they have made the Tiger (Leopard) to run from its nest to the bush. In such a situation, the disputing parties are both held responsible for disturbing the peace of the village and for making Ekpe to run from its nest. They are asked to pay a fine to Ekpe. Formally, the parties that fight in the village are fined to bring a big Jar of palm wine, which is usually three jugs of palm wine (called in the dialect erib a taparee). Each of those that fight are required to bring three jugs of palm wine, kola nut, and snuff for fighting. This is because it is said that two wrongs cannot make a right. It is after the parties have brought the fine for fighting that
they will be asked to give their statements as to the reasons of the fight, how the fight started, and who started the fight? The parties will then say it is either Mr. A or B that started the fight, and they will call in witnesses if they have them. For example, if two brothers fight because of a bowl of food, the junior brother might say the senior brother eat all the meat in the soup and he was not happy about it, and asked the senior one and the senior brother decided to slap him on the cheek. If the Ekpe society realizes that the matter was a family matter, they will resolve it in a family way to bring peace between the brothers. For example, if they find out that the junior brother did not respect the senior brother, and hit him first, or tried to seize the meat from his hand, they will advise him that he should have gone and reported the matter to their mother explaining that the senior brother eat all the meat in the soup rather than challenging the senior brother to a fight. They will tell the junior brother to always respect the senior brother. What they do is to educate and advise the junior person to respect the senior. In the Ekpe house, it is said that “Ekpe has put a spoke on the feathers of a bird on the head of the guilty person.” In such a family case, Ekpe will not ask the parties that fight to pay any other fine. Ekpe will advise the brothers that Ekpe does not want violence. Ekpe wants the juniors to respect the senior person, and it also calls on the senior person to threat the junior person right, and respect the junior brother. Ekpe will ask both parties to go and warn them that Ekpe does not want such an incident to re-occur in the future. When the brothers go, it is assumed that they will stay in peace. As you can see, Ekpe will not want the brothers to pay a fine because if they pay a fine, they will not be in good terms in their house. So Ekpe will make
peace between the brothers and will advise them on how to live. That is how Ekpe settles a family conflict.

In one of the cases that I observed, the at-fault party was not happy with the judgment and said that he is prepared to take the case to court, irrespective of how much it may cost him. However, some elders called him and advised him that he was free to do so if he wanted. However, he should be aware that the community did not hate anybody, but had looked at the matter in fairness to both parties and that it was unlikely he would get a different outcome wherever he went.

**Appealing an Ekpe judgment.** There are two ways through which the decisions or judgments of Ekpe can be appealed: taking the matter to the Ekpe of another village and taking the matter to the Ekpe Supreme Council in Mamfe town. The *Research Participant No. 3* described the Ekpe appeal process as follows:

When Ekpe passes a judgment and the violator refuses to vacate the disputed land,
If the person still goes to the land, Ekpe will still call the person to order and will invite the Ekpes of other neighboring villages to come and judge the case as well.
If the person still refuse to vacate the land, Ekpe will take the person to the general Ekpe of Mamfe that sits in Mamfe. There, the person must abide by the decisions of the manyu Ekpe because they have some decisions that are traditional. The person must abide by the decision of the Manyu Ekpe. I am yet to see a judgment that has gone to that level. People usually comply with the decisions of Ekpe. Even in the village council, most of the time, the council comes to Ekpe and requests that Ekpe goes and put an injunction on a disputed piece of land. Once Ekpe puts an injunction, it is final. People are always scared
of an Ekpe injunction that I don’t know how to explain it to you. Probably because their laws are very strict.

The procedure of appealing is further discussed below.

**Taking the matter to another Ekpe house (cross water).** When a party is not satisfied with an Ekpe judgment, the party can tell the Ekpe members in sitting that he or she is not satisfied with the decision and intends to take the matter to the Ekpe of any other village that he or she so desires (generally known as cross water). In such a case, the Ekpe will send a messenger to the Ekpe that previously listened to the matter to inform them of the appeal and ask the Ekpe to send a representative on the day the matter is held to explain why they arrived at the judgment. On the day the appeal is held, both parties to the suit as well as representatives of the Ekpe Lodge that first tried the case are listened to. In case the Ekpe Lodge listening to the appeal finds out that the judgment was biased, they will say so and put aside the judgment of the previous Ekpe. This was stated by *Research Participant No. 3* as follows:

Yes, an Ekpe judgment can be appealed. For example, if Ekpe judges a case in this village and a party of the case is not satisfied with the judgment, the person can decide to take the matter to the Ekpe of another village, or even to the village traditional council. In such a case, the council or the Ekpe of the other village will call Ekpe to come and explain why and how they arrived at their judgment. If the Ekpe of the neighboring village sees or believes that the judgment was not correct or just, it can put aside the judgment of that Ekpe and pass its own judgment. Ekpe cannot say that since the Ekpe of one village passed a particular judgment, it cannot change its position. Ekpe gives rooms for flexibility.
**Appeals at the Ekpe Supreme Council in Mamfe Town.** The Ekpe Supreme Council in Mamfe Town serves as the final body in appeal matters. The Supreme Council listens to appeals from parties that are not satisfied with the judgment of an Ekpe council, as well as matters reported by Ekpe against a party that failed to respect an Ekpe judgment. The Ekpe Supreme Council sits on Saturdays, every other week. The trial takes the same procedure as the ordinary Ekpe court. The only difference is that the judges represent most of the villages in Manyu Division, and are very knowledgeable in Manyu culture. Also, by coming from all over Manyu, the possibility of bias in their decisions is limited because it is difficult to tell who is going to be coming on any particular seating.

During the process of appealing, the parties are required to respect the decision/judgment passed by Ekpe. For example, the person that found to be a trespasser in a farm dispute cannot go into the disputed farmland while the appeal is pending. If he or she does, he is considered to have violated an Ekpe injunction requiring a severe fine. As stated by *Research Participant No. 3*:

The party who losses an Ekpe case cannot go into the disputed farmland until he appeals and the appeal is tried and the result known. If a person against whom an Ekpe judgment is given goes to the disputed farmland with an appeal, the person is considered to have violated the decisions of Ekpe and the punishment could be very serious. The fines for violation of an Ekpe injunction could include payment of a goat or cow.

**Violation of an Ekpe judgment.** After a case is heard by the Ekpe court, the person found guilty is required to pay a fine, in restitution of the loss that was caused to the victorious party. The respective fines that the guilty party is required to pay for
various circumstances was laid out by the founding fathers of Ekpe. However, in recent
times, some modifications have been made as a result of modernity. Upon pronouncing
its verdict, the party found to be at fault has two weeks to comply with the judgment. As
stated by Research Participant No. 6:

Okay, for the decision of Ekpe, the way they are implemented are very simple and
straight forward. The moment they discover that maybe it is “A” who has cause
wrong to the other, since everything in Ekpe is already in place, the laws have
been put there by our forefathers. Although there are certain modifications that we
make there along the line as the generation passes by, we still maintain the
structure. So this person is asked immediately to bring the emm, how do they call
it, this person is imposed a certain time limit to bring his fine. And, Ekpe has a
certain time limit which is 2 weeks.

Violating an Ekpe judgment is considered a serious offence and can result in
severe consequences to the person. In the precolonial period, the punishment included
forbidding anyone in the community from talking to the person or going to his house,
exclusion of the person from community activities, and banishment from the community.
In such a situation, Ekpe sends the information to the Ekpe Supreme Council for further
action. Research Participant No.6 further stated that:

If that two weeks elapses, then further action has to be taken. And in addition, it
might be that the at-fault party may say he is not going to pay the fine. Since the
Manyu culture is one, it might turn to a process that it might involve the general
Manyu which has a court in Mamfe which is the divisional headquarters. So when
he goes there now and see the way it’s being emmm, the way the matter is being
handled, he has to pay. That is the tradition of the land. Everybody has the
obligation to respect it, to follow it completely and strictly.

The consequences for violating an Ekpe judgment was confirmed by Research
Participant No. 2, who said:

Now if a person is given a fine by Ekpe and the person refuses to pay the fine,
like in the native laws and custom, (1) the individual could be bound from
entering into the house of anybody in the village to get fire, (2) Ekpee can tell you
that … No, Ekpe cannot tell you that you should not go to your farm to go look
for food, because Ekpe will not want to starve anybody. Also, Ekpe cannot tell the
person not to go to the stream to fetch water or to bath. That is unlawful. The
punishment Ekpe can give a person that refuses to corporate is to band the person
from all Ekpe houses. Even the Ekpe houses of other villages. The person will be
forbidden from entering into any Ekpe house, even in another village.

Meaning, Ekpe will order everybody in the community isolate the person,
including the person’s relatives and friends. Research Participant No. 4 confirmed that
saying:

On that point, in those days that administration had not come closer to the people,
nobody could dare violate the decisions of Ekpe. Ekpe had the powers to give an
announcement to the village that nobody should talk to a person that violates the
decisions of Ekpe. You could be isolated in the community. Ekpe had the powers.
But now that the administration has come, it has made the powers of Ekpe to be
limited. Because at that time, the administration was far away from the people,
and Ekpe served as the powers in the village, and everything that Ekpe said was respected by all in the community and everybody had to respect it.

The decision is further communicated to surrounding communities that are expected to implement it if the person comes to their community. This goes on till the person complies. Ekpe does not have prisons and hence the at-fault party is not sent to prison for offending the other party. Research Participant No. 4 stated that:

Ekpe does not have a prison. Ekpe does not have any other powers that can stop the trespasser from encroaching. The only thing Ekpe does after it has given its decision and the decision is not respected traditionally is that, Ekpe will ask the winner of the case to cross water, and that Ekpe will be his/or her witness.

Meaning that, if a party of the conflict is not satisfied with the judgment of an Ekpe house, the party is free to go to another Ekpe Lodge and ask them to re-examine the case.

**Quantitative Findings**

The section starts with a sample description to characterize the respondents and validate the data. The results are then presented hypothesis by hypothesis with a sub-conclusion for each of the hypotheses. Results are presented using statistical tables and charts and their interpretations following the objectives.

**Sample Description and Data Validation**

A total of number of 500 questionnaires were sent out in the field. 436 of them were returned. Two of the participants were not from Manyu Division and therefore they were discarded from the sample. Those who had stayed in Manyu Division for less than 5 years were also discarded. In total, 18 questionnaires were discarded following
exploratory statistics. The detail in sample variation is presented on the flow chart (Figure 6.6).

Missing Values Analysis

Missing values rate was calculated using the following formula:

\[ \text{Rate of missing values} = \left( \frac{\text{Number of missing responses}}{\text{Total number of expected responses}} \right) \times 100 \]

\[ = \left( \frac{\text{Number of missing responses}}{(\text{Number of variables} \times \text{Sample size})} \right) \times 100 \]

\[ = \left( \frac{0}{9196} \right) \times 100 \]

\[ = 0.0\% \]

The rate of missing values was 0.0%. Generally, the rate of missing values is assumed not critical when below 5% and high rate of missing values place a doubt on the validity of the data (Nana, 2012).
Reliability Analysis

The analysis of reliability is presented below.

Table 7

Reliability Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
<th>No. of items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.592</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

N=418

As shown by Table 6.6, Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient was satisfactory ($\alpha=0.592$), implying that the responses were consistent. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability coefficient above 0.5 indicates a satisfactory internal consistency for the responses (Nana, 2012).

Duration of Stay in the Community

Only those who had stayed in Manyu Division for five years and above were eligible for the study. All the participants were of Manyu Division.

Table 8

Duration of Stay in the Manyu Division

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duration of stay in the community (year)</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-30</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>39.7</td>
<td>72.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>89.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46+</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The number of those who had stayed in Manyu Division for between 5 and 15 years was 136, making a proportion of 32.5%, while those who had stayed 16-30 years
were 166 (39.7%), between 31 and 45 years were 71 (17.0%) and 46 years or more 45 (10.8%), as shown in Table 6.7.

**Highest Level of Schooling Attained**

The level of schooling of the participants is shown in Figure 6.7.

![Figure 11. Highest Level of Schooling Attained](image)

There were 13 (3.1%) of the participants that had no formal education, 35 (8.4%) who had attained primary level, 157 (37.6%) that have attained secondary level, and 213 (51.0%) that had attained tertiary level. For analytical suitability, no formal education and primary were grouped for a cumulative percentage of 48 (11.5%).

Detailed analysis on school attainment is presented on Table 6.8 and it is realized that 117 (28.0%) had Bachelor degree, 60 (14.4%) of the participants had professional degree, 31 (7.4%) Master’s Degree, 5 (1.2%) PhD, 71 (17.0%) were high school graduates, 46 (11.0%) secondary school graduates, 40 (9.6%) technical school graduates, 35 (8.4%) primary school, and 13 (3.1%) had no formal education.
Table 9

*Distribution of Highest Level of School Attainment*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schooling levels</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No Schooling</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical School</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>21.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Graduate</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>49.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Degree</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>63.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor’s Degree</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>98.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctorate Degree</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>418</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Employment Status**

The employment status of the participants is presented in the figure below.

*Figure 12. Distribution of Employment Status*

Self-employed status was the most represented since 157 participants (37.6%) were grouped under that category, followed by civil servants that were 125 (29.9%),
students who were 51 (12.2%), those looking for work who were 45 (10.8%), retired participants who were 21 (5.0%), other occupations with 14 (3.3%) participants, and finally those who were unable to work 5 (1.2%).

Figure 13. Awareness and Knowledge of Conflict Resolution Tools/System

Research participants were asked to test their knowledge of conflict resolution tools/system. The questions that participants were asked and the responses include:

**Question 1:** Are Manyu indigenes aware of the existence of the Presidential Decree of 1977 that governs chieftaincy issues in Cameroon (Chieftaincy Law)?

**Response:** Slightly more than the majority, 236 (56.5%), were aware of the existence of the Presidential Decree of 1977 (Chieftaincy Law) that governs Chieftaincy Succession in Cameroon.

**Question 2:** Do Manyu indigenes understand the Chieftaincy Decree of 1977 that governs Chieftaincy Succession in Cameroon?

**Response:** Less than the majority of Manyu indigenes, 156 (37.3%), understand the chieftaincy decree of 1977 that re-organized of Manyu indigenes Chieftaincy Succession in Cameroon.
**Question 3:** Do Manyu indigenes understand Ordinance No. 74 of 6 July 1974 that governs land tenure in Cameroon (Land Ordinances)?

**Response:** Less than the majority, 195 (46.7%), understand Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July 1974 that established land tenure rules in Cameroon (Land Ordinance).

**Question 4:** Do Manyu indigenes understand how the court system resolve disputes dealing with succession to property issues in Cameroon?

**Response:** More than the majority, 268 (64.1%), understand how the courts system resolve disputes dealing with succession to property.

**Question 5:** Are Manyu indigenes familiar with the Ekpe institution and the Ekpe model of conflict resolution?

**Response:** It was realized that generally 341 (81.6%) people were familiar with the Ekpe traditional institution.

**Question 6:** Do Manyu indigenes understand the Ekpe model of conflict resolution?

**Response:** It was realized that 326 (78%) of Manyu indigenes understand the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution.

More detailed information of these results is shown in Table 6.9 and 6.10 below.

In Table 6.9, the results for the awareness and understanding of the Presidential Decree of 1977 are shown.
Table 10

Distribution of Awareness and Knowledge of Chieftaincy Decree of 1977 by Background Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Indicators</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Awareness of the existence of Presidential Decree of 1977 (Chieftaincy Law)</th>
<th>Understanding of the Chieftaincy Decree of 1977</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>175(64.3%)</td>
<td>125(46.0%)</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>61(41.8%)</td>
<td>31(21.2%)</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.217; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td>V=0.244; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years living in the division</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>70(51.5%)</td>
<td>39(28.7%)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-30</td>
<td>89(53.6%)</td>
<td>60(36.1%)</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>49(69.0%)</td>
<td>37(52.1%)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>28(62.2%)</td>
<td>20(44.4%)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.130; p=0.069</td>
<td>V=0.170; p=0.007</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-35</td>
<td>80(50.3%)</td>
<td>48(30.2%)</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>73(58.4%)</td>
<td>46(36.8%)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>55(66.3%)</td>
<td>37(44.6%)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>28(54.9%)</td>
<td>25(49.0%)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.119; p=0.115</td>
<td>V=0.141; p=0.040</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School attainment</td>
<td>No formal education and primary</td>
<td>3(23.1%)</td>
<td>3(23.1%)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>75(47.8%)</td>
<td>45(28.7%)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>140(65.7%)</td>
<td>96(45.1%)</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.218; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td>V=0.174; p=0.003</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Civil servant</td>
<td>86(68.8%)</td>
<td>63(50.4%)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looking for work</td>
<td>18(40.0%)</td>
<td>8(17.8%)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8(57.1%)</td>
<td>7(50.0%)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>13(50.0%)</td>
<td>10(38.5%)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>86(54.8%)</td>
<td>54(34.4%)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>25(49.0%)</td>
<td>14(27.5%)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.186; p=0.013</td>
<td>V=0.220; p=0.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Awareness of the existence of Presidential Decree of 1977 (Chieftaincy Law) that governs chieftaincy succession in Cameroon was significantly dependent on gender whereby males were more aware than females. With regards to school attainment, those who have attained higher education were the most aware. As for occupation, civil servant were the most aware (p<0.05). This indicator was both dependent on age and duration of stay in the Manyu Division (p>0.05).

Concerning the understanding of the Chieftaincy Decree of 1977 that reorganized Chieftaincy Law in Cameroon, males had a better understanding as compared to females, those who had stayed longer in the division understood better, understanding increase with age and school attainment and civil servants understood the most and these associations were significant (p<0.05) as shown in Table 6.9.

The results for the awareness and understanding of the tools and systems of conflict resolution are presented in Table 6.10.

Table 11

*Distribution of Awareness and Knowledge of Conflict Resolution Tools/System by Background Indicators*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Indicators</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Understanding of Land Ordinance of 1974</th>
<th>Understanding of the Ekpe conflict resolution</th>
<th>Understanding of the court system conflict resolution</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>129 (47.4%)</td>
<td>227 (83.5%)</td>
<td>174 (64.0%)</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>66 (45.2%)</td>
<td>99 (67.8%)</td>
<td>94 (64.4%)</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.021; p=0.664</td>
<td>V=0.180; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years living in the division</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>72 (52.9%)</td>
<td>87 (64.0%)</td>
<td>93 (68.4%)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-30</td>
<td>70 (42.2%)</td>
<td>135 (81.3%)</td>
<td>103 (62.0%)</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>38 (53.5%)</td>
<td>62 (87.3%)</td>
<td>48 (67.6%)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>15 (33.3%)</td>
<td>42 (93.3%)</td>
<td>24 (53.3%)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Normally for each of the indicators, we are supposed to have two categories that “is aware and not aware” for the ‘existence of Presidential Decree of 1977 (Chieftaincy Law)’ that governs chieftaincy succession in Cameroon and “understand and do not understand” for ‘the chieftaincy decree of 1977 that re-organized chieftaincy law in Cameroon’. In order to save space and put the two pieces of information in the same
“not aware and do not understand” were then silent. By going this way, we avoid a congested table and complementary information are better presented.

As far as the understanding of Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974 that established land tenure rules in Cameroon (Land Ordinance) was concerned, it increased with duration of stay in the community and level of school attainment. Civil servants understood Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974 the most and these associations were significant (p<0.05). It was not dependent of gender and age (p>0.05) as shown in Table 6.10.

The understanding of how the Ekpe society resolve conflicts was significantly dependent on gender as males understood better than females. With regards to duration of stay in Manyu Division, those who had stayed longer understood better. With regards to age, the understanding increased with age (p<0.05). The understanding of how Ekpe society resolves conflicts was not dependent on school attainment and type of occupation (p>0.05) as shown in Table 6.10.

As far as understanding how the court system resolves disputes dealing with succession to property was concerned, it was significantly dependent only on occupation, as civil servants understood the most (p<0.05) as shown in the table above.

**Research Hypotheses**

**Research hypothesis 1.** The central government administration system is less likely to resolve chieftaincy disputes than the Ekpe model in Manyu Division.

**RH1 (a):** The indigenes are less happy with the role of the administration in appointing chiefs than with the Ekpe model.
RH1 (b): The indigenes are less happy with the administrative process of resolving dispute than with the Ekpe model.

One hundred and seven participants making a proportion of 25.6% had had a conflict that was resolved by the administration (Divisional Officer or Senior Divisional Officer).

Figure 14. Satisfaction with Powers Given to Authorities. Notes: $\chi^2$-test: $\chi^2=131.05$; df=2; $p<0.001$ and $\chi^2$-test: $\chi^2=135.70$; df=2; $p<0.001$ Satisfaction with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division and respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon.

Less than the majority of the participants, 102 (24.4%), were satisfied with powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division; among those participants 26 (6.2%) were “very satisfied” and
this difference was statistically significant (p<0.05) as shown in Figure 6.10. Also, less than the majority, 111, were satisfied with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon and the proportion was 26.6%, among which 37 (8.9%) were very satisfied and this difference was statistically significant (p<0.05) as shown in Figure 6.10. Then, research hypothesis is accepted.

In Table 6.11, the level of satisfaction with the powers given to authorities is presented in relation to background indicators.

Table 12

*Satisfaction with Power Given to Divisional Officer/Senior Divisional Officer by Background Indicators*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background Indicators</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to authorities by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division</th>
<th>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to authorities by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>69(25.4%)</td>
<td>76(27.9%)</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>33(22.6%)</td>
<td>35(24.0%)</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>V=0.070; p=0.357</td>
<td>V=0.067; p=0.395</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>32(23.5%)</td>
<td>30(22.1%)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-30</td>
<td>43(25.9%)</td>
<td>42(25.3%)</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>12(16.9%)</td>
<td>21(29.6%)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>15(33.3%)</td>
<td>18(40.0%)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>V=0.186; p=0.024</td>
<td>V=0.193; p=0.017</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18-35</td>
<td>48(30.2%)</td>
<td>51(32.1%)</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>25(20.0%)</td>
<td>27(21.6%)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>16(19.3%)</td>
<td>19(22.9%)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>13(25.5%)</td>
<td>14(27.5%)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background Indicators</td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to authorities by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division</td>
<td>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to authorities by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School attainment</td>
<td>No formal education and primary</td>
<td>3(23.1%)</td>
<td>3(23.1%)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>41(26.1%)</td>
<td>40(25.5%)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>48(22.5%)</td>
<td>52(24.4%)</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Civil servant</td>
<td>31(24.8%)</td>
<td>39(31.2%)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LOOKING FOR WORK</td>
<td>8(178%)</td>
<td>9(20.0%)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>1(7.1%)</td>
<td>1(7.1%)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RETIRED</td>
<td>5(19.2%)</td>
<td>5(19.2%)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SELF-EMPLOYED</td>
<td>43(27.4%)</td>
<td>44(28.0%)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>14(27.5%)</td>
<td>13(25.5%)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAVE HAD A CONFLICT THAT WAS RESOLVED BY THE ADMINISTRATION</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>63(20.3%)</td>
<td>79(25.4%)</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>39(36.4%)</td>
<td>32(29.9%)</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS AWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREES OF 1977 (CHIEFTAINCY LAW)</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>38(20.9%)</td>
<td>39(21.4%)</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>64(27.1%)</td>
<td>72(30.5%)</td>
<td>268</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the Chieftaincy Decree of 1977</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>47(17.9%)</td>
<td>46(17.6%)</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>55(35.3%)</td>
<td>65(41.7%)</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cramer's V

V=0.133; p=0.283
V=0.131; p=0.310
V=0.136; p=0.134
V=0.154; p=0.058
V=0.193; p=0.111
V=0.212; p=0.044
V=0.178; p=0.001
V=0.045; p=0.661
V=0.192; p<0.001
V=0.227; p<0.001
V=0.219; p<0.001
V=0.290; p<0.001
Satisfaction with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs was dependent on duration of stay in Manyu Division; those who have stayed longest were the most satisfied. In addition to that, those who have had a conflict that was resolved by the administration (Divisional Officer or Senior Divisional Officer), those who were aware of the existence of Presidential Decree of 1977 (Chieftaincy Law) that governs Chieftaincy Succession in Cameroon, and those who understand the Chieftaincy Decree of 1977 that re-organized Chieftaincy Law in Cameroon were the most satisfied \( p<0.05 \) as shown in Table 6.11.

Satisfaction with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon was dependent on duration of stay in the community; those who have stayed longest in Manyu Division were the most satisfied. Satisfaction was also dependent on occupation as civil servant were the most satisfied. Besides that, those who had had a conflict that was resolved by the administration (Divisional Officer or Senior Divisional Officer), those who were aware of the existence of Presidential Decree of 1977 (Chieftaincy Law) that governs Chieftaincy Succession in Cameroon, and those who understand the Chieftaincy Decree of 1977 that re-organized Chieftaincy Law in Cameroon were the most satisfied \( p<0.05 \) as shown in Table 6.11.

**Research hypothesis 2.** The legal system/court is less likely to resolve land dispute and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division.

Research hypothesis 2 is sub-divided into 2 sub hypotheses:
**RH2 (a):** The legal system/court is less likely to resolve land disputes than the Ekpe Model in Manyu Division.

**RH2 (b):** The legal system is less likely to resolve succession to property disputes than the Ekpe Model in Manyu Division.

![Bar chart](chart.png)

*Figure 15. Participants’ Understanding of Land Ordinance and Court’s Resolution of Property Conflicts*

Land Ordinance was perceived as understood by less than the majority, 195 (46.7%), while the majority, 268 (64.1%), said they understand how the court system work (see Figure 6.11).
Figure 16. Level of Satisfaction with Legal System/Court. Note. $\chi^2$-test: $\chi^2=63.95$; df=2; $p<0.001$ and $\chi^2$-test: $\chi^2=129.56$; df=2; $p<0.001$

In relation to sub-hypothesis RH2 (a), less than the majority, 103 (24.6%), were satisfied with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board by the Land Ordinance to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon. The hypothesis is then accepted for land dispute.

In relation to sub-hypothesis RH2 (b), the majority, 228 (54.5%), were satisfied with the way the courts system resolve succession to property disputes and the difference was significant (see Figure 6.12). Therefore, the hypothesis was rejected for disputes related to succession to property.

Satisfaction with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board by the Land Ordinance to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon was not dependent on gender, duration of stay in the community, age, occupation, and school attainment.
(p>0.05), but it was perceived that those who understand Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974, that established land tenure rules in Cameroon (Land Ordinance), were more satisfied as well as those who understand how the courts system resolves disputes dealing with succession to property and these associations were significant (p<0.05) as shown in Table 6.12.

In the same vein, satisfaction with the way the court system resolves succession to property disputes was not dependent on gender, duration of stay in Manyu Division, age, occupation, and school attainment (p>0.05), but it was perceived that those who understand Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974, that established land tenure rules in Cameroon (Land Ordinance), were more satisfied as well as those who understand how the courts system resolves disputes dealing with succession to property and these associations were significant (p<0.05) as shown in Table 6.12.

Table 13

*Satisfaction with Land Consultative Board and Court System by Background Indicators*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background indicators</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Satisfied with the powers given to the land consultative board to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon</th>
<th>Satisfied with the way the court system resolves succession to property disputes</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>69(25.4%)</td>
<td>145(53.3%)</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>34(23.3%)</td>
<td>83(56.8%)</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.051; p=0.575</td>
<td>V=0.038; p=0.739</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>36(26.5%)</td>
<td>73(53.7%)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>living in the division</td>
<td>16-30</td>
<td>32(19.3%)</td>
<td>93(56.0%)</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>22(31.0%)</td>
<td>38(53.5%)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>13(28.9%)</td>
<td>24(53.3%)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.135; p=0.267</td>
<td>V=0.078; p=0.864</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18-35</td>
<td>41(25.8%)</td>
<td>88(55.3%)</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Background indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Satisfied with the powers given to the land consultative board to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon</th>
<th>Satisfied with the way the court system resolves succession to property disputes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>27 (21.6%)</td>
<td>64 (51.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>20 (24.1%)</td>
<td>47 (56.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56+</td>
<td>15 (29.4%)</td>
<td>29 (56.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>V = 0.053; p = 0.827</td>
<td>V = 0.061; p = 0.957</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School attainment**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Satisfied with the powers given to the land consultative board to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon</th>
<th>Satisfied with the way the court system resolves succession to property disputes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No formal education and primary</td>
<td>4 (30.8%)</td>
<td>8 (61.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>31 (19.7%)</td>
<td>82 (52.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>54 (25.4%)</td>
<td>123 (57.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>V = 0.095; p = 0.482</td>
<td>V = 0.100; p = 0.428</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Occupation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Satisfied with the powers given to the land consultative board to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon</th>
<th>Satisfied with the way the court system resolves succession to property disputes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Civil servant</td>
<td>37 (29.6%)</td>
<td>80 (64.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking for work</td>
<td>13 (28.9%)</td>
<td>18 (40.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2 (14.3%)</td>
<td>6 (42.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>7 (26.9%)</td>
<td>10 (38.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>33 (21.0%)</td>
<td>84 (53.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>11 (21.6%)</td>
<td>30 (58.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>V = 0.199; p = 0.085</td>
<td>V = 0.200; p = 0.079</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Understanding Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Satisfied with the powers given to the land consultative board to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon</th>
<th>Satisfied with the way the court system resolves succession to property disputes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>46 (20.6%)</td>
<td>88 (39.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>57 (29.2%)</td>
<td>140 (71.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>V = 0.310; p &lt; 0.001</td>
<td>V = 0.324; p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Understanding how the courts system resolves succession property disputes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding</th>
<th>Satisfied with the powers given to the land consultative board to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon</th>
<th>Satisfied with the way the court system resolves succession to property disputes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>31 (20.7%)</td>
<td>27 (18.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>72 (26.9%)</td>
<td>201 (75.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>V = 0.185; p &lt; 0.001</td>
<td>V = 0.575; p &lt; 0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Research hypothesis 3.** The traditional Ekpe institution is more likely to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division.

Research hypothesis 3 has been sub-divided into 3 (a), 3 (b), and 3 (c) sub-hypotheses.

**RH3 (a):** The traditional Ekpe institution is more likely to resolve chieftaincy dispute than the formal administration.

**RH3 (b):** The Ekpe Model is more likely to resolve land disputes than the Land Consultative Boards.

**RH3 (c):** The Ekpe Model is more likely to resolve succession to property disputes than the courts in Manyu Division.

![Figure 17. Knowledge of Traditional Institution](image)

Generally, people were familiar with Ekpe institution, 341 (81.6%). Besides, 326 participants (78.0%) understand how the Ekpe society resolve conflicts and less than the majority, 178 (42.6%), had had a conflict that was resolved with the Ekpe model as shown in Figure 6.13.
The majority of participants, 260 (62.2%), were satisfied with the way Ekpe resolves conflicts and 139 (33.3%) were very satisfied (see Figure 6.14).

Logistic regression analysis was used to depict significant predictors of perceived ability of Ekpe to resolve disputes as highlighted on Table 6.13. These predictors are those with $p < 0.05$. Table 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, and 6.18 back Table 6.13 by being more explicit.
Table 14

*Logistic Regression Model Depicting Significant Predictors of Perceived Ability of Ekpe to Resolve Disputes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Effect</th>
<th>Model Fitting Criteria</th>
<th>Likelihood Ratio Tests</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-2 Log Likelihood of</td>
<td>Chi-Square</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reduced Model</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>4.386E2</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>443.737</td>
<td>5.100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>440.536</td>
<td>1.899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of year living in Manyu Division</td>
<td>446.948</td>
<td>8.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest level of schooling attained</td>
<td>446.043</td>
<td>7.407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>448.570</td>
<td>9.933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have had a conflict that was resolved by the formal administration</td>
<td>442.093</td>
<td>3.457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is aware of the existence of Presidential Decree of 1977</td>
<td>438.808</td>
<td>.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the Chieftaincy Decree of 1977 that re-organized chieftaincy law</td>
<td>439.795</td>
<td>1.158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to authorities by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division</td>
<td>450.954</td>
<td>12.317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to authorities by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon</td>
<td>440.946</td>
<td>2.309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974</td>
<td>441.318</td>
<td>2.682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board to resolve land disputes</td>
<td>455.852</td>
<td>17.215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how the courts system resolves disputes dealing with succession to property</td>
<td>438.697</td>
<td>.061</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of satisfaction with the way the courts system resolve succession to property disputes</td>
<td>464.812</td>
<td>26.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is familiar with the Ekpe traditional institution</td>
<td>445.479</td>
<td>6.842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how the Ekpe society resolves conflicts</td>
<td>456.017</td>
<td>17.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have had a conflict that was resolved by the Ekpe Society</td>
<td>450.183</td>
<td>11.547</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The predictive level of individual indicators was appraised using the Log
Likelihood Ratio of the Logistic Regression test, but the Wald statistics could also be
used to this effect and it is more discriminatory. Below is the Wald statistics.

Table 15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables in the Equation</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
<th>Exp(B)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.079</td>
<td>.171</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.645</td>
<td>.924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.250</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.536</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.464</td>
<td>1.284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of year living in Manyu Division</td>
<td>-.175</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>.905</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.342</td>
<td>.840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest Level of Schooling Attained</td>
<td>-.115</td>
<td>.211</td>
<td>.299</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.585</td>
<td>.891</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Status</td>
<td>-.025</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.772</td>
<td>.976</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have had a conflict that was resolved by the formal administration</td>
<td>.033</td>
<td>.345</td>
<td>.009</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.924</td>
<td>1.034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is aware of the existence of Presidential Decree of 1977 (Chieftaincy Law)</td>
<td>.303</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>.601</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.438</td>
<td>1.353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the chieftaincy decree of 1977</td>
<td>.513</td>
<td>.346</td>
<td>2.200</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.138</td>
<td>1.670</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to the authorities by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division</td>
<td>.094</td>
<td>.157</td>
<td>.359</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.549</td>
<td>1.099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to the authorities by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon</td>
<td>-.262</td>
<td>.149</td>
<td>3.103</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.078</td>
<td>.770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974</td>
<td>-.098</td>
<td>.140</td>
<td>.489</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.484</td>
<td>.907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board to resolve land disputes</td>
<td>-.298</td>
<td>.390</td>
<td>.582</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.445</td>
<td>.742</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how the courts system resolves disputes dealing with succession to property</td>
<td>.310</td>
<td>.129</td>
<td>5.722</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>1.363</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Wald statistics is more discriminatory, but inclusive (comparing with the Likelihood Ratio test) and, unlike the Likelihood Statistics, highlights two significant predictors; therefore revealing that good understanding of how the court resolves conflict coupled with the understanding of how the Ekpe society resolve conflict could improve on the ability of the Ekpe model to resolve conflict.

Satisfaction with the way Ekpe resolves conflict is presented in Table 6.15.

Table 6.15

Satisfaction with the Way Ekpe Resolves Conflict by Background Indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background indicators</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Is familiar with Ekpe institution</th>
<th>Had conflict that was resolved by the Ekpe society</th>
<th>Satisfied with the way Ekpe resolve conflict</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>227(83.5%)</td>
<td>139(51.1%)</td>
<td>178(65.4%)</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>114(78.1%)</td>
<td>39(26.7%)</td>
<td>82(56.2%)</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>99(72.8%)</td>
<td>34(25.0%)</td>
<td>73(53.7%)</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-30</td>
<td>138(83.1%)</td>
<td>71(42.8%)</td>
<td>108(65.1%)</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>62(87.3%)</td>
<td>42(59.2%)</td>
<td>46(64.8%)</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>42(93.3%)</td>
<td>31(68.9%)</td>
<td>33(73.3%)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td>18-35</td>
<td>120(75.5%)</td>
<td>44(27.7%)</td>
<td>95(59.7%)</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>106(84.8%)</td>
<td>56(44.8%)</td>
<td>78(62.4%)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>66(79.5%)</td>
<td>42(50.6%)</td>
<td>52(62.7%)</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background indicators</td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Is familiar with Ekpe institution</td>
<td>Had conflict that was resolved by the Ekpe society</td>
<td>Satisfied with the way Ekpe resolve conflict</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>49(96.1%)</td>
<td>36(70.6%)</td>
<td>35(68.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.171; p=0.007</td>
<td>V=0.282; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td>V=0.123; p=0.385</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School attainment</td>
<td>No formal education and primary</td>
<td>9(69.2%)</td>
<td>8(61.5%)</td>
<td>9(69.2%)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>131(83.4%)</td>
<td>73(46.5%)</td>
<td>98(62.4%)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>171(80.3%)</td>
<td>74(34.7%)</td>
<td>128(60.1%)</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.070; p=0.396</td>
<td>V=0.141; p=0.022</td>
<td>V=0.104; p=0.392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Civil servant</td>
<td>106(84.8%)</td>
<td>46(36.8%)</td>
<td>80(64.0%)</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Looking for work</td>
<td>35(77.8%)</td>
<td>16(35.6%)</td>
<td>28(62.2%)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>11(78.6%)</td>
<td>4(28.6%)</td>
<td>5(35.7%)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>23(88.5%)</td>
<td>18(69.2%)</td>
<td>18(69.2%)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-employed</td>
<td>124(79.0%)</td>
<td>81(51.6%)</td>
<td>92(58.6%)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
<td>42(82.4%)</td>
<td>13(25.5%)</td>
<td>37(72.5%)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.084; p=0.712</td>
<td>V=0.233; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td>V=0.155; p=0.433</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is familiar with the Ekpe traditional institution</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td>171 (71.3)</td>
<td>19(24.7%)</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>170 (95.5%)</td>
<td>241(70.7%)</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.310; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td>V=0.309; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td>V=0.324; p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how Ekpe society resolve conflicts</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>29(31.5%)</td>
<td>4 (4.3)</td>
<td>16(17.4%)</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>312(95.7%)</td>
<td>174(53.4%)</td>
<td>244(74.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.411; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td>V=0.411; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td>V=0.629; p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Had conflict that was resolved by the Ekpe society</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>171 (71.3)</td>
<td></td>
<td>119(49.6%)</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>170 (95.5%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=0.309; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td>V=0.376; p&lt;0.001</td>
<td>V=0.376; p&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Familiarity with Ekpe institution increased with duration of stay in the community and age \((p<0.05)\), was not dependent on gender, school attainment and occupation \((p>0.05)\), and it was perceived that those who understand how Ekpe society resolves conflicts were more familiar with Ekpe institution; and the same happened with those who had had conflict resolved by the Ekpe society as shown in Table 6.15.

Males had conflicts that were resolved by the Ekpe society more than females. Those who have stayed longer in the division, the older, those with lower level of school attainment, the retired and the self-employed also had more conflicts resolved by Ekpe and these relationships were significant \((p<0.05)\) as shown in Table 6.15.

Males were more satisfied with the way Ekpe resolves conflict. In addition to that, satisfaction with the way Ekpe resolves conflict increased with duration of stay in the division \((p<0.05)\), but age, school attainment, and occupation were not significantly related \((p>0.05)\). Those who understand how Ekpe society resolve conflicts were more inclined to have conflict resolved by Ekpe \((p<0.05)\), as can be seen in Table 6.15.

Satisfaction with the way Ekpe resolves conflict was significantly related to gender \((p<0.05)\). Males were more satisfied than females and satisfaction increased with duration of stay in the community \((p<0.05)\). However, age, school attainment, and occupation were not significantly related \((p>0.05)\). It was perceived that those who were familiar with the Ekpe traditional institution were more satisfied. The same happened with those who understand the Ekpe society or who have had conflicts resolved by Ekpe and these associations were significant \((p<0.05)\) as it can be seen in Table 6.1.

More of those who were not satisfied with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration
respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon were satisfied with the way the Ekpe society resolves dispute. In the same vein, more of those who were not satisfied with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board by the Land Ordinance to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon were satisfied with the way the Ekpe society resolves disputes (p<0.05). Unlike the two first indicators, people were more satisfied with the way the courts system resolves succession to property disputes, but equally expressed satisfaction for the way the Ekpe society resolves disputes (see tables 6.16, 6.17 and 6.18).

The level of satisfaction with the “powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon” and “satisfaction with the way Ekpe resolves chieftaincy disputes” is presented in the table below.

Table 17

Association between Satisfaction with the Powers Given to Authorities and the Way Ekpe Resolves Conflicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to authorities to resolve chieftaincy disputes</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Unsatisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>41.0%</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>69.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>20.7%</td>
<td>60.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. V=0.242, p<0.001
The association between “satisfaction with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board by the Land Ordinance to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon” and “satisfaction with the way Ekpe resolves conflicts” is presented in Table 6.17.

Table 18

*Association between Satisfaction with the Powers Given to the Land Consultative Board and Satisfaction with the Way Ekpe Resolves Conflicts*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of satisfaction with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board to resolve land disputes</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Unsatisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>N 44</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 38.9%</td>
<td>16.8%</td>
<td>44.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
<td>N 28</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 13.9%</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>72.8%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>N 18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 17.5%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
<td>61.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N 90</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% 21.5%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* V=0.203, p<0.001

In Table 6.18, the association between “satisfaction with the way the courts system resolves succession to property disputes” and “satisfaction with the way Ekpe resolves conflicts” is presented.
Table 19

Association between Satisfaction with the Way the Courts System Resolves Disputes and Satisfaction with the Way Ekpe Resolves Conflicts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of satisfaction with the way the courts systems resolves disputes</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Unsatisfied</th>
<th>Satisfied</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>N 35</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>33.0%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsatisfied</td>
<td>N 17</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>20.2%</td>
<td>29.8%</td>
<td>50.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>N 38</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>N 90</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>418</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>21.5%</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>62.2%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. $V=0.192$, $p<0.001$

The difference in perception about the ability to resolve conflicts of the courts system, the formal administration, and Ekpe is shown in the next figure.
Figure 19. Comparing Perceived Conflict Resolution Ability between Court, Administration, and Ekpe. Note. a) \( \chi^2 \)-test: \( \chi^2=107.71, \text{df}=2, p<0.001 \); b) \( \chi^2 \)-test: \( \chi^2=103.23, \text{df}=2, p<0.001 \), and \( \chi^2 \)-test: \( \chi^2=175.72; \text{df}=2; p<0.001 \).

It was perceived by the majority of the participants, 242 (57.9%), that Ekpe could successfully resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division, the administration coming at the second position with a weight of 104 (24.9%), then the court 72 (17.2%) (see Figure 6.15) and this trend was not dependent of gender, age, duration of stay in the community, school attainment, or occupation. However, there was statistically enough evidence that those who understand the Ekpe believed more on its ability to resolve conflicts (see Table 6.13).

As far as land dispute was concerned, it was equally perceived by the majority, 221 (52.9%), that Ekpe could successfully resolved them, then come the court and the administration with almost equal proportions of 99 (23.7%) and 98 (23.4%) respectively (see Figure 6.15) and this trend was not dependent of gender, age, duration of stay in the community, school attainment, or occupation. However, there was statistically enough evidence that those who understand the Ekpe believed more on its ability to resolve land disputes (p<0.05). Those that have had a conflict that was resolved by the administration tend to believe more in the ability of Ekpe to resolve land conflict (p<0.05) as shown in Table 6.19 below.

Concerning succession to property dispute, people mostly believed in the court, 205 (49.0%), followed by Ekpe 146 (34.9%), and then the administration 67 (16.0%) as shown in figure 6.15. It was realized that females believed more in the court than males (p<0.05), that the older ones believed more in Ekpe (p<0.05), that those who had
succession to property dispute before believed more in Ekpe (p<0.05), that those who understand Ordinance N°. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974 that established land tenure rules in Cameroon (Land Ordinance) believe more in the court system, and those who understand how Ekpe society resolves conflict believe more in Ekpe (see Table 6.20).

In the next table, the perception about the ability that the courts system, the formal administration, and Ekpe have to resolve chieftaincy disputes is presented in a detailed way.

Table 20

*Distribution of Who Is Perceived to Successfully Resolve Chieftaincy Disputes in Manyu Division by Background Indicators*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background indicators</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Successfully resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Cramer’s V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration Court Ekpe</td>
<td></td>
<td>V=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>65(23.9%) 44(16.2%) 163(59.9%)</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>V=0.057 p=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39(26.7%) 28(19.2%) 79(54.1%)</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>0.508</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years living in the division</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>33(24.3%) 33(24.3%) 70(51.5%)</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>V=0.150 p=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-30</td>
<td>45(27.1%) 23(13.9%) 98(59.0%)</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>0.149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>18(25.4%) 8(11.3%) 45(63.4%)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>V=0.129 p=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>8(17.8%) 8(17.8%) 29(64.4%)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.326</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18-35</td>
<td>44(27.7%) 29(18.2%) 86(54.1%)</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>V=0.122 p=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>35(28.0%) 19(15.2%) 71(56.8%)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>0.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>19(22.9%) 15(18.1%) 49(59.0%)</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>V=0.160 p=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>6(11.8%) 9(17.6%) 36(70.6%)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>0.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>No formal education/ primary</td>
<td>2(15.4%) 2(15.4%) 9(69.2%)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>V=0.122 p=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>44(28.0%) 19(12.1%) 94(59.9%)</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>0.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>51(23.9%) 44(20.7%) 118(55.4%)</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>V=0.160 p=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School attainment</td>
<td>Civil servant</td>
<td>40(32.0%) 19(15.2%) 66(52.8%)</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>V=0.160 p=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>LOOKING FOR WORK</td>
<td>8(17.8%) 8(17.8%) 29(64.4%)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>0.381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>1(7.1%) 5(35.7%) 8(57.1%)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>V=0.160 p=</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background indicators</td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Successfully resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Court</td>
<td>Ekpe</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>5(19.2%)</td>
<td>5(19.2%)</td>
<td>16(61.5%)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELF-EMPLOYED STUDENTS</td>
<td>39(24.8%)</td>
<td>28(17.8%)</td>
<td>90(57.3%)</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HAVE HAD A CONFLICT RESOLVED BY ADMINISTRATION</td>
<td>11(21.6%)</td>
<td>7(13.7%)</td>
<td>33(64.7%)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>80(25.7%)</td>
<td>59(19.0%)</td>
<td>172(55.3%)</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YES</td>
<td>24(22.4%)</td>
<td>13(12.1%)</td>
<td>70(65.4%)</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is aware of the existence of Presidential Decree of 1977</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>45(24.7%)</td>
<td>34(18.7%)</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Chiefaincy Law)</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>59(25.0%)</td>
<td>38(16.1%)</td>
<td>236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand the Chieftaincy Decree of 1977</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>58(22.1%)</td>
<td>45(17.2%)</td>
<td>262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>46(29.5%)</td>
<td>27(17.3%)</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTAN D ORDINANCE N°. 74-1 OF 6 JULY, 1974</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>64(28.7%)</td>
<td>38(17.0%)</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>40(20.5%)</td>
<td>34(17.4%)</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTAN D HOW EKPE SOCIETY RESOLVES CONFLICT</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>32(34.8%)</td>
<td>39(42.4%)</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>72(22.1%)</td>
<td>33(10.1%)</td>
<td>326</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 6.20, the perception about the ability that the courts system, the formal administration, and Ekpe have to resolve land disputes is presented in a detailed way.
Table 21

*Distribution of Who is Perceived to Successfully Resolve Land Disputes in Manyu Division by Background Indicators*

| Background indicators | Categories | Successfully resolve land disputes in Manyu Division | | | N | Cramer’s V
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 59(21.7%) | 60(22.1%) | 153(56.3%) | 272 | V=0.092  
| | Female | 39(26.7%) | 39(26.7%) | 68(46.6%) | 146 | p=0.168 |
| | 5-15 | 34(25.0%) | 32(23.5%) | 70(51.5%) | 136 | V=0.112  
| | 16-30 | 39(23.5%) | 46(27.7%) | 81(48.8%) | 166 | p=0.507 |
| | 31-45 | 16(22.5%) | 14(19.7%) | 41(57.7%) | 71 | V=0.131  
| | 46+ | 9(20.0%) | 7(15.6%) | 29(64.4%) | 45 | p=0.115 |
| | 18-35 | 44(27.7%) | 42(26.4%) | 73(45.9%) | 159 | V=0.147  
| | 36-45 | 28(22.4%) | 31(24.8%) | 66(52.8%) | 125 | p=0.081 |
| | 46-55 | 16(19.3%) | 17(20.5%) | 50(60.2%) | 83 | |
| | 56+ | 10(19.6%) | 9(17.6%) | 32(62.7%) | 51 | |
| School attainment | No formal education/primary | 4(30.8%) | 1(7.7%) | 8(61.5%) | 13 | V=0.193  
| | Secondary | 34(21.7%) | 30(19.1%) | 93(59.2%) | 157 | p=0.115 |
| | Higher | 52(24.4%) | 61(28.6%) | 100(46.9%) | 213 | |
| | Civil servant | 34(27.2%) | 27(21.6%) | 64(51.2%) | 125 | |
| | LOOKING FOR WORK | 9(20.0%) | 12(26.7%) | 24(53.3%) | 45 | |
| Occupation | OTHER | 1(7.1%) | 9(64.3%) | 4(28.6%) | 14 | V=0.125  
| | RETIRED | 6(23.1%) | 5(19.2%) | 15(57.7%) | 26 | p=0.039 |
| | SELF-EMPLOYED | 38(24.2%) | 34(21.7%) | 85(54.1%) | 157 | |
| | STUDENTS | 10(19.6%) | 12(23.5%) | 29(56.9%) | 51 | |
| Have had a conflict resolved by the administration | No | 75(24.1%) | 82(26.4%) | 154(49.5%) | 311 | V=0.066  
| | YES | 23(21.5%) | 17(15.9%) | 67(62.6%) | 107 | p=0.474 |
| IS AWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE OF | No | 43(23.6%) | 48(26.4%) | 91(50.0%) | 182 | |
| | YES | 55(23.3%) | 51(21.6%) | 130(55.1%) | 236 | |
Concerning succession to property dispute, people mostly believed in the court, 205 (49.0%), followed by Ekpe, 146 (34.9%), and then the administration, 67 (16.0%), as shown in Figure 6.15. It was realized that females believed more in the court than males (p<0.05), that the older ones believed more in Ekpe (p<0.05), that those who had succession to property dispute before believed more in Ekpe (p<0.05), that those who understand Ordinance No. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974 that established land tenure rules in Cameroon (Land Ordinance) believe more in the court system and those who understand how Ekpe society resolves conflict believe more in Ekpe (see Table 6.21).
Table 22

*Distribution of Who is Perceived to Successfully Resolve Succession to Property Disputes in Manyu Division by Background Indicators*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Background indicators</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Successfully resolve succession to property disputes in Manyu Division</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Cram er’s V</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Court</td>
<td>Ekpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GENDER</td>
<td>MALE</td>
<td>41(15.1%)</td>
<td>124(45.6%)</td>
<td>107(39.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FEMALE</td>
<td>26(17.8%)</td>
<td>81(55.5%)</td>
<td>39(26.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of years living in the division</td>
<td>5-15</td>
<td>21(15.4%)</td>
<td>74(54.4%)</td>
<td>41(30.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16-30</td>
<td>32(19.3%)</td>
<td>81(48.8%)</td>
<td>53(31.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>31-45</td>
<td>10(14.1%)</td>
<td>29(40.8%)</td>
<td>32(45.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46+</td>
<td>4(8.9%)</td>
<td>21(46.7%)</td>
<td>20(44.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18-35</td>
<td>31(19.5%)</td>
<td>18(14.4%)</td>
<td>13(15.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36-45</td>
<td>18(14.4%)</td>
<td>58(46.4%)</td>
<td>49(39.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46-55</td>
<td>13(15.7%)</td>
<td>44(53.0%)</td>
<td>26(31.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56+</td>
<td>5(9.8%)</td>
<td>19(37.3%)</td>
<td>27(52.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No formal education and primary</td>
<td>4(30.8%)</td>
<td>4(30.8%)</td>
<td>5(38.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>27(17.2%)</td>
<td>70(44.6%)</td>
<td>60(38.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Higher</td>
<td>32(15.0%)</td>
<td>118(55.4%)</td>
<td>63(29.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civil servant</td>
<td>21(16.8%)</td>
<td>66(52.8%)</td>
<td>38(30.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LOOKING FOR WORK</td>
<td>5(11.1%)</td>
<td>23(51.1%)</td>
<td>17(27.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>OTHER</td>
<td>1(7.1%)</td>
<td>8(57.1%)</td>
<td>5(35.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RETIRED</td>
<td>4(15.4%)</td>
<td>12(46.2%)</td>
<td>10(38.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SELF-EMPLOYED</td>
<td>27(17.2%)</td>
<td>70(44.6%)</td>
<td>60(38.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>STUDENTS</td>
<td>9(17.6%)</td>
<td>26(51.0%)</td>
<td>16(31.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>53(17.0%)</td>
<td>163(52.4%)</td>
<td>95(30.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>14(13.1%)</td>
<td>42(39.3%)</td>
<td>51(47.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>33(18.1%)</td>
<td>90(49.5%)</td>
<td>59(32.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>34(14.4%)</td>
<td>115(48.7%)</td>
<td>87(36.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background indicators</td>
<td>Categories</td>
<td>Successfully resolve succession to property disputes in Manyu Division</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Cramer’s V</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>Court</td>
<td>Ekpe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEGREE OF 1977</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>40(15.3%)</td>
<td>133(50.8%)</td>
<td>89(34.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(CHIEFTAINCY LAW)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>27(17.3%)</td>
<td>72(46.2%)</td>
<td>57(36.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDERSTAND THE</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>43(19.3%)</td>
<td>96(43.0%)</td>
<td>84(37.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHIEFTAINCY DEGREE OF</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>24(12.3%)</td>
<td>109(55.9%)</td>
<td>62(31.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1977</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>31(33.7%)</td>
<td>48(52.2%)</td>
<td>13(14.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36(11.0%)</td>
<td>157(48.2%)</td>
<td>133(40.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Ordinance</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N°. 74-1 of 6 July</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand how Ekpe</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>society resolves</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>conflict</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It should be recalled that the quantitative study was guided by three main hypotheses:

**RH1**: The central government administration system is less likely to resolve chieftaincy disputes than the Ekpe Model in Manyu Division.

**RH2**: The legal system/court is less likely to resolve land dispute and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division. Hypothesis 2 has been sub-divided into 2 (a) and 2 (b).

- **RH2 (a)**: The legal system/court is less likely to resolve land dispute than the Ekpe Model.
- **RH2 (b)**: The legal system is less likely to resolve succession to property disputes than the Ekpe Model in Manyu Division.
RH3: The traditional Ekpe institution is more likely to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division. Hypothesis 3 was sub-divided into 3 (a), 3 (b), and 3 (c).

- **RH3 (a):** The traditional Ekpe institution is more likely to resolve chieftaincy dispute than the formal administration.

- **RH3 (b):** The Ekpe Model is more likely to resolve land disputes than the Land Consultative Boards.

- **RH3 (c):** The Ekpe Model is more likely to resolve succession to property disputes than the courts in Manyu Division.

The hypotheses are accepted for the settlement of chieftaincy and land disputes (p<0.05), but not for succession to property dispute; whereby neither the court nor Ekpe was perceived effective by the majority though opinions weighted more in the favor of the court system.

**Summary of Findings**

The findings of this study are presented below.

Table 23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research hypothesis</th>
<th>Test statistics</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RH 1:</strong> The central government administration system is less likely to resolve chieftaincy disputes than the Ekpe Model in Manyu Division.</td>
<td>( \chi^2 = 131.05 ) ( \text{df} = 2 ) ( p &lt; 0.001 )</td>
<td>Less than the majority was satisfied with powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division 102 (24.4%), among which 26 (6.2%) were very satisfied and this difference was statistically significant (p&lt;0.05).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| H1 (a): Manyu indigenes do not want the government administration to appoint chiefs in Manyu Division | \( \chi^2 = 135.70 \) \( \text{df} = 2 \) \( p < 0.001 \) | Less than the majority was satisfied with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior |
administration system is less likely to resolve chieftaincy disputes better than the Ekpe model in Manyu Division.

**RH2:** The legal system/court is less likely to resolve land dispute and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division.

- **H2 (a):** The legal system/court is less likely to resolve land disputes than the Ekpe model in Manyu Division.  
  \[ \chi^2 = 63.95 \]  
  \[ \text{df} = 2 \]  
  \[ p < 0.001 \]

- **H2 (b):** The legal system is less likely to resolve succession to property disputes than the Ekpe model in Manyu Division.  
  \[ \chi^2 = 129.56 \]  
  \[ \text{df} = 2 \]  
  \[ p < 0.001 \]

**RH3:** The traditional Ekpe institution is more likely to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division.

- **H3 (a):** The traditional Ekpe institution is more likely to resolve chieftaincy disputes than the formal administration.  
  \[ \chi^2 = 175.72 \]  
  \[ \text{df} = 2 \]  
  \[ p < 0.001 \]

- **H3 (b):** The traditional Ekpe institution is more likely to resolve land disputes than the Land Consultative Boards.  
  \[ \chi^2 = 107.71 \]  
  \[ \text{df} = 2 \]  
  \[ p < 0.001 \]

- **H3 (c):** The traditional Ekpe institution is more likely to resolve succession to property disputes than the courts in Manyu Division.  
  \[ \chi^2 = 103.23 \]  
  \[ \text{df} = 2 \]  
  \[ p < 0.001 \]
Chapter 7: Discussion

This study described the Ekpe model of conflict resolution and explored if and how Ekpe could be employed to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division and Cameroon in general. Qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry were used to examine the phenomenon and to look for answers to questions raised in the study. The experiences of Manyu indigenes with chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes, the Ekpe model of conflict resolution, as well as the customs and traditional practices of Manyu indigenes were investigated. I observed four cases in which the Ekpe model was used to resolve disputes and conducted qualitative interviews with eight Manyu indigenes that were at least eighteen years old, had lived in Manyu Division for at least five years after reaching eighteen years old, and were knowledgeable in the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. I also conducted one focused group interview with Manyu indigenes living in Mamfe town. Surveys were also used to collect data for the quantitative study in which Manyu indigenes living in various cities in Cameroon were asked to answer questions about the Chieftaincy Decree that governs chieftaincy issues in Cameroon, the Land Ordinances that govern land title issues, the jurisdiction of the courts in resolving succession to property disputes in Manyu Division, and their opinion about the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution.

In the process of the research, data collected revealed information about historical background, the situation of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property issues in Cameroon, the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, the role of elders, women and youths, the role of ceremonies, the role of symbols, the effect of colonization, modernization, and religion. The revelations were clustered into nine themes including; weaknesses of the
formal legal and administrative process of conflict resolution, the Ekpe structure, resolution and reconciliation – win-win solution, acceptance and participation in the Ekpe model, forgiveness and healing, conflict of laws, participation and acceptance of the Ekpe model of conflict resolution, symbols and significance in the Ekpe model (role of symbols), and strengths and challenges to the Ekpe model.

**Interpretation of Findings and Discussion**

The Ekpe institution blends governance, conflict resolution, and social activities in communities that acquire the institution. Whereas the role of Ekpe in governance has greatly diminished, it is instrumental in social activities and Manyu indigenes rely on very much to resolve conflicts. The Ekpe model is designed to resolve conflicts between individuals, families, and group. Almost all the individual and focused group interview participants said that the goal of the Ekpe model is reconciliation, peace, and harmony in the community. During the course of observing the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, I observed that the optimum goal of the Ekpe process is reconciliation of the conflicting parties.

The findings of this study are based overwhelmingly on data that emerged in the field. For example, the interview participants and I described the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution and the description of the interview participants was corroborated by my observation. Also, most research participants said they did not understand the formal process of conflict resolution and that it was expensive. This assertion was corroborated by Manyu indigenes in the quantitative study wherein 341 (81.6%) of those surveyed said they were familiar with the Ekpe model of resolving conflicts and 326 (78.0%) said they understand how the Ekpe society resolves conflicts, irrespective of the
fact that less than the majority -178 (42.6%) - had had conflict that was resolved by the Ekpe institution. In the same vein, the majority 260 (62.2%) were satisfied with the way Ekpe resolve conflicts and 139 (33.3%) were very satisfied (see Figure 6.14) and this difference was statistically significant (p<0.05).

On the other hand, less than the majority was satisfied with powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division, 102 (24.4%), among which only 26 (6.2%) were very satisfied and this difference was statistically significant (p<0.05). Also, less than the majority was satisfied with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/ Governor/ Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division, and the proportion was 26.6% (111), among which 8.9 % (37) were very satisfied and this difference was statistically significant (p<0.05).

With regards to land disputes, less than the majority, 103 (24.6%), was satisfied with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board by the Land Ordinance to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division. However, the majority, 228 (54.5%), was satisfied with the way the courts system resolve succession to property disputes and the difference was significant.

Logistic regression analysis was used to depict significant predictors of perceived ability of Ekpe to resolve disputes. These predictors are those with values p<0.05. Familiarity with Ekpe institution increased with duration of stay in the community and age (p<0.05), was not dependent on gender, school attainment, or occupation (p>0.05)
and it was perceived that those who understand Ekpe model of conflict resolution were more familiar with Ekpe institution. The same result was recorded with those who have had conflict resolved with the use of the Ekpe model. Also, the study revealed that males were more satisfied with the way Ekpe resolves conflict. Also, satisfaction with the Ekpe model of conflict resolution increased with duration of stay in the division (p<0.05) but was not dependent on age, school attainment, or occupation (p>0.05). Those who understand how Ekpe society resolves conflicts were more inclined to have conflict resolved by Ekpe (p<0.05) as shown in Table 6.15.

The findings of this study contribute significantly to the state of the art of the field. That is, Manyu indigenes showed a preference for a system of conflict resolution that is imbedded in their indigenous practice. One in which they are fully involved in the process and can claim ownership to. They feel secured relying on the Ekpe model to resolve their disputes and feel insecure whenever they have to face the formal administrative and legal systems and process of conflict resolution. Research participants said a) the Ekpe model of conflict resolution involves the inclusion of all in the community; b) the process is in the form of dialogue opened to participation by all in the community; c) the goal of the model is for an outcome whereby the conflicting parties are happy to live with; and d) the Ekpe model guarantees protection of the rights of youths, women, and elders. The model being generally accepted by Manyu indigenes as well as non Manyu indigenes are significant findings of the study that contributes greatly to the field of indigenous studies. This chapter explores and discusses the themes that emerged in greater detail as a coherent model.
Discussion and Interpretation of the Ekpe Model

The Ekpe model of conflict resolution is the oldest institution ever used by the indigenes of Manyu. Prior to the exploration of Africa by Europeans, Ekpe functioned in governance and the Ekpe model of conflict resolution was used to resolve disputes in the respective communities that acquired the institution. Participation in the Ekpe conflict resolution process is voluntary. The goal of the Ekpe process is reconciliation and it culminates with a feast during which all in the community takes part. The feasting is in adherence to the general feeling of oneness, as is the case with most indigenous institutions (Boege, 2006). The traditional beliefs and practices of Manyu indigenes are that all in the community should take part in the disclosure of facts in a conflict situation, hold those that bridge the peace of the community accountable, reconcile conflicting parties, and ensure order and peace reigns in the community.

Interview participants expressed faith and trust in the ability of the Ekpe model to peacefully resolve their disputes and feel unsafe in the formal administrative and legal process of conflict resolution. Both individual and focused group interview participants, and the majority of the participants in the quantitative surveys expressed their trust in their traditional practices, and believed in the feelings of protection when relying in the Ekpe model. Collectively, they felt secured relying in the Ekpe indigenous model to resolve disputes and reaffirmed their desire to self-determining the direction to take in resolving their disputes.

Discussion of the Emergent Themes

The focus of the indigenous method of conflict resolution is reconciliation, restitution, and restoration of harmonious relationship. In order to accomplish these goals,
focus is placed on a common understanding of what caused the conflict. In the process, the conflicting parties negotiate and come to an agreement on how the past was for them, what caused the conflict, and the person responsible for the conflict. Once the facts, cause of the conflict, and the truth are established, perpetrators are called to confess, apologize for their wrongful acts, and ask for forgiveness. The victims are also requested to accept the apologies and forgive (Boege, 2006). Indigenous systems give room for everyone in the community to participate in the disclosure of facts, hold offenders accountable for their actions, and reconcile all affected parties.

Individual and focused group interview participants expressed their desire to see an extension of the role of Ekpe in conflict resolution and their concerns about the role of the formal administrative and legal process of conflict resolution. Participants said they have faith and trust in the Ekpe model and process and feel unsafe with the formal administrative process of conflict resolution. Their opinion was that the Ekpe model reflects their identity and they want to be able to identify the institution they prefer to resolve their disputes. The quantitative study corroborated the opinions of the interview participants.

The findings of the study pointed out some revelations that were clustered into nine themes, which are discussed from this point on.

**Theme #1: Weaknesses of the formal legal and administrative process of conflict resolution.** Most of the individual and focused group interview participants said they do not understand and are not comfortable with the formal administrative and legal processes of resolving dispute in Cameroon. Most said the formal process is corrupt and too expensive for them, it takes time for a dispute to be resolved, and most of them, that
are illiterate, have to depend on someone else to write their statements. The opinion of the interview participants was echoed by participants in the quantitative study whereby a majority (54.8%) of Manyu indigenes showed dissatisfaction with the powers given to the administrative Officials (Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration) to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division, with just 24.4% being satisfied. Also, 54.8% of those surveyed were dissatisfied with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon, and only 26.6% were satisfied.

In the same vein, the majority, 228 (54.5%), of Manyu indigenes were unsatisfied with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board by the Land Ordinance to allocate land titles and to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon, with only 103 (24.6%) saying they were satisfied. With regards to the legal system, the majority, 268 (64.1%), said they understand how the court system works. The majority, 228 (54.5%), said they are satisfied with the way the courts system resolves succession to property disputes. The interview participants gave reasons for the dislike of the formal system of conflict resolution. Research Participant No. 2, for example, explained the frustrations of the indigenes with the formal legal system saying:

You see, this our government matters, if you go today, say you go to the court to open a summons, they waste a lot of time. You go today, they will tell you that the case has been adjourned, go tomorrow, they tell you that the case has been adjourned, when the disputed farmland can be the land which you want to cultivate crops for that year. But when the court places an injunction, it does not
take quick action to resolve the matter quickly to remove the injunction. A person might go to court continuously for about two years to judge a case through the courts. The courts waste a lot of time. But with Ekpe, whenever an Ekpe injunction is placed on a piece of land, within a week, the accused must see the Ekpe injunction and will eventually come to Ekpe to settle the matter. So Ekpe is faster. That is why people prefer to go to Ekpe because it is faster. Also, with the courts, if one of the parties have money, he decide to continuously adjourn the matter to punish the party that does not have money for a long period of time. So some people will prefer to go to Ekpe because Ekpe takes action immediately.

*Research Participant No. 2* further stated that:

… Ekpe process is not corrupt, because since emmm, other families are represented in the Ekpe court, and not just one family or one person, emmm, and sometimes a person can have luck that other members of other villages could also come to the MEkpe court on the day of the case and they will also listen to the statement of the parties. Even if the people of the village want to cite with a party to the dispute wrongfully, the others present will refuse and make sure that the process is just. That is how it is, So, Ekpe will not try to threat a party in a dispute when they are judging a case. So that encourage people to come to Ekpe to resolve their disputes because Ekpe is straight forward. Ekpe is not corrupt in its process of conflict resolution. Ekpe members cannot take bribe to favor a party in a dispute because sometimes if it becomes over heated and the parties do not want to speak the truth, they are requested to take an oath saying that to the best of their understanding, what they are saying is the truth as they know it concerning the
matter. Because of the fear of what could happen when a person lies under an Ekpe oath, people usually refrain from lying under an Ekpe oath and tell the truth in a matter concerning them. That is how Ekpe makes sure that things go rightly in its process of conflict resolution.

He is in essence saying that the formal administrative and legal process of resolving disputes is expensive, time consuming, corrupt, and frustrating for those that are not educated. On the other hand, he said the Ekpe model is not corrupt; that it is transparent and inclusive. Indigenes of the community are represented directly or indirectly in the Ekpe conflict resolution process to ensure transparency. Whereas less than the majority of those sampled reported to have had a conflict that was resolved by the Ekpe indigenous institution, 178 (42.6%), majority favors the Ekpe model.

More of those who were not satisfied with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon were satisfied with the way the Ekpe society resolves dispute. In the same vein, more of those who were not satisfied with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board by the Land Ordinance to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon were satisfied with the way the Ekpe society resolves disputes (p<0.05). Unlike the two first indicators, people were more satisfied with the way the courts system resolves succession to property disputes, but equally expressed satisfaction for the way the Ekpe society resolves disputes (see tables 6.16, 6.17, and 6.18).

The reason some people do not go to Ekpe with their disputes now seems to be because the Ekpe model has not been officially recognized as a formal institution of
conflict resolution in Cameroon. If the Ekpe model is legitimized, there will be a high probability that most of Manyu indigenes will prefer to take their disputes to Ekpe. In this regard, it is necessary that the Ekpe indigenous process of conflict resolution be integrated into the formal institutions of Cameroon, as the formal legal system is.

**Theme #2: The Ekpe structure.** The theme of structure of Ekpe emerged from the individual interviews, focused group interviews, and the participant observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. Structure first emerged by highlighting and classifying words used by interview participants into codes. The codes were further merged to form categories, and the categories were further merged and classified as a major theme. All the individual and focused group interview participants said that the Ekpe institution acts as the government, resolves conflicts, and performs social activities by coming together to drink wine, eat, and perform social activities like cultural dance and display in the community. The Ekpe model promotes the inclusion of all indigenes in the community and utilizes constructive and meaningful dialogue in the deliberations. According to most interview participants, the Ekpe structural approach is imbedded in the indigenous belief and tradition of social harmony and peaceful co-existence. The voice of the young, elders, and women are given equal consideration in the Ekpe model.

Interview participants said that one has to go to the “Achi Mgbe” with a jar of palm wine to commence a suit. They also said the “Achi Mgbe” takes the palm wine and presents it to the Sessekou, who requests summoning Ekpe members to the Ekpe lodge. The Achi Mgbes are tasked with the responsibility of visiting disputed farmlands and to report to Ekpe. There is tremendous respect for the structure of the Ekpe model. As stated by Interview Participant No. 1:
… when there was no formal government of the state, when there was no formal development, when we were still at the old settlements with our Grandfathers, the Ekpe society acted as the government of the village (community), like, the administrative body that was in charge of resolving matters like settling cases, debt collection, and bringing other social gatherings among friends in the villages.

Ekpe is a lovely group that our fathers were living with. During the raining seasons, when the rains were too much, they will ask one person (Mr. John) that had been fined by Ekpe (usually one bottle of hot wine) to bring the fine so they can keep themselves warm, and together discuss other issues that are going on in the village and our own group in the Ekpe society.

**Governance.** During the pre-colonial period, Ekpe was the main governing body in the community. It made laws and enforced them in communities that acquired the institution. Failure to respect a law put by Ekpe resulted in fines to the person. *Research Participant No. 4* had this to say in respect of the role of Ekpe in governance:

Ekpe is the culture that our first parents, at that time, there was no government. It was Ekpe that was governing us. It was Ekpe that was governing our people, to make sure there is peace and orderliness in the village. And emm, Ekpe has its principles. You are not supposed to fight in the community. When people fight, Ekpe holds them responsible and ask them to pay a fine to make sure that peace reigns in the village.

The role of Ekpe in governance was also discussed by Harris (1976) in an article in which wrote:
Ekpe was the main institution preventing total fission of the groups within each town. It provided a kind of common council for all who could afford its fees. Thus the central organization of Efik society was modified to cope with the new situation long before the nineteenth century (p. 286).

Whereas the role of Ekpe in governance has dwindled, the Ekpe model of conflict resolution is very much relied on by Manyu indigenes in resolving their disputes.

**Conflict resolution.** Ekpe also served as the principal organ in conflict resolution. This function has continued despite the end of colonialization, and the advent of the central government and the courts. However, Ekpe is relied upon in resolving disputes mostly at the village level and by those that cannot afford the cost of the legal process. Such cases include; fighting, stealing, cheating, adultery, land dispute, covetousness, gossip, blackmail, backstabbing, trespassing, beating a wife, throwing your wife’s food on the floor or outside, the use of vulgar language- especially towards a woman, discussing Ekpe matter with uninitiated people, abusive language, and meddling with boundary marks. The process differs with the nature of the dispute to be resolved.

The individual and focused group interview participants also stated that the Ekpe process has a trail and appeal process through which the parties of a conflict can go through to resolve their dispute. The process begins at the trial stage when a party goes to the *Achi Mgbe* with a jar of wine and informs him of the conflict and desire to have Ekpe resolve the dispute. Upon the hearing of both sides to the dispute and witnesses, Ekpe deliberates on the presentation of the parties and passes its verdict. If a party to the dispute is not satisfied with the verdict of the case, he is welcome to go to another Ekpe lodge to begin another case, or to go to the Ekpe Supreme Council that serves as the
Appeals Court to request a retrial of the case. A case can only go to the Ekpe Supreme council after an Ekpe lodge has examined it and a party is not satisfied with the judgment.

In the course of my observation, I saw that the Ekpe process is well structured, with people having distinct roles to perform in the conflict resolution process. These include the Sessekou, the Secretary, the Achi Mgbe, Okini, and the general assembly. The roles each play is discussed below.

**The Sessekou.** The Sessekou is the highest rank in the Ekpe house. He is the chief in an Ekpe house and is consulted in making final decisions. During the course of my observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, I observed that all Sessekou present sat down while addressing the Ekpe court. Also, the Sessekous were the ones that deliberated before passing the final verdict in the case. The decision of the Sessekous in every issue is highly respected and nobody dares to disagree with that decision.

**The Achi Mgbe.** The Achi Mgbes are the ones responsible for the planting of the Ekpe injunction on a disputed farmland. The Achi Mgbes conduct the preliminary investigations into the cause of the dispute; they visit disputed farmlands and listen to the parties and neighbors. Those selected to the role of Achi Mgbes are young and very active men with a lot of strength. I also observed that during the conflict resolution process, the Achi Mgbes called for order whenever there was disorder during the deliberations. Also, when the Sessekou pronounces the verdict, the Achi Mgbes are in charge of sentencing. They pronounce the fine that the at-fault party will have to pay.
In the course of my observations of the Ekpe process, I also saw that the youths and the elders played an active role in the dispute resolution process and that the Ekpe model is well structured with specific roles reserved for specific people.

**Role of elders.** During my observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, I could see that most of the Sessekous are elderly men. They sit in the center and act as judges during the Ekpe conflict resolution process. After the parties present the facts of the dispute, the elders retreat into a private room to discuss the facts of the case. Upon conclusion of their deliberations, they come back into the hall and pronounce their verdict. Also, I observed that in situations where an elder is a party to a dispute, he is given a chair to sit before presenting his side of the dispute whereas all other parties are required to stand up. Furthermore, elders are highly honored during feasts. They are served first and are given twice of the drinks available.

Most individual interview participants talked about the role elders play in the Ekpe model. To request Ekpe to listen to a dispute, the palm wine that the appellant gives to the Achi Mgbe is presented to the Sessekou, who has authority to request the beat of the Ekpe drum to summon Ekpe members to the Ekpe shrine to commence the conflict resolution process. Most interview participants also said that the elders are the ones that order the Ekpe injunction to be placed in a disputed farmland, and further request the Achi Mgbes to go to a disputed farmland for a fact finding mission.

The participants in the group interview also said while the roles of elders are vital in the Ekpe model, elders mostly serve to guide the process to ensure fairness and effectiveness. Elders do not go on fact finding missions or proclaim fines that parties have to pay. Elders follow the process keenly, pronounce judgment, and can either reduce
or increase the fine that is requested by the *Achi Mgbes*. Elders are the only ones that ask questions to the parties of the dispute while sitting and, in cases where an elder or Sessekou is a party of a dispute, he is given the privilege to sit down while all other parties are required to stand up.

The importance of the role elders play in the community is also acknowledged by the formal administration wherein they are consulted in making certain decisions that impact the community. For example, during the course of the document analysis, I found that the Chieftaincy Decree gives elders a very important role in the selection of a chief. Upon the death or incapacity of the incumbent, the administrative officer with jurisdiction organizes consultative talks with the elders of the village that are king makers in the families that are traditionally required to serve as chief. The elders are told to choose the person they think is best fit to be chief of the village. Upon their deliberations, the elders select their preference and present him to the administrative officer for consideration and appointment. The administrative officer can only reject the selected candidate if he feels the person selected is not fit and competent enough to serve as chief.

Furthermore, most individual and focused group interview participants said elders are responsible for educating the youths into the traditions and customs of the people. Elders prepare the youths to take over their role as they pass on to the land of their ancestors. Elders perform initiation rites and libations before the commencement of traditional feasts and at the end of them. From what most interview participants said and my observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, elders are regarded in high esteem. The opinion and advice of elders are consulted in making decisions and laws that affect the community.
Role of women. During the document analysis of the Ekpe institution, I realized that women play a limited role in Ekpe. Generally, Ekpe is a male society and the role women play in the institution is limited and depends on the Ekpe lodge. In some lodges, the first daughter of the Sessekou is given the title of Ekandem and permitted to sit in the Ekpe shrine with Ekpe men. In other lodges, elderly women are welcome to take part in Ekpe cultural activities and deliberations. However, no woman is allowed to enter the secret room from where the leopard roars.

In the course of my interviews, most individual and focused group interview participants said women play an indirect role in the Ekpe conflict resolution process by giving their opinions and advising their husbands of what they think the outcome of the matter should be before the Ekpe sessions. In the course of my observations, I realized that, whereas women play limited role in the Ekpe model directly, they cook the food that indigenes eat during festivities. Women also join the chores and sing during Ekpe cultural dances and clap their hands in cheers at the masquerade dances and parades. Ekpe considers the woman as a wicker sex; therefore, it protects women and a man gets severe punishment for disrespecting a woman, especially his wife. Women can bring suits to Ekpe, suits can be brought against them, and they can testify as witnesses in the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. Most interview participants said that, whereas women are not allowed the same rights as men in Ekpe, they have their own society called Ekpa that has similar functions as the Ekpe. However, since my research was based on Ekpe, I decided to conduct a research on Ekpa in a subsequent study.

Role of youths. The Ekpe institution encourages the participation of young men. In this vein, young men are encouraged to join and be initiated in Ekpe. Once joined, they
are schooled in the Ekpe sign language, songs, dance style, practices, culture, and tradition by their parents and other elders in the community so as to take over the activities of Ekpe upon their demise. The first son is expected to take over the role of his father upon his death and it is the father’s role to ensure the son is well prepared to play the role in his absence.

Young men play an active and significant role in the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. Most of the individual interview participants said those selected to be Achi Mgbe are active and strong young men.

Non Manyu indigenes. Non Manyu indigenes are welcome to join Ekpe, but the role they play in the institution is limited. All in the community are however welcome to bring a suit, act as witnesses, and can be suited to Ekpe. Ekpe does not favor anybody in the conflict resolution process.

Satisfaction with the Ekpe model and structure. In the quantitative study, the logistic regression model was used to depict significant predictors of perceived ability of Ekpe to resolve disputes, as highlighted on table 6.13. These predictors are those with p-values <0.05. Table 6.15, 6.16, 6.17, and 6.18 backed table 6.13 by being more explicit. Familiarity with Ekpe institution increased with duration of stay in the community and age (p<0.05), was not dependent on gender, school attainment, or occupation (p>0.05), and it was perceived that those who understand how Ekpe society resolves conflicts were more familiar with Ekpe institution and the same happened with those who had had conflicts resolved by the Ekpe society (see Table 6.15).

Males had more conflicts that were resolved with the Ekpe model than females. Those that have stayed longer in Manyu Division, the elderly, those with lower level of
school attainment, the retired and the self-employed had conflicts resolved through the Ekpe model and these dependences were significant (p<0.05), as shown in Table 6.15.

For example, males were more satisfied with the way Ekpe resolves conflict. Also, satisfaction with the way Ekpe resolves conflict increased with duration of stay in Manyu Division (p<0.05) but was not dependent on age, school attainment, or occupation (p>0.05). Those who understand how Ekpe society resolves conflicts were more inclined to have conflicts resolved by Ekpe (p<0.05), as shown in Table 6.15.

Satisfaction with the way Ekpe resolves conflict was significantly dependent on gender (p<0.05), with male being more satisfied; increased with duration of stay in the community (p<0.05); was not dependent on age, school attainment, or occupation (p>0.05). It was perceived that those who were familiar with the Ekpe institution were more satisfied, the same happened with those who understand the Ekpe model or who have had conflict resolved by Ekpe and these associations were significant (p<0.05), as shown in Table 6.16.

More of those who were not satisfied with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon were satisfied with the way the Ekpe society resolves dispute. In the same vein, more of those who were not satisfied with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board by the Land Ordinance to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon were satisfied with the way the Ekpe society resolves disputes (p<0.05). However, people were more satisfied with the way the courts system resolves succession to property disputes, but equally expressed satisfaction for the way the Ekpe
society resolves disputes (see tables 6.10, 6.11, and 6.12). The quantitative study confirms what most of both the individual and focused group interview participants said.

**Theme #3: Resolution and reconciliation - A win-win solution.** The goal of the Ekpe model is to resolve conflicts peacefully, reconcile the conflict parties, and ensure peace reigns for all in the community. As the individual and focused group participants described the Ekpe process of conflict, the words they used were highlighted and used as codes. The codes were clustered together into categories. The categories were then used to develop the theme “resolution and reconciliation”. The things that interview participants said was corroborated with my observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution.

**The nature of the conflict.** The nature of the conflict was identified and placed as a category under the Ekpe conflict resolution and reconciliation process theme. Both the individual and focused group interview participants identified the kind of conflicts that Ekpe is called upon to resolve. Most said Ekpe is relied upon in resolving disputes mostly at the village level, and by those that cannot afford the cost of the legal process. Such cases include: fighting, stealing, cheating, adultery, land dispute, covetousness, gossip, blackmail, backstabbing, trespassing, beating a wife, throwing your wife’s food on the floor or outside, the use of vulgar language -especially towards a woman, discussing Ekpe matter with uninitiated people, abusive language, and meddling with boundary marks. The process differs with the nature of the dispute to be resolved.

During my observation, two land dispute cases -a bridge of a contract and a theft by taking- were resolved by Ekpe. My observations confirmed what the individual and focused group interview participants said. In the quantitative study, people were
generally familiar with Ekpe, 341 (81.6%), understand how the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution works, 326 (78.0%), even though less than the majority had had conflicts that were resolved by the Ekpe society, 178 (42.6%).

**Ekpe process of conflict resolution.**

The Ekpe process of conflict resolution comprises seven steps that are described below.

*Step 1:* All the individual and focused group participants said the Ekpe conflict resolution process begins with the appellant presenting a jar of palm wine to the *Achi Mgbe* and informing him of the dispute and his desire to have Ekpe listen to the parties and resolve the dispute.

*Step 2:* The *Achi Mgbe* takes the palm wine to the *Sessekou* and informs him of the dispute. The *Sessekou* then requests that the Ekpe drum be beaten to summon all Ekpe members to the Ekpe lodge.

*Step 3:* Upon gathering of the Ekpe members, they will drink the palm wine and the *Sessekou* will call on the *Achi Mgbe* to tell the assembly the purpose of the wine. The *Achi Mgbe* will then tell the appellant to introduce the dispute and a date is set to listen to the parties and begin the resolution process. The *Okini Dibou* is then dispatched to summon the respondent, requesting him to appear before Ekpe to answer charges against him or her. The summons contains the date, time, and what to present to Ekpe before the charges against him or her will be read.

*Step 4:* On the appointed date, he or she is called in front of Ekpe gathering, asked to present the summons fee, after that the appellant is called to state his/her side of the dispute. Thereafter, there is a session during which the respondent and the audience are
given the opportunity to question the appellant. Upon completion, the respondent is also asked to state his/her side of the dispute, which is also followed by questions from the appellant and audience. In most land disputes, a team is put together and dispatched to go to the disputed land for a fact finding mission and the case is adjourned to continue after the fact finding team conclude their findings.

**Step 5:** Upon the conclusion of their findings, the fact finding team informs the Sessekou, who reconvenes the Ekpe session. After presenting their findings, the Sessekous and other elders present retreat to a closed room to deliberate, and then return and give their verdict in the presence of all the audience.

**Step 6:** The party that was found to be the cause of the conflict is called to make a statement, which most of the time is a statement of apology for the wrongful act. The Achi Mgbe is then called to pronounce the fine that the party at fault will pay.

**Step 7:** The last step is reconciliation, feasting, and merriment. All present are encouraged to drink and eat the drinks and food that the parties to the conflict were requested to present to Ekpe. During the feasting, the parties are encouraged to put their dispute behind them, reconcile, and rebuild the good relationship that existed between them.

This description of the Ekpe process was confirmed by me during my observation, in which the respective respondents were called and asked to give the summons fee before the charges against them would be read to them and they did. I also observed the Achi Mgbe gave a report about their visit to a disputed farmland, and their findings. In addition to that, I observed the president of the Ekpe court and Sessekou pronounced the verdict in three cases, after which the Achi Mgbe got up and pronounced
the fine that the party at fault will pay confirming what the individual and focused group interview participants said about the Ekpe process of conflict resolution.

**Win-win solution.** The category win-win emerged from words of both the individual and focused group interview participants, who said that the goal of Ekpe is to resolve conflicts, reconcile the conflicting parties, and make sure that peace reigns in the community. Most interview participants said that Ekpe is just fast, less expensive, and the goal is reconciliation. Some also said that Ekpe does not have a police, but Ekpe ensures that all in the community respect and enforce its judgments. The interview participants further said the fine that the at-fault party pays to Ekpe is used to give a feast during which all present are requested to participate, including the conflicting parties who are encouraged to reconcile.

During my observation, I realized that the drinks that the defendants were asked to bring, before the charges against them were read, were shared to all present after the judgment was pronounced. In the case *Ekpe Nchang vs. Tanyi Cosmas Mbi*, that I observed, Mbi was found to be at fault and fined. Whereas Mbi paid the fine, he was not happy with the determination of the Ekpe court. He said openly that he would take the matter further and would not mind spending all the money he made in life. However, Mbi was advised to meet his maternal relatives, reconcile with them, and begged them to give him the land for peace to reign between them.

One of the Sessekous advised Mbi not to waste money to go to the courts with the matter because Mbi would most likely lose and would ruin the relationship with his maternal family. He further said Mbi is just a young man and may not understand the implications of what stand ahead of him. He advised Mbi to rethink, humble himself,
reconcile with his maternal family members, and request they give him land to farm as that would make peace reign with his family. My observation confirms what the interview participants said that the goal of the Ekpe model is reconciliation of conflicting parties.

In the quantitative study, the majority -260 (62.2%)- said they were satisfied with the way Ekpe resolves conflicts and 139 (33.3%) were very satisfied (see Figure 6.14). When asked who they prefer to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes, it was perceived by the majority, 242 (57.9%), that Ekpe could successfully resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division, with the administration coming at the second position with a weight of 104 (24.9%), and then the court with 72 (17.2%).

With regards to land dispute, it was equally perceived by the majority, 221 (52.9%), that Ekpe could successfully resolve them, then came the court and the administration with almost equal proportions of 99 (23.7%) and 98 (23.4%) respectively. The trend was not dependent of gender, age, duration of stay in the community, school attainment, or occupation. Also, there was statistically enough evidence that those who understand the Ekpe believed more on its ability to resolve land disputes (p<0.05). Those that had had a conflict that was resolved by the administration tend to believe more in the ability of Ekpe to resolve land conflicts (p<0.05), as shown in Table 6.20.

Concerning succession to property dispute, people mostly believed in the court, 205 (49.0%), followed by Ekpe with a weight of 146 (34.9%), and then the administration with 67 (16.0%), as shown in Figure 6.15. It was realized that females believed more in the court than the males (p<0.05), that the older ones believed more in Ekpe (p<0.05), that those who had succession to property disputes before believed more
in Ekpe (p<0.05), that those who understand Ordinance N°. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974 that established land tenure rules in Cameroon (Land Ordinance) believe more in the court system, and that those who understand how Ekpe society resolves conflict believe more in Ekpe (see Table 6.21).

**Theme #4: Acceptance and participation in the Ekpe model.** Whereas the Ekpe model encourages all in the community to engage in a meaningful and constructive dialogue, participation in the model is totally voluntary. Most of the individual and focused group interview participants said that taking a dispute to Ekpe for resolution is based on the free will of the conflicting parties. If a party does not want Ekpe to resolve the dispute, he is free to inform Ekpe of his desire without consequences to him. This was confirmed during my observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution wherein one of respondents to a land dispute (Tabe Queenta Egbe) failed to show up personally, but sent a representative with two letters to present to the Ekpe Supreme Council. The first informing Ekpe that the dispute had been taken to court and requested to find out if a matter that is in court can be tried at the same time at Ekpe. The second letter was from the law firm representing her in which the law firm confirmed representing Queenta Egbe in the matter in court. Upon reading the letter, the Ekpe court decided to excuse itself from the matter and requested the parties to pay the fees required to close the file in Ekpe registry. Another case I observed in which Ekpe recoursed itself after one of the party to the dispute subsequently took the matter to the legal department was the case between the People of Mbakang vs. Ojong Peter.

However, in criminal and other cases that infringe the peace of the community, Ekpe can intervene to resolve the dispute without requesting the opinion of the parties to
the dispute to succumb to its jurisdiction. The individual and focused group interview participants said that Ekpe vehemently prohibits disorder in the community. Fighting is purported to cause disorder and causes the Ekpe (the Tiger) to run from its abbot. When two people fight in the presence of an Ekpe member or if it is reported to an Ekpe member, the Ekpe drum is beaten to inform the community that the parties have disturbed the peace and Ekpe members are summoned to a meeting. In the meeting, both fighting parties are summoned and asked if it is true that they fought or not. If they acknowledge they fought, they are held responsible for disturbing the peace of the community and are asked to first pay a fine before the matter is heard by Ekpe. The standard fine that the parties have to pay is a big jar of palm wine (*called erib a taparee in the dialect*), kola nuts, and snuff. Both parties are expected to pay the fine immediately. During my observation, I realized that the Ekpe Court requested Tabe Queenta Egbe to pay a fine for disrespecting an Ekpe injunction by going into a farmland that had an Ekpe injunction, irrespective of the fact that Queenta had taken the matter to court and sent letters to Ekpe to inform it of her willingness to proceed with the formal justice system. My observation confirmed the restrictions of the right to free determination to submit to the jurisdiction of Ekpe that indigenes have.

In the quantitative study, people were generally familiar with Ekpe, 341 (81.6%), and understand how the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution resolves conflicts, 326 (78.0%), even though less than the majority had had conflicts that were resolved by the Ekpe society, 178 (42.6%).

It was perceived by the majority, 242 (57.9%), that Ekpe could successfully resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division, the administration coming at the second
position with a weight of 104 (24.9%), and then the court with 72 (17.2%), as shown in Figure 6.15. This trend was not dependent on gender, age, duration of stay in the community, school attainment, or occupation. However, there was statistically enough evidence that those who understand the Ekpe believed more on its ability to resolve conflicts (see Table 6.19).

As far as land dispute is concerned, it was equally perceived by the majority, 221 (52.9%), that Ekpe could successfully resolve them, followed by the court and the administration with almost equal proportions of 99 (23.7%) and 98 (23.4%) respectively. This trend was not dependent on gender, age, duration of stay in the community, school attainment, or occupation. However, there was statistically enough evidence that those who understand the Ekpe believed more on its ability to resolve land disputes (p<0.05). Those that had had a conflict that was resolved by the administration tend to believe more in the ability of Ekpe to resolve land conflicts (p<0.05), as shown in Table 6.20.

Concerning succession to property dispute, people mostly believed in the court, 205 (49.0%); followed by Ekpe, 146 (34.9%), and then the administration, 67 (16.0%), as shown in Figure 6.15. It was realized that females believed more in the court than the males (p<0.05), that the older ones believed more in Ekpe (p<0.05), that those who had had succession to property disputes before believed more in Ekpe (p<0.05), that those who understand Ordinance N°. 74-1 of 6 July, 1974 that established land tenure rules in Cameroon (Land Ordinance) believe more in the court system, and that those who understand how Ekpe society resolve conflicts believe more in Ekpe (see Table 6.21).

This hypothesis is therefore accepted for the settlement of land and chieftaincy disputes (p<0.05), but not for succession to property disputes since neither the court nor
Ekpe was perceived effective by the majority, though opinions weighted more in the favor of the court system.

Taking the matter to another Ekpe House (Cross Water), Manyu indigenes are free to take their disputes to any Ekpe lodge of their choice for resolution. Also, if a party is not satisfied with the verdict of an Ekpe lodge, the party is free to take the matter to another Ekpe Lodge and request that they re-examine the matter. *Interview Participant No. 3*, for example, stated that:

If Ekpe judges a case in this village and a party of the case is not satisfied with the judgment, the person can decide to take the matter to the Ekpe of another village, or even to the village traditional council. In such a case, the council or the Ekpe of the other village will call Ekpe to come and explain why and how they arrived at their judgment. If the Ekpe of the neighboring village sees or believes that the judgment was not correct or just, it can put aside the judgment of that Ekpe and pass its own judgment. Ekpe cannot say that since the Ekpe of one village passed a particular judgment, it cannot change its position. Ekpe gives rooms for flexibility.

*Limitations of the right to self-determination.* As pointed out above, Ekpe can intervene to resolve the dispute without requesting the opinion of the parties in criminal and other cases that infringe the peace of the community since fighting is considered to disturb the Ekpe and that should be informed so as to call an Ekpe meeting where the issue is discussed and a decision is taken. The individual and focused group interview participants said that Ekpe vehemently prohibits disorder in the community. As described
above, my observation confirmed the restrictions of the right to free determination to submit to the jurisdiction of Ekpe that indigenes have.

**Theme #5: Forgiveness and healing.** The theme of forgiveness and healing was developed from document analysis, interviews with both individual and focused group research participants, and from observing the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. Leib and Romano (1984) describe Ekpe institution as;

> A secret, gerontocratic brotherhood, Ngbe is responsible for maintaining the well-being of the community. All traditional affairs of the village, be they political, economic, judicial, or social, fall under its jurisdiction. Membership in the leopard association is tantamount to citizenship in local customary government (p. 48).

The goal of the Ekpe model is to encourage forgiveness, reconciliation, healing of the aggrieved party, and help indigenes rebuild the relationship they once had. Interview Participant No. 4 confirmed the goals of Ekpe saying that, during the pre-colonial era when there was no formal system of government, Ekpe was in charge of running the affairs of the community. The Ekpe institution governed the people, resolved disputes, reconciled disputing parties, and ensured peace reign in the community.

Most of the interview participants said that, after a case is heard by the Ekpe court, the person found guilty is required to pay a fine in restitution for the loss that was caused to the victorious party. The fine that the guilty party pays is used to organize a feast in which all are encouraged to partake in and the parties are encouraged to reconcile. The respective fines vary but with the nature of the dispute.
In my observations on the dispute between *Ekpe Nchang vs. Tanyi Cosmas Mbi*, at the Ekpe Supreme Council, Cosmas Mbi was ordered to pay a fine of 60 bottles of beer (3 x20 bottles of beer), kola nut and snuff for the sum of 7,800 Francs CFA for violating an Ekpe injunction. Mbi was also asked to pay the summons fee of 25,000 Francs CFA.

Upon presenting the fine, Mr. Mbi was advised to go meet members of his mother’s family, and try to resolve the matter with them amicably because the conflict is just a family conflict. The president of Ekpe Manyu pleaded with Mbi to go and make peace with his maternal family members. The President said from what he has seen and heard about the dispute, the family does not want Mbi to farm in the land anymore and, as per tradition, there is little Mbi can do. That the aunt who allowed him to farm in the land is no longer living. The president continued that those living do not want Mbi in the land and have a right as per tradition to evict him from the land. However, Mbi insisted that he will take the matter to court and he does not mind how much it would cost him.

*The feast.* Upon paying the fine that is requested by Ekpe, a date is set for the feast. The Ekpe members, disputing parties and their families, and community members are encouraged to attend the celebrations. *Interview Participant No. 1* described the nature of the Ekpe feast during the pre-colonial period saying:

…during the raining seasons, when the rains were too much, Ekpe will request a person (Mr. John) that had been fined by Ekpe to bring the fine so we can eat, drink, keep themselves warm, and together discuss other issues that are going on in the village and the Ekpe society.

Whereas I was not opportune to witness an Ekpe reconciliation feast, I observed that the money that the disputing parties pay as summon fees are used to buy drinks that
are shared by all during the dispute resolution process together with the drinks brought by
the parties. The appeals for Mr. Mbi to meet his maternal relatives to resolve the disputes,
the goals of Ekpe institution to reconcile all in the community as well as the statements of
the interview participant informed my decision to develop a theme of forgiveness and
healing.

**Theme # 6: Conflict of law.** The theme of conflict of laws was developed from
document analysis, my observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, and from
what most of the individual and focused group participants said during the interviews.
Words in texts that I read were highlighted at www.billexpress.com ebpp.coaptitd
words interview participants used were also highlighted as codes. The codes were clustered into
categories, and they were finally used to form the theme “conflict of laws”.

In analyzing the Chieftaincy Decree that govern chieftaincy issues in Cameroon, I
realized that the decree creates room for conflict in the selection process of a chief and in
resolving chieftaincy disputes. Whereas the people are requested to select their chief as
required by their tradition, the administrator (Divisional Officer, Senior Divisional
Officer, and Minister of Territorial Administration respectively) has to appoint the chief.
The administrator has authority to put aside the people’s choice and appoint any other
person he feels is more competent to the chieftaincy throne. Also, the land ordinances
that govern land title issues in Cameroon are very verbose and officials are corrupt. There
is no clear distinctions between native, private, and public lands, indigenous land laws,
and land rights. These laws help create clouds and breathe conflicts.

The conflict of laws extend to the conflicts in the process of resolving disputes.
For example in the dispute between the People of Mbakang vs. Ojong Peter that I
observed, Ekpe decided the respondent was guilty and he was asked to pay the amount he owed the appellant. After making part payment, the respondent later took the dispute to the Legal Department for another hearing. There, he was requested again to pay what he owed the appellant or risked going to jail. Irrespective of the threat of jail time, the appellant refused to pay and the respondent, out of frustration, decided to take the case back to Ekpe for resolution.

Also in the case between *Ekpe Nchang vs. Tanyi Cosmas Mbi*, the Ekpe Supreme council advised Mbi to reconcile with his maternal relatives and ask them to give him land to farm on. Mbi however, said he would pursue the legal option despite its cost.

From my observations, I gathered there is a conflict between the formal institutions and Ekpe. The secretary of Ekpe voiced this conflict when he regretted the fact that people take their disputes to the formal institutions after Ekpe succeeds in resolving them. From my observation, he was very frustrated with the undermining of the ability of Ekpe to resolve disputes. The findings from my observations were substantiated by both the individual and focused group interview participants. Most said they do not understand the formal process of conflict resolution, complained of the duration it takes for a dispute to be resolved through the legal channels as too long, and said they have to depend on someone else in most cases to write their statements, which is too expensive. The complicated formal process creates a room for conflict as people turn to go back and forth between the formal and indigenous systems to resolve their disputes.

The results of the quantitative studies further confirms the perception of Manyu indigenes of a conflict of laws that a majority of them face. A majority think they are not aware of, do not understand the chieftaincy degree, and are not aware of and do not
understand the land ordinances that govern land titles issues in Cameroon after more than sixty years of existence of these laws.

The conflict of laws was further brought to life in the dispute between the *People of Mbakang vs. Ojong Peter*, resolved with the Ekpe model. In the aforementioned case, the respondent was in breach of a contractual duty to pay the appellants rents in the sum of nine hundred thousand Francs CFA (900,000 Francs) for the lease of a farmland and the appellants brought the matter to Ekpe. After listening to the parties, Ekpe decided that the respondent should honor his contractual obligation and pay the appellants the rents. The respondent agreed, paid almost half the amount (four hundred thousand Francs CFA) and promised to pay the balance, but failed to do so and instead decided to take the appellants to the State Persecutor.

Then, the Ekpe Supreme Council decided that since the matter was then at the legal department, the parties were supposed to come and close the case file, by paying the normal closing fee within sixteen (16) days (the 21st of March) so Ekpe would not call the matter going forward. The appellants confessed that the judgment Ekpe passed was the same as the State Counsel passed, but lamented that the accused had not complied with the judgment and that the only money the accused paid (400,000 Francs) was paid by the orders of Ekpe and that the pressure from the State Counsel did not yield results. The Secretary General lamented the fact that Ekpe Manyu was being trampled on by Manyu indigenes. He used the fact that Ekpe was able to collect 400,000 Francs CFA, but since Ekpe does not have a police or gendarme, the people dismissed their decision. He lamented the situation saying he hoped that the case serves as an example for those
underestimating the ability of Ekpe to resolve conflicts to understand that Ekpe is indeed an effective and reliable institution of conflict resolution.

**Theme # 7: Participation and acceptance of the Ekpe model of conflict resolution.** The theme “participation and acceptance” was developed from observing the Ekpe process of conflict resolution as well as from what most individual and focused group interview participants said. During my observation, I saw that participation in the Ekpe process of conflict resolution is open to all in the community. Men, women, the youths as well as non-indigenes living in Manyu Division are free to attend Ekpe conflict resolution sessions, request Ekpe to resolve their disputes, and can be witnesses in Ekpe cases. The roles men, elders, youths, and women play was discussed above.

Most of the focused group discussion participants said that all members of the community are free to be present during an Ekpe conflict resolution process, irrespective of the fact that the process is male dominated. Participants further said to ask a question to the parties, one must be an initiated Ekpe member and have acquired the rank to address Ekpe. Non-members and those of lower rank must seek the approval of a high ranking member and ask the member to clap on his behalf and request him to ask his question or make a statement.

**Acceptance of the Ekpe model.** Participation in the Ekpe model of conflict resolution is voluntary. In this vein, both the appellant and respondent are free to reject the jurisdiction of Ekpe. Almost all the participants in the focused group discussion said they are satisfied with the Ekpe model of conflict resolution. Participants said the Ekpe model is fast, less expensive, and those that give judgment are indigenes, are aware of the nature of disputes, and understand the culture of the community. Participants further said
that the goal of the Ekpe model is to reconcile conflicting parties and ensure peace reigns in the community. Most participants preferred the Ekpe model to the formal administrative and judicial process whose main focus is to send people to prison, divide the indigenes, and cause chaos in their community.

Also, most of the individual interview participants said they prefer to take their dispute to Ekpe because of the goal of reconciliation of the conflicting parties and maintenance of harmony in the community. Interview participants further said the Ekpe process is fair, fast, less expensive, and they feel satisfied that their dispute is being settled by people that know the customs and traditions of the people, know the real facts of most of the cases, and talk in the language that everyone in the community understands.

The opinion of the individual and focused group participants was reiterated by the quantitative study wherein it was realized that generally, people were familiar with Ekpe, 341 (81.6%); understand how the Ekpe society resolves conflicts, 326 (78.0%), despite the fact that less than the majority had had conflict that were resolved by the Ekpe society 178 (42.6%), as shown in Figure 6.13. Furthermore, the majority of those sampled, 260 (62.2%), were satisfied with the way Ekpe resolves conflicts and 139 (33.3%) were very satisfied (see Figure 6.14).

On the other hand, when asked their opinion of the powers given to the Divisional Officer/Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to appoint traditional chiefs in Manyu Division, only 102 (24.4%) said they were satisfied, among which 26 (6.2%) were very satisfied and this difference was statistically significant. In the same vein, less than the majority
was satisfied with the powers given to the Divisional Officer/ Senior Divisional Officer/Governor/Minister of Territorial Administration respectively by the Chieftaincy Decree to resolve chieftaincy disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon and the proportion was 26.6% (111), among which 37 (8.9%) were very satisfied, and this difference was statistically significant (p<0.05), as shown in Figure 6.10.

In the same vein, less than the majority 103 (24.6%) were satisfied with the powers given to the Land Consultative Board by the Land Ordinance to resolve Land Disputes in Manyu Division/Cameroon. However, the majority -228 (54.5%) - were satisfied with the way the courts system resolve succession to property disputes and the difference was significant. The findings of the quantitative studies confirm the opinion of the individual and focused group participants in the qualitative study and make the findings reliable.

**Theme # 8: Symbols and significance in the Ekpe model (role of symbols).**

Symbols play a major role in the life and activities of the Manyu indigenes as well as in the activities of Ekpe. Ekpe uses symbols in different situations including communication, dance, information, conflict resolution, and deterrence. Some of Ekpe symbols include the injunction, sign language, the *okat*, drums, tortoise, masquerades, towel, staff, and hat.

**The Ekpe injunction.** Most of the individual and focused group interview participants said Ekpe uses the injunction to deter people from meddling with evidence in a dispute. The injunction bars all in the community from touching or altering the status quo. Injunctions are mostly used in land disputes, when two people have disagreement
over a piece of land. In such a situation, one of the parties must first summons the other to Ekpe for the process to begin.

The Ekpe summon procedure requires the appellant to take a jar of palm wine to the *Achi Ekpe* and inform him of the dispute. The *Achi Mgbe* in turn takes the palm wine to the *Sessekou*, and inform him of the dispute and the request for an Ekpe injunction to be placed on the disputed piece of land. The *Sessekou* summons the members of Ekpe to brief them of the dispute and to examine the matter at stake. Upon the approval of the Ekpe members, the *Achi Mgbe* goes and puts the Ekpe injunction on the disputed piece of land. The injunction bars the general public including the appellant from entering into the piece of land until the matter is resolved or the suit is withdrawn. During the course of my observations, I observed that both the appellant and respondent were charged for violating an Ekpe injunction by going into a farmland that had the Ekpe injunction. Both parties paid the fine they were asked to pay to Ekpe.

*The traditional attire.* In all, the traditional attire for the Manyu man is a shirt and a loin cloth. In addition to the shirt and loin cloth, Ekpe added other decorations that are symbolic to the rank of a person has acquired in the Ekpe institution. In this vain, the manner in which an Ekpe member dresses and appears in public is symbolic of their rank in the Ekpe institution, and by seeing him, other members give him the position and respect that his rank demanded.

*The towel.* Whereas men in Manyu Division wear a white shirt and tie a lion cloth as their traditional attire, only Ekpe members are authorize to use towels. Most of the individual and focused group interview participants said the manner in which a towel is used reveals your rank in Ekpe. The ordinary members throw a towel over their neck,
while a Sessekou hangs it over his shoulder to distinguish him from ordinary Ekpe members. Thus, the towel symbolizes membership into the Ekpe society as well as the rank that a person has attained in Ekpe.

**The staff.** The staff is an instrument of authority in Manyu culture as well as in Ekpe. Most individual and focused group interview participants said an individual attains the rank of handling a staff when he is initiated into the rank in which he can clap his hands and acquire the voice to call for attention to address an Ekpe gathering. This was confirmed during the document analysis wherein the *Manyu Mgbe Culture Handbook* added that to attain the rank of holding a staff, the individual must “have been schooled in the understanding of the Ekpe language” (p. 17).

**Drums.** Drums are used in communication and to call for attention in Ekpe. They are played in various styles to produce melody that moves people to dance and pass out information. The manner in which the drum is beaten communicates the matter at hand (*Manyu Mgbe Culture Handbook*). Most of the individual and focused group interview participants confirmed that drums are used in communication in Ekpe. During my stay in Manyu Division, I also observed a young man beating a drum in Mbakem village, after which all Ekpe members rallied in the Ekpe lodge to discuss Ekpe issues.

**The tortoise shell.** Documental analysis revealed that the tortoise shell is also beaten to speak in a language that only high ranking Ekpe members, such as Sessekous and Osongoribos, as well as those that are schooled in Ekpe culture can understand. Most of the individual and focused group interview participants stated the use of the tortoise shell in communication.
**The flag (Sunday Mgbe).** During my observations, I witnessed that a red flag is flown on a poll in front of the Ekpe lodge. On inquiry, almost all the individual and focused group interview participants said the flag is planted in commemoration of Ekpe activities, such as the Bekundi and the death of a prominent Ekpe member.

**The okat.** During my stay in Manyu Division, I observed that a special cloth was placed on the wall which blocked the entrance into a room within the Ekpe hall. My document analysis revealed that the cloth called the *Okat* is a special cloth that is used to control entry into the Ekpe strong room where the tiger that cries is kept (*Manyu Mgbe Culture Handbook*). Most of the interview participants further said the *Okat* is used to control entry into the secret room where the tiger is placed because this secret room differs from lodge to lodge; hence a person is not supposed to enter the secret room of an *Ekpe* lodge that he does not belong to.

These symbols and their significances were corroborated by other research methods. From what I gathered, symbols are part and parcel of Manyu culture. Symbols play an important role in culture, communication, maintaining peace and stability in the Manyu culture.

**Theme #9: Strengths and challenges of the Ekpe model.** Most interview participants talked about strengths and challenges of the Ekpe model, which were corroborated by my observations and findings during document analysis. Some of the strengths of the Ekpe model includes its ability to adapt to changes, the all-inclusive consensus driven decision making nature of the model, the constructive deliberations, the goal for a solution that all the parties to a conflict are happy with (a win-win solution),
the reconciliation of conflicting parties, and the restoration of peace and harmony of all in the community.

Despite the strengths of the model, some interview participants also talked about some of the weaknesses and challenges to the Ekpe model, which were verified during my observation and analysis of documents. Some of these challenges include the patriarchy nature of the model and the respect for human rights. However, I observed that changes can be made to the Ekpe model to adapt to modern times while retaining the very nature and essence of the model.

**Strengths of the Ekpe model**

*Ability to adapt to change.* One of the strengths of the Ekpe model is the ability of the institution to make changes to adapt to change with the passage of time. Whereas most indigenous institutions are reluctant to change to adapt with modernity, Ekpe has been able to make that. Most individual and focused group interview participants said that, during the pre-colonial era, Ekpe acted as an institution of governance, conflict resolution, educated the youths in the culture of the people, and performed cultural activities. With the coming of Christianity to Africa, Ekpe was looked by colonial masters as satanic. The indigenes were pressured to abandon the practices of Ekpe in favor of Christianity. Colonialism added pressure on Ekpe as the colonial and post-colonial administrations took over most of the functions of governance and conflict resolution. However, Ekpe was able to relinquish most of the functions of governance to avoid conflict with the colonial administration, retain its role and relevance in conflict resolution, and make changes to allow non Manyu indigenes living in Manyu Division to be initiated and become members. During my observation of the Ekpe process of conflict
resolution, I could see that Ekpe has added the position of a Secretary General with responsibility to take notes during the conflict resolution process. The purpose being to ensure precedence by keeping record of the proceedings and judgments of Ekpe cases. That is another ability to change and confirms what interview participants said about the ability of Ekpe to change to adapt to changing times.

**Indigenously owned.** The Ekpe model of conflict resolution is indigenously owned. The judges and the *Achi Mgbes* that make up the fact finding teams come from among the people. The indigenes, most of the times, take their disputes to Ekpe lodges in their respective villages. The Ekpe process of conflict trial sessions most often sit in the village where the dispute originated, except during appeals. Most of the individual and focused group interview participants said they feel secured using Ekpe to resolve their disputes because of their feeling of satisfaction that the process is owned by them and, therefore, reliable. Satisfaction with the Ekpe model was confirmed by participants in the quantitative study in which 341 people were familiar with Ekpe (81.6%) and 326 understand how the Ekpe society resolves conflicts (78.0%). Furthermore, the majority - 260 (62.2%) - were satisfied with the way Ekpe resolves conflicts and 139 (33.3%) were very satisfied (see Figure 6.14), even though less than the majority had had conflicts that were resolved by the Ekpe society, 178 (42.6%). Manyu indigenes feel comfortable using a system that is imbedded in their culture. They understand and are comfortable with the process and the judges.

**Familiarity and knowledge.** Most of the interview participants said that the judges and participants in the Ekpe model are, in the majority of instances, eye witnesses and have firsthand knowledge of the nature and circumstances and of most of the disputes
that the indigenes bring to Ekpe. As a result, false testimonies are easily identified and thrown out. In this regard, the judgments of Ekpe reflect the truth and make the model trustworthy. During my observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, I could see that judges and participants had knowledge of most of the conflicts, especially in land dispute cases, confirming what the interview participants said.

**Challenges to the Ekpe model**

*Exclusion of women.* One of the major challenges of the model is the exclusion of women in the conflict resolution body of Ekpe. Most individual and focused group interview participants said that Ekpe is a male only institution. The quantitative study revealed that satisfaction with the way Ekpe resolves conflict was significantly dependent (p<0.05) on gender; male being more satisfied with the Ekpe model. However, satisfaction increased with duration of stay in Manyu Division (p<0.05) and was not dependent on age, school attainment, or occupation (p>0.05). It was perceived that those who were familiar with the Ekpe traditional institution were more satisfied; the same happened with those who understand the Ekpe model or who had had conflicts resolved by Ekpe and these associations were significant (p<0.05), as shown in Table 6.15. The limited participation of women in the Ekpe model was confirmed during my observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution. Whereas women are welcome to bring a dispute, be suited, and testify as a witness in Ekpe sessions, they are not included in the panel of judges. By excluding women in the deliberations, there is a high probability that Ekpe misses to tape from the knowledge and wisdom talented women could bring into the Ekpe model.
Religion. Another challenge to the Ekpe model is religion. Most individual and focused group interview participants talk about the conflict between Ekpe and Christianity. They said Christians believe that participation in Ekpe is satanic and discourage their peers from joining Ekpe and taking part in its activities. Interview participants said that Ekpe is a cultural practice and not a religion. They said people that take Ekpe as a secret society are misinformed. During my observation of the Ekpe process of conflict resolution, I heard the Secretary General of the Ekpe Supreme Council lamented the disregard for Ekpe by evangelical Christians, who call Ekpe a secret and satanic society. I also observed that some Christians are reluctant to take part in the Ekpe sessions because of their beliefs. The conflict between Christianity and Ekpe is a challenge that Ekpe has to deal with to maintain its relevance in Manyu Division.

Modernity. Modernity is another challenge that Ekpe is facing. Most individual and focused group interview participants said that, during the pre-colonial era, Ekpe was in charge of governance and conflict resolution. The colonial and post-colonial administrations have taken away most of the functions of Ekpe; thereby limiting the influence and functions of Ekpe.

Also, interview participants said the formal system of government have police power that is used to scare the populace into submission. The rich and those that can afford often take their conflict to the formal system because of the ability to use the police to scare the weak into submission. On the other hand, the Ekpe institution depends on the willingness of participants to submit to its jurisdiction. Since Ekpe does not have police power, some people look at Ekpe as weak. The challenge on Ekpe is to revamp the credibility it has among the indigenes to maintain its relevance.
During my stay in Manyu Division, I observed that most of the youths have left the villages in search for greener pastures in the major cities. They only come to the villages periodically and do not have enough time to spend with their fathers and elders. The effect is that the youth risks not inheriting some of the skills of their fathers and the possibility of losing these skills when they pass away.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter discussed the findings of the study. Most of the questions that guided the interviews were developed during my analyses of documents on the Ekpe institution and model of conflict resolution. Words that interview participants used were coded and grouped into categories. The categories were further grouped into clusters to form themes that described the way Manyu indigenes feel about the formal administrative and legal process of conflict resolution and the Ekpe model, the description of the Ekpe model, their acceptance and participation in the Ekpe Model, the perceived efficiency and reliability of the Ekpe Model, the role of symbols and significance, and the strengths and challenges to the Ekpe model.

In all, most of what the individual interview participants said was corroborated by the focused group participants and my observations. Their answers helped described the Ekpe model of conflict resolution in which limited research had been conducted. Furthermore, the quantitative study revealed that Manyu indigenes reject the formal administrative process of appointment of chiefs and resolution of chieftaincy disputes as well as the use of the Land Consultative Board to issue land titles and resolve land disputes, and prefer the Ekpe model to be used to resolve chieftaincy and land disputes. However, Manyu indigenes prefer the use of the court system to resolve succession to
property disputes. This is probably because the indigenous customs have been integrated into the legal system, with judges that are knowledgeable in the customs of the people to handle customary issues dealing with succession to property disputes in Manyu Division.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the Ekpe model of conflict resolution and to find out if it could be effectively employed to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division. Throughout the course of the study, I pondered with some questions including: a) Is the role of indigenous models of conflict resolution sufficiently recognized in modern legal processes in Cameroon? and b) How can cultural and indigenous practices play a role in resolving conflicts and ensuring peace? Taking into consideration the existing gap in the knowledge of, and the role, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms could play in peace and reconciliation process, it was important that to develop research focused on such indigenous methods of conflict resolution.

Conceptual Model

The Ekpe model resolves disputes at the local level. The process is simple and involves making oral statements or complaints, hearing from all parties involved in the dispute, and the community engages in dialogue meant to peacefully resolve disputes and reunite disputing parties. During the pre-colonial era, Ekpe acted in governance and the Ekpe model was used to resolve disputes. Presently, the Ekpe model is used mostly in the rural areas and the model is fast, less expensive, and participation is open to all in the community.

The Ekpe model is vibrant and cohesive. All in the community are invited to participate in the process. The process is open and transparent from the time the appellant goes to the Achi Mgbe to present his or her dispute, to the Achi Mgbe presenting the dispute to the Sessekou. Both sides are listened to, and findings of the panel are made in
public. The goal of the model is to resolve disputes peacefully, as well as rebuild and restore cordial relationship with all in the community. The Ekpe model is based on the principle that, if one member of the community is not happy, the whole community is unhappy.

Whereas Ekpe is a male only institution, I explored the role of elders, women, and youths in this study. The findings reveal that the Ekpe model protects women and all in the community are encouraged to use the model to resolve their disputes. The model is imbedded in the culture of Manyu indigenes, and has been effective in resolving dispute peacefully and restore cordial relationship with disputing parties. Whereas most of those that take their disputes to Ekpe live in the rural area, Manyu indigenes all over Cameroon believe Ekpe is very effective in resolving disputes and prefer Ekpe to resolve chieftaincy and land disputes.

The main advantage of Ekpe is that the model is rooted in the culture of the people and owned by Manyu indigenes. The process is bottom-top, simple, easy to carry out, very fast, and is less expensive than the formal institutions of conflict resolution. The process is transparent, open to all in the community, and a party that is not satisfied with the decisions arrived at is free to take the dispute to another Ekpe lodge or the Ekpe Supreme Council.

**Relationship between Ekpe Model and the Formal Administrative and Legal Institutions**

The relationship between the Ekpe institution and the formal administrative and legal institutions have not been very smooth.
Relationship between Ekpe and the Legal System

Some of the interview participants talked about situations where the Ekpe injunction was misconstrued by judges and officers of the Legal Department as charms that a party has put on a disputed farmland to harm the other party he or she is disputing with. I also listened to the frustration of the Secretary General of the Ekpe Supreme Council who lamented the fact that some indigenes despise Ekpe and turn to the legal system with their dispute, even though Ekpe had been able to partially resolve the dispute and made the at-fault party pay part of the money he is owing the appellant.

Relationship between Ekpe and the Administrators

The relationship between Ekpe and respective administrative officers have also been rocky at time. One interview participant recounted a story that happened in the past where the Senior Divisional Officer ordered the arrest and detention of a Sessekou at the Gendarmerie brigade, denying him his right to due process. The action of the Senior Divisional Officer provoked the anger of members of the Ekpe society. In their rank and file, they decided to rally in demonstration against the abuse of powers by the Senior Divisional Officer. They marched in Mamfe Town, assembled at the Senior Divisional Officer’s Office and requested that he ordered the release of the Sessekou immediately and also paid a cow as a fine for arresting and humiliating a Sessekou in public without justification. The Senior Divisional Officer complied with their demands, paid the fine, and released the Sessekou before the crisis was resolved.

While the conflicts between Ekpe and the Administrative and Legal Department seem to have subsided, there is still suspicion between the formal institutions and the Ekpe indigenous institution. Hopefully, this study will shed light on what the Ekpe
institution is about, especially to administrative and legal officers that do not originate from Manyu Division. Administrative officers will have a clearer picture of the functions and usefulness of the Ekpe institution and model of conflict resolution. In the same vein, the legal officers will have a better understanding of the Ekpe model of conflict resolution and the way to deal with cases that has first been listened to with the Ekpe model.

**Changing Nature of the Ekpe Model**

This study reveals that Ekpe is able to undergo changes to adapt to modernity and changing times. During my observation, I could see that the Ekpe model has been able to undergo changes to adapt to changing times. I observed that Ekpe has incorporated the position of secretary general, who records the statements of participants, proceedings during Ekpe dispute resolution process, and Ekpe judgments. This change makes it possible for Ekpe judgments to follow precedence. I also observed that Ekpe has a financial secretary and a bank account wherein they have savings. Interview participants confirmed that Ekpe is modernizing to deal with the realities of life. The implication is that Ekpe will not be viewed as an institution whose relevance is outdated. Rather, the relevance of the institution is upheld and given an opportunity to serve those that truly need its service so as to maintain peace and harmony in Manyu Division.

**Implications of the Study**

Calls for the integration of indigenous institutions do not necessarily mean a complete replacement of the formal institutions. Rather, the indigenous institutions should complement formal institutions. In addition to achieving the objectives that the
formal legal system of Cameroon could not attain, the Ekpe model should function along the confines of the sociocultural habitat of the indigenes in their daily activities.

Integrating indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution in Manyu Division in particular, Cameroon, and Africa in general will boost the ability of local communities to claim ownership of justice enterprise, develop self-confidence for partnership with formal government institutions, which for now are widely seen as being corrupt, oppressive, and dividing rather than building peace in communities. McEvoy and Eriksson (2006) supports the integration of indigenous institutions stating that:

In such a context, it is argued: [I]t makes sense that communities themselves should take primary ownership over the establishment of programs, deciding what type of intervention might be suitable, who is going to be involved, which values will guide their work and devise their own benchmarks as part of a broader ‘legitimation process’. Those with the greatest stake in justice reconstruction – often those who have been on the receiving end of violence and criminality ... should themselves be direct participants in the process as innovators, planners and implementers. Community participation in decision-making processes regarding the rebuilding of a society adds transparency, accountability, legitimacy, and, importantly minimizes the risk of renewed conflict. Top-down initiatives need to be accompanied by culturally appropriate grassroots programs … (pp. 322–323).

Integrating indigenous institutions of conflict resolution is important for enabling a bottom-up culture of human rights. Integrating a transparent, consensual, and inclusive indigenous conflict resolution institution like Ekpe serves as an incentive for the empowerment of local communities and for promoting grassroots ownership of the
Such approaches will, to a large extent, enhance legitimacy of the justice system and reduce the likelihood of conflicts. This is especially important since experience has proven that top-down approaches to conflict resolution have not been effective in resolving protracted conflicts (McEvoy & Eriksson, 2006).

Furthermore, integrating indigenous institutions of conflict resolution stimulates the establishment of human rights at the grassroots, which is essential for communities that are undergoing transition. Should indigenous institutions be integrated into the institutions of Cameroon, the resulting consequence will be a transformation of once conflict societies into peaceful communities with vigorous actions at the grassroots level, as opposed to top-down approaches that have only dampened conflict for a short time, or inflaming existing conflicts and making them protracted. Other implications of integrating the Ekpe model into the institutions of Cameroon include the following ones.

**Deeper Knowledge in the Field of Conflict Analysis, Resolution, and Peace Studies**

The goal of this study was to make a contribution to the field of conflict analysis, resolution, and peace studies by exploring, analyzing, and describing the Ekpe indigenous institution and model of conflict resolution as practiced by the indigenes of Manyu Division. In the past, knowledge about the Ekpe model and its processes had passed from one generation to another through oral history, and little had been written about the Ekpe model. This is the first study that thoroughly describes the Ekpe model and process of conflict resolution as practiced by the indigenes of Manyu Division. The study collected new information and offered a way of informing the world about the model. The observations of the researcher were corroborated by document analysis, both the individual and focused group interview participants, and the majority of the participants
that answered the quantitative surveys, making the findings of the study very reliable and valid.

The outcome of the study fills the vacuum that existed in the field of indigenous studies by describing the Ekpe model of conflict resolution. The Ekpe model is imbedded in the collectivist culture of the indigenes, while the formal processes are mostly imbedded in individualistic culture. It is my hope that the government of Cameroon will consider the findings of the study as guidelines in the search for an all-inclusive system of governance.

**Lack of Understanding and Trust of the Formal Administrative Process of Conflict Resolution**

This study has revealed that a majority of Manyu indigenes do not understand the formal administrative process of appointment of chiefs and resolution of chieftaincy disputes. A majority of Manyu indigenes do not trust the powers given to the administration to appoint chiefs and to resolve chieftaincy disputes either. Rather, they prefer the indigenes to be solely involved in appointment of chiefs, and the Ekpe model to resolve chieftaincy disputes within their community.

Also, the research reveals that a majority of Manyu indigenes do not understand the land ordinances that govern land title issues in Cameroon. A majority are not in favor of role of the Land Consultative Boards in resolving land disputes in Manyu Division. The indigenes indicated that they will prefer the Ekpe model to resolve land disputes in Manyu Division. On the other hand, Manyu indigenes prefer the courts to resolve succession to property disputes because the customs of the people have been integrated into the laws governing succession to property issues in Cameroon.
Ownership and Participation

A majority of Manyu indigenes resent the powers given to administrative officers (Sub-Divisional Officers/Senior Divisional Officers/Governors) to appoint chiefs and resolve chieftaincy disputes. A majority believe that these administrators do not understand the customs and traditions of the indigenes and are corrupt. On the contrary, they prefer a system they can claim ownership too; one that is rooted in their custom. The majority of Manyu indigenes believe that the Ekpe model meets the criteria of a model they will like to use because Ekpe is a part of their culture and its members have a firsthand understanding of their issues and conflict. They believe the judgments of Ekpe can easily be accepted and implemented by all in the community. This study gives voices to the cries of the people and the government of Cameroon should consider it in its search for good institutions. It is important for the government of Cameroon to give consideration to the voice of the people to encourage participation in the government by indigenes.

Restorative Justice

This study reveals that the Ekpe model focuses on restorative justice. The goal of the Ekpe model is to resolve disputes, reconcile disputing parties, and reinstate cordial relationships that existed between the parties prior to their dispute. Whereas the at-fault party is fined, the purpose of the fine is to procure food and drinks to celebrate in a feast meant to reunite the parties. The at-fault party is encouraged to accept that he or she committed a wrongful act and to ask for forgiveness. Also, the party that was wronged is encouraged to accept the apology and to sincerely forgive the at-fault party. The process concludes in a feast in which all in the community are encouraged to participate as proof
of restoration of the peace and warm relationship that existed prior to the conflict. The purpose of the fine the at-fault party pays is not looked at as punitive, but rather as a compensation to procure the food and drinks and an opportunity to bring people together and feast in celebration for the restoration of the harmonious relationship of all in the community. As such, the fine could either be in drinks, food, or performing other community services.

Whereas the Ekpe model is based on the culture of Manyu indigenes, most of the interview participants said that indigenes from other ethnic groups are welcome to use the Ekpe model to resolve their conflicts. This study proves that the Ekpe model could be replicated in other communities outside Manyu Division that do not have an indigenous model of conflict resolution.

**Challenges of the Study**

One of the major challenges that I faced was the fact that I originally come from Manyu Division, lived in it for most of my youthful life, and still have family and close friends there. I was concerned that my familiarity with the people and culture may give me some advantages when conducting research in the area. However, having been away from Manyu for more than twenty years, it was possible that most of the people I knew may have moved. Besides, I cannot remember most of the cultural practices and avoided to go to communities and associate with people that I may have close ties with.

Another challenge that I faced was that, during my stay in the community, there was an ongoing land dispute in the village from which I come from, in which the chief was accused of selling one hundred hectares of community land to an individual without the consent of the community. My paternal family members happened to be very opposed
to the sales and spearheaded taking the matter to court. The matter became so serious that
the Sub-Divisional Officer for Eyumojojck, Senior Divisional Officer for Manyu, the
Governor of South West Region, the Minister in charge of lands, and the court system got
involved. Having disclosed my identity to the Sub-Divisional Officer for Eyumojojck, I
had the feeling he became suspicious that I might be conducting an investigation to
expose corruption in the system and was hesitant to give me access to documents in
Eyumojojck Sub-Division. To overcome that challenge, I decided not to conduct any
study on chieftaincy land issues in Eyumojojck Sub-Division, but to focus more on
Mamfe Central Sub-Division.

Also, I am particularly interested in the preservation of indigenous systems. I
believe that indigenous systems imbedded in the cultures of the people, ones that the
indigenes feel comfortable with, will be more effective than a system that is foreign to
them and which they do not fully understand how it functions. There was always a
possibility that my interest in indigenous systems could cause biases towards the Ekpe
model in the course of the research. To overcome the possibility of biases influencing this
study, I had to use multiple methods of data collection including documents analysis,
observations, interviews, and surveys. It is my hope that the various methods used will
minimize the possibility of my biases influencing the study

Further still, Manyu Division is a very vast territory and most of the villages do
not have access to motor able roads and telephone communications. Since the time I had
to stay in the community was limited, I could not visit all the villages, especially those in
the hinterlands to live with them and understand the challenges they face. The most I
could do was rely on the story that some members of some of these communities told me
during our meetings at the Ekpe trial session in Eyumojock Town and the Ekpe Supreme Council Meeting in Mamfe Town.

Despite my attempt to disintegrate myself and my opinion from that of the members of the community and to remain an observant, there is always the possibility that my biases may have impacted the outcome of the study. However, with the use of triangulation, I was able to look at the phenomenon from different angles and perspectives and minimize the possibility of my biases impacting the final outcome of the study. To add more, data for the quantitative studies was obtained from Manyu indigenes living all over Cameroon. Those that answered the questions in the questionnaire did so in their free will and their identity was in no way threatened. It is thus my hope that the outcome of the study will indeed reflect the opinion of a cross section of all Manyu indigenes irrespective of where they live.

**Limitations of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate and describe the Ekpe institution and model of conflict resolution as practiced by the indigenes of Manyu Division and to find out if the Ekpe model can be effective in resolving chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division. The study is thus limited to the study of the Ekpe model of conflict resolution and excludes Ekpe as practiced in other ethnic groups. There is a possibility there could be variations in Ekpe model and process in other ethnic groups including in Oroko and the Cross Rivers State of Nigeria. In this regard, this study should not be considered applicable to all ethnic groups that has acquired the institution. Rather, further study is required to confirm or bring out variations in the Ekpe institution and model as practiced by other ethnic groups. Also, because of time limitation, this study
examines the Ekpe model only, and excludes all other models of conflict resolution practiced in Manyu. To get a holistic picture of how Manyu indigenes resolve disputes, a study of other methods such as the traditional council and the female dominated institution and model (Ekpa) is desirable.

Another limitation of the study is the sample size. The goal was to visit and collect archival records and documents, interview indigenes, and observe the Ekpe model in all the four sub-divisions in Manyu Division. However, due to the vastness of Manyu Division, the lack of access to motor able roads, and no access to internet and phone services, some remote areas including Akwaya and Upper Bayang Sub-Divisions were excluded from the study. It was not possible to access archival records and documents, contact possible research participants, and observe Ekpe activities in those areas. Also, I had to exclude collection of documents and archival records on chieftaincy and land dispute issues in Eyumojock Sub-Division because of possible conflict with the Sub-Divisional Officer for Eyumojock Sub-Division and fears that my biases would negatively impact the research.

The limited time I stayed in Manyu Division meant I could only observe ceremonies that were programed to take place during the duration of my stay in the community. Thus, the number of ceremonies and Ekpe cases I was privileged to observe were limited. This limitation might have impacted my ability to fully understand the model and get a better understanding of the feeling of a wider population about the Ekpe model.

To add more, gender disparity is also a limitation to the study. The number of women that participated was limited, with very few women willing to participate. I
should have spent more time with women to build rapport and enable them to feel comfortable to express themselves and their opinion about the Ekpe model. More still, my choice of using quantitative and qualitative methods and my limited skills in both might have impacted the discussions and analyses of research samples.

Finally, most of the data were analyzed upon my return to the United States and not in the field because of internet and electricity limitations. There is the possibility I might have forgotten some things I observed and overlooked some of the things that interview participants said that could be significant to the study. However, data collection and analysis were efficient whenever I could manage them. Also, because Manyu indigenes from all the sub-divisions were encouraged to complete the surveys and they did, it can be concluded that their views replicated the views of a majority of Manyu indigenes.

**Recommendations for Future Study**

The goal of this study was to understand and describe the Ekpe indigenous model and to find out if the Ekpe model can be used to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division and Cameroon in general. Based on my experience and the findings of the study, some recommendations can be made for improving the study and for future research.

1. A study of other indigenous models in Manyu Division as well as other regions and ethnic groups in Cameroon should be conducted and accessed if they can be effective in resolving these disputes. Being Cameroon a very diverse country linguistically, culturally, and ethnically, it is important that indebt studies be conducted to find out which institutions are widely used, and which ones could be
more accepted and effective to resolve heinous conflicts that are gradually becoming protracted.

2. Studies should be carried on developing a curriculum for indigenous studies in Cameroon. The study of indigenous institutions and systems should be inculcated into the school curriculum in Cameroon. Teaching indigenous studies will raise awareness and empower indigenes to embark on using these institutions to resolve their disputes, rather than making them to be over dependent on the legal system, which is currently overcrowded and overburdened with cases.

3. Existing research shows that the formal institutions have so far not been effective in resolving chieftaincy and land disputes. The government should encourage indigenous institutions and models to resolve these disputes, especially in the rural areas where there is limited access to formal institutions. Also, the legal system should examine and recognize judgments and decisions of indigenous models. Recognizing indigenous models will empower indigenes to rely on their models to resolve disputes, reduce the backlog of cases in the formal legal institution, and reduce the burden on the court system in Cameroon. Studies should, in this regard, be carried on how the government should employ indigenous methods and the cases in which indigenous methods will be most appropriate.

4. The opinion of non Manyu indigenes, living in Manyu Division, about the Ekpe institution and model should be studied. An understanding of their opinion will give broader views and understanding of the model and will make it better
adopted and applicable to non Manyu indigenes living in Manyu Division as well as to other ethnic groups and communities.

5. Formal training should be given to the Ekpe judges so as to better prepare them to examine and resolve disputes. Indigenous institutions are imbedded in the culture and lifestyle of the people. In the past, passing the skills and knowledge of the institution was done orally. However, with modernization, it is essential that activists undergo periodic training to refresh their skills and to acquire new skills in the art. In this vein, studies should be conducted on how to train and retrain activists to better administer indigenous justice.

**Summary of the Study**

This study investigated and described the Ekpe model of conflict resolution and enquired if Ekpe could be used to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division. In Chapter one, I introduced the problems of chieftaincy, land, and succession to property disputes in Manyu Division in particular, Cameroon, as well as Africa as a whole. I also stated the objectives of the study, the research questions, the importance, and the limitations of the study, and finally defined some of the terms that run through the study. Chapter two focused on the history of Cameroon and its goal was to help understand why, and how Cameroon, became very divergent and why the formal institutions are not adopted to resolve some of the conflicts that are becoming protracted and dividing once peaceful communities.

Chapter three was a review of the existing literature on indigenous studies. The literature revealed that indigenous models have been used successfully in recent times to resolve disputes wherein the formal system was found wanting. I also reviewed existing
literature on the Ekpe model which revealed that there was no study that examined the
Ekpe model of conflict resolution. In chapter four, some theories were used to analyze the
situation in Cameroon and the need for conducting a study on the Ekpe model of conflict
resolution. Theory was also used to explain why indigenous studies are important in
Manyu Division.

In Chapter five, an intrinsic qualitative case study approach was used to explore
and describe the Ekpe model of conflict resolution. Quantitative study was also
conducted to find out if Manyu indigenes understand the Chieftaincy Decree, and their
opinion about the powers given to administrative authorities to appoint chiefs and to
resolve chieftaincy disputes, to determine if Manyu indigenes understand the 1974 Land
Ordinances and their opinion about the role of Land Consultative Boards in the issuance
of land titles and to resolve land disputes, to establish the opinion of Manyu indigenes
about the Ekpe model of conflict resolution, and finally to find out the opinion of Manyu
indigenes about the institution they prefer to resolve chieftaincy, land, and succession to
property disputes in Manyu Division.

In chapter six, the findings of the document analysis, observation, and interviews
were presented. Findings of the quantitative study were also presented. In chapter seven,
the findings of the study were discussed. My observations were corroborated by the
document analysis as well as by individual and focused group interview participants.
Furthermore, the quantitative analysis revealed that a majority of Manyu indigenes will
prefer the use of the Ekpe model to resolve chieftaincy and land disputes, and the court
system to resolve succession to property disputes. Chapter eight was focused on the
implication, limitations of the study, and proposals for future research.
For ethical purposes, participants were properly informed about the purpose of the research as well as their freedom to participate or not to participate. Those that accepted to participate in the study were asked to sign the informed consent form. The identity of the research participants were kept confidential for the purpose of their security. At the end of the research, findings were analyzed and discussed. This study further contributes to critical studies that analyze the national and the indigenous (ethnic) consequences (aspects) of the adoption of Western orientated institutions of governance and conflict resolution and the relevance of indigenous institutions that had been existing prior to colonialization. It is my hope that this study will create a framework for the understanding and development of knowledge in the field of indigenous studies, conflict resolution, and the social sciences in general.
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Appendix A: Map of Manyu Division
Appendix B: Interview Guide

Interview Questionnaire (Qualitative Study)

1. What is Ekpe Society?
2. What does Ekpe represent according to your culture?
3. What is the process of conflict resolution in Ekpe?
4. What are the norms that impact the Ekpe Society conflict resolution process?
5. Do you believe that the offended and the family of the offended are usually satisfied with the result of a case settled by Ekpe?
6. What are the guarantees that Ekpe provide to prevent a reoccurrence of the wrongful act by the offender or the offender’s family?
7. What are the guarantees that Ekpe provide to prevent the victim or victim’s family from revenging?
8. In your opinion, who do you think benefits more when Ekpe is called upon to resolved disputes between two people, families, or groups?
9. What are the consequences of refusing to abide by the decisions/rulings of Ekpe?
10. What is the role of women in the Ekpe society?
11. Do you believe that woman should have a say traditionally in conflict resolution? How? Why?
12. Why do you think some people will choose to go to Ekpe rather than the Administration or the courts?
13. Why do you think some people will go to the Administration or the courts rather than Ekpe?
14. Do you think that Ekpe can be more successful in resolving chieftaincy succession disputes?
15. How do you think the courts and the administration have impacted the proper functioning of Ekpe in conflict resolution?
16. Do you believe that Ekpe has any impact on the people’s perception about the efficiency of the judiciary?
17. To your opinion, what are the disadvantages of the administration, and the Ekpe society?
18. What do you think should be done to harmonize the administration, the legal system and the Ekpe, society?
Subject: CHIEFTAINCY CONSULTATIVE TALKS

I have the honour to inform you that in application of Article 10 of Decree N°77/245 of 15/7/1977 bearing on the organization of traditional chieftdoms as modified and completed by Decree N° 82/241 of 24/6/1982;

I will be at the Eyangntui village hall on Wednesday April 4th 2012 at 10:00am to carry out Consultative Talks with the view to designating a new traditional ruler of your village.

The entire population, internal and external elites as well as the concerned are requested to be present and on time.

You are further requested to ensure the smooth organization of the meeting.

Treat this as very important and urgent, please.

CC:

✔ The SDO Manyu/Mamfe

The Sub-Prefect

The Vice Chairman and Traditional Council, Eyangntui.
Mamfe Central Sub-Division
AGBORKEM TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

* THE DIVISIONAL OFFICER
  FOR EYUMOJOCK SUB-DIVISION
  (CHAIRMAN OF AGBORKEM TRADITIONAL COUNCIL):

* THE PRESIDENT OF CHIEFS FOR EYUMOJOCK SUB-DIVISION:

* THE PRESIDENT OF MANYU CHIEFS

Sir,

AN ATTESTATION OF RECOGNITION OF
CHIEF EKURI EMMANUEL AYIMESIN.

This is to certify that we the undersigned sitting in council, have the honour to remind you that chief Ekuri Emmanuel Ayimesin was enthroned as the chief of AGBORKEM OSSIDINGÉ (GERMAN) on the 22nd November, 1997 in accordance with our tradition. It would also be recalled that consultative talks were carried out by the D.O. of EYUMOJOCK on the 29/1/98 and 18/3/98 at Agbokem and Eyumojock respectively. Chief Ekuri Emmanuel Ayimesin remains the only chief of Agbokem Ossiding (German) until death or abdication due to inability to continue to rule. We have therefore mandated him to represent the population of his village (Agbokem) in all meetings or public manifestations which require the attendance of Manyu chiefs.

We wholeheartedly throw our support and unflinching loyalty to our dynamic and peace loving Chief Ekuri Emmanuel Ayimesin.

In testimony whereof, this attestation is issued to serve the purpose for which it is needed.

We remain, yours Faithfully,

1. Mr. JOSEPH OSSANG EBAN - Interim Vice Chairman of Council
2. Mr. GREGORY ENO TABÉ - COUNCILLOR
3. MADAM HELEN OWAN EGBE - COUNCILLOR
4. MR. SAMSON MBI OJONG - ELDER
5. MR. JACOB OWAN OWA - ELDER
6. MR. JOHN MPAME EBAN - ELDER
7. MR. OBI MBI MATHIAS - SENIOR QUARTER HEAD
8. MR. AGBOK AYUK WILLIAM - QUARTER HEAD

CC:

* THE SENIOR DIVISIONAL OFFICER FOR MANYU.

Above for your information.
REPUBLIC OF GHANA
PEACE-MIN. ATTACHMENTS

THE SENIOR DIVISIONAL OFFICER FOR KANTU DIVISION

SHAWNOLE, 31st May, 1996

SIGNED

JOSEPH OTU

CIVIL ADMINISTRATOR, KANTU DIVISION

CASE NO. 03/C.G./375

OF ETUKU

On the 23rd December, 1995

EDUKK

SIGNED

MICHAEL ADAMSON

SENIOR DIVISIONAL OFFICER, KANTU DIVISION

AT KANTU, the 1st JAN 2000
THE AGBORKEM-OSSIGEGNE VILLAGE
(MONASSAM QUARTERS)
Eyumojobok Judd-Division
Republic of Cameroon

Contact Address:
c/o P.O Box 78
Mamfe-Manyu

Our Ref. 0010/MCD/AG/2000

Without prejudice

13th June, 2000.

The Sub-Divisional Officer,
Mamfe Central Sub-Division,
Mamfe, Republic of Cameroon.

Dear Sir,

Protest against the appointment of Mr. Ekuri Emmanuel Ayimensin as Chief of
Agborkem Ossigenge.

We, the people of the Monassam family write to protest against the appointment of Mr.
Ekuri Emmanuel Ayimensin as the chief of Agborkem Ossigenge. We consider it an insult
and injustice to have a different person outside our family made to represent us. The move
so taken has given grounds for the person imposed on us to lay claim to the fact that he
comes from a ruling family. In the result every other person is not eligible to rule as it is
only people from their house that have to head the village. Consequently everyone else is a
domestic – slave – without a right to have a say in the running of the village, let alone
being a chief for that matter. That declared position so put by the Administration makes
the chieftaincy in Agborkem hereditary. It is indeed a false picture painted to suit the
authors of this fake claim. It is dishonesty in the highest degree to defeat the end of justice.
We cannot and do not accept the distorted facts so put forward and acted upon by the
powers that be. They acted on wrong premises. So it smacks disaster and disunity and
disagreement in the village. But we cannot be so smeared.

The history of the village now known as Agborkem Ossigenge is as follows:
The founder of the said settlement is Abontama who begot three sons. These were
Monassam, Atemnkang and Akomba. The eldest son was Monassam followed by
Atemnkang and Akomba being the youngest. Monassam begat Ossare-aya, Atemnkang
Ayukaba and Akomba begat Eyangayip later on renamed Njemelabu. Each of the
branches of the three formed its own settlement and lived in its own area with well defined
boundaries of their own. However, when the Germans arrived they urged the then
autonomous villages to come together so as to facilitate development and surveillance over
The hostile surrounding. Each of the settled family moved to where the Germans were and the area so occupied was named Agborkem Ossigenge (German).

There was need for the three separate units now under one roof to develop a system of running the affairs of the village- the new settlement so created. Each village took its turn to provide a chief when its turn came up thus establishing the rotatory principle among the erstwhile brothers. The quarter whose turn it was to provide the leader for the entire village, after consulting among its members, then announced their readiness to give the village their nominee. It is then that all the other members of the village assembled and they are presented by the person so brought by those whose turn it was to give a leader. It is therefore false and misleading for anyone to claim the hegemony of his family among the other families to talk of a hereditary rulership. This has never been the practice.

Based on the above understanding Ayuk Ogemanyi representing Atemnkang the forefathers of Ayukaba village. Ndifon Agborfa took the batton for and on behalf of the monassam-Osseyaya-family tree. Ayimesin did in the turn of Akomba represent the Njemeba. Now it was time for a second round to be taken and Ayukaba was asked to present its choice to the group. They the people of Ayukaba presented one Ojong Okun. Unfortunately he Ayukaba’s choice had just lost his wife so he after conferring with his own group requested Mpame Ekule to deputise for him. Thus, Mpame though from the Akomba family became the chief of the village. But as Mpame Ekule grew weak and sickly when Ojaghe Michael Ndep retired from the police force, Mpame in agreement with his people requested that he chief Ojaghe replace him. Chief Ojaghe ruled but when the person Mpame Ekule died he Chief Ojaghe was asked to withdraw. He did do as he was requested to do and pleaded that he would take the turn of his quarter’s second round. He was allowed to do so till 1996 when he died. It therefore naturally follows that the office of the new chief is to be devolved to the Monassam-Ossire-aya family unit.

So with the death of chief Ojaghe Michael Ndep in 1996, in November 1997 or so Mr. Ekuri and Obi Douglas moved to the village. While there Mr. Ekuri cunningly assembled many people from their quarters in his house. In the house, those present at the instance of Mr. Ekuri raised the chieftaincy issue and expressed the desire to have the vacancy filled. They agreed that it was the turn of the Monassam family to provide the new flag bearer. Mr. Okuk Sam Besong one of the two persons from our quarter was requested to propose the name of their flag bearer. At that juncture he Sam Okuk asked where his own people notably Mpame Ashu and Ojong John Ndep from Mamfe were not there in the delegation that came. In reply to this pertinent question Obi Douglas got up to say he had informed Mpame Ashu who said he was more interested in the practice of law than come home for chieftaincy matter. Same as Ojong John Ndep who was alleged to be more concerned with looking for money to send his children to school than come. These replies were all fallacies as it turned out that non-of our persons of Mamfe had knowledge of the secret agenda planned by Mr. Ekuri. Mr. Douglas and others of their quarters. In the circumstance Sam Okuk Besong in displeasure said if his own followers were not keen on
Identifying themselves with the aspirations of their people, he Okuk would say he had no one to present for the office. It was then that he Okuk said he would give Ekuri to take up the flag for and on behalf of the Monassam group. In the same Mr. Ekuri’s house Sam Okuk was taken to the room of the former and made to thumb print documents. This very step was a pointer to the bad faith with which the consultations were done. Consultations are supposed to have been in the town hall in the presence of all those interested in the issue at stake. The whole secret agenda was carried out on 21/11/97.

The Monassam people had gone to Nsanakang for some funeral celebration. When they returned they were informed of the trick played on Okuk but they refused to so by made decision taken without consultation. On the 22nd November, 1997 when Mr. Ekuri would have been presented to the whole village by Sam Okuk Besong, he Okuk Sam got up to announce to the entire people assembled for that purpose that he had withdrawn his proposal that Mr. Ekuri be made to take the place of any of the Monassam persons. He went further to say his own family members had not accepted the secret talks they made behind their backs. But before this gathering dispersed Mr. Mbu Mathias acting as spokesperson for the AKamba family stood up to announce before the crowd that since the people whose turn it is to give the new leader – the Monassam family object to the secret talks, the Monassam people should go behind and bring them their choice within a reasonable time. Thus no presentation was ever done if Mr. Ekuri as the new leader as would have been done.

Word was sent and our people wrote and invited notably Mpame Ashu and Ndep Ojong John of the Monassam family. They arrived home on 11/12/97. Consultative talks were held amongst us and on the 13th December 1997 we took Mpame Ashu to the town hall where the whole population was gathered upon the bell being rang. In the midst of all assembled, Sam Okuk Besong got up and announced that upon the break down of the secret talks of 21/11/97 he as head of the Monassam family was asked to bring the person from amongst them who would head the village. He continued that he had come with the person – the people’s choice in the person of Mpame Ashu. Mpame Ashu’s hands were raised before the whole crowd as the successor to late chief Ojaghe Michael Ndep. However, at the end of the formal presentation of the new leader before the entire village, Mr. Mbu Mathias Obi got up from where he sat and said he was sorry for Mr. Mpame Ashu for he Mpame has to wait until the demise of Mr. Ekuri who had been made chief since 21/11/97 and documents signed to that effect.

Mpame Ashu had been formally presented as the new chief of the village. Jubilations therefore went on and there was gun firing and dancing, which event continued till the new leader of the village was escorted to his residence. As a result of the festivities that followed the Monassam people were reported to the Gendarmes and convocations were sent to the Monassam people to report at the Brigade. This was on 17/12/97 and we all moved to the Brigade on 18/12/97. We had arrived late a new date for the hearing of the complaint was fixed for 29/12/97. On that day we were told that when Mpame was
installed chief of the village the nine arms-guns he had bought from Nigeria for that occasion were used to intimidate the whole village. Curiously a woman as fat and huge as Mrs. Obi Philiomena was alleged to have ran under her bed because of the fright she had on hearing the numerous gunshots. It was proven that the gun firing was normal when such occasions arose and we were all allowed to return to our village.

On the 29th January 1998, we were honoured with the visit of the sub-prefect for Eymojoock Sub Division. Welcome addresses were presented notably one from the eldest person in the village: Pa Awok Daniel Ngbody. In it he outlined the procedure used to select the successor to a deceased chief of the village. Copy of this welcome address is attached for your appreciation. After hearing the welcome addresses so presented, the D.O for Eymojoock, on hearing talks from people from the different family groups declared the secret meeting where Mr. Ekuri was proposed by Okuk Sam Besong as being null and void. This declaration was made in the hall wherein we had some members of the entourage notably Mrs. Chu Mary municipal administratrix of the Eymojoock Rural Council and Hon. Ayuk Achale Peter Egbe M.P for Eymojoock present. It is therefore ridiculous that a meeting declared null and void could be one on which basic decisions are based regardless of the facts disclosed at the first consultative talks. There in the very hall Mr. Ekuri was told by the administrative Authority that he was disqualified. Late chief Ojaghe was his uncle and their turn to the headship of the entire village had lapsed. Sam Okuk was further advised to get their choice and bring to Eymojoock. Therefore the fact that consultative talks were held on 23/12/97 and the decision giving the chieftaincy to Mr. Ekuri by prefectoral order N° 191/2000 of 11/01/2000 is a decision based not on any consultative talks at all. Copy of the said Prefectoral Order above cited is attached. In addition the fact that no consultative talks were ever held on that day are known by Mr. Ekuri and his clique who preach the hegemony of their family amongst the Agborkem families. This fact is reflected in a letter titled “An Attestation of Recognition of chief Ekuri Emmanuel Ayimesin” dated 19th September, 1999 addressed to the Divisional Officer for Eymojoock Sub-Division, the president of chiefs for Eymojoock Sub-Division and President of Manyu Chiefs, which letter was copied S.D.O for Manyu. Copy of above cited letter attached. The letter came from a supposed Agborkem Traditional Council made up of only people from other quarters.

On that very 29/1/97 we were instructed by the D.O for Eymojoock sub-division that by the 18th March 1998, Okuk should bring his choice which he boshed and presented to the other part of the village to Eymojoock for recognition. On that 18/3/98 which was the second talks ever held in the mist of all, Okuk Sam Besong of Monassam and Agbor Ayuk William of Ayukaba stood that they supported my nomination. He Mr. Agbor Ayuk William while questioned why he then gave me his support replied that at first he was made to tell lies but his conscience pricked him and he was then for the truth and since it is our turn- the Monassam turn- he was strongly behind me for the procedure to be followed. It is note-worthy to mention that at this very talks Mr. Ekuri and his people came up with a new story about my origin. They alleged falsely that my parents came from Nigeria and
resided in Akwen, from where we moved to Ossire-aya founded by Monassam and therefore the ruling house was the Akomba family incarnated by the Ojaghe Awujong family. This is completely false, as my uncle Ndifen Agborfa was the chief of the village. It was after his death that Mparne Ekule at the instance of Ojong Okun for Atemnkang came to the scene but before his death he handed over the reigns of power to late chief Ojaghe when he retired from the police force. Ojaghe continued for the turn of Akomba when Mparne Ekule died. So it is now the turn of Monassam and Mparne Ashu is the people’s choice.

It is equally necessary to mention that the flag bearing of the village had been done as follows:

1. MONASSAM (OSSIRE-AYA) — Ndifen Agborfa

2. ATEMNKA NG (AYUKABA) — Ayukegem Anyi, Ojong Okun

3. AKOMBA (EYANG AYIB) — Ayimesin, Mparne Ekule. Who deputised for Ojong Okun at his request, and Ojaghe Michael Ndep who finished the turn of Mparne Ekule but took the turn of Akomba when Mparne Ekule’s turn lapsed with the death of Ojong Okun.

From the above it would be seen that the chieftaincy in Agborkem rotates from family to family and not hereditary as arrogated by self-seeking person who shamelessly want to distort facts to suit their selfish ends. This fact was clearly boasted by Mr. Ekuri on the 14th April, 2000 when we were before the S.D.O when Ekuri said “Even God knows as well as his deceased parents besides the whole world that he was the person to be chief.” The S.D.O however frowned at this utterance and advised Ekuri to desist from such inflammatory talks. But one would ask where one who thinks it was a divine right to rule would have regard for any other person. The S.D.O would remember the ugly incident that took place when he and his entourage went to present the flying boats to the villages on the riverside. Mr. Ekuri stood to pour libation in the presence of his elders, an act considered more abominable by our tradition. We are sure that the authorities were mised and would do well to correct this injustice worked on us as a quarter-the most senior quarter in Aborkem that matter and let us have our share of the leadership stool which is now ours as of right. Ekuri Ayimesin is from Akomba and his uncle Ojaghe Michael Ndep have just ended their turn. We object to any move to change the chieftaincy procedure practised by our forefathers.

Thank you,

Yours faithfully.
ENC:

- Attestation of Recognition of Chief Ekuri Emmanuel Ayimensin
- Prefectorial Order No. 191/88/2000
- A list of Signatories of that family (Monassam Family)

Copied:

- Ministry of Territorial Administration (MINAT) - Yaounde
- Governor South West Province - Buea.
- All Sub-Prefects – Manyu.
Following the MDCC Committee meeting held at Bachuo – Akagbe on Saturday, 3rd September, 2005 to examine the Mbinjong Ekpe problem that arose early in July 2005 in respect of the honouring of Mr. Arrey Augustine Arrey as SESEKOU, and having resolved the problem;

Considering that the Manyu General Ekpe failed to honour the invitations to attend handed to the Secretary of that Organisation;

Doubtful of the status of the Manyu General Ekpe vis-à-vis its activities constituting itself as a court in Ekpe matters;

In view of the fact that the Chiefs remain the custodians of all traditions and heads of all Cultural and Development Associations in accordance with section 20 of Chieflaincy Decree No. 77/245 of 15 July 1977;

Hereby decides to suspend the activities of Manyu General Ekpe pending a decision of the Manyu Divisional Chiefs’ Conference due to hold sometime in November 2005.

Done at Mamfe, this 5th September 2005.

Chief Takang Henry Agbor
Vice President

Cc:
- The S.D.O., Manyu
- The D.O., UpperBanyang
- The D.O., Mamfe Central
- The D.O., Eyumojock
- The D.O., Akwaya
- Manyu General Ekpe President/Secretary.