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# Glocalization of Subway in India: How a US Giant Has Adapted in the Asian Subcontinent

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## Abstract

This paper examines how Subway, the US fast food restaurant franchise, has adapted to Indian culture. Glocalization theory will be the guiding framework used in this analysis. Glocalization rests on the premise that a universal concept must change to fit and function in a local culture. Blending the local and the global, it provides a passage to empowerment where modifications to a particular commodity can make it prosper in various traditions. Four important themes of glocalization emerged from this analysis: (1) adjustment of restaurant ambience; (2) adoption of Jain values; (3) adjustment of advertising practices; and (4) adjustment of the use of social media. An important conclusion is that, although India is embracing modernity, Subway has honoured many religious and cultural views in that nation.

## Keywords

Adaptation, culture, glocalization, Hinduism, India, Jainism, Subway

## Introduction

This paper examines how Subway, the US fast food restaurant franchise, has adapted to Indian culture. The idea of fast food has not always been favoured in India since home cooking has been a tradition for decades. Fast food became a local concept once giants like McDonald's altered their international menu items to fit Indian home-grown values of health, religion and vegetarian living. Yet, obesity continues to be an issue. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 25 million Indians currently have diabetes (Anand, 2011). This is where Subway has played a substantial role in communicating health to Indian consumers. Glocalization theory will be the guiding framework used in this analysis. Glocalization rests on the premise that a universal concept must change to fit and function in a local culture. Blending the local and the global, it

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provides a passage to empowerment where modifications to a particular commodity can make it prosper in various traditions (Robertson, 1995).

This paper begins with a review of glocalization theory followed by a brief history of fast food in India. With household sizes decreasing, women entering the workplace, and wealth becoming more attainable, 70% of Indian consumers are ordering take-out food at least once a month (Ali and Nath, 2013). After discussing the emergence of Subway around the globe, this paper delves into the heart of this analysis: the glocalization of Subway in India. As such, four important themes of glocalization emerged from this analysis: (1) adjustment of restaurant ambience; (2) adoption of Jain values; (3) adjustment of advertising practices; and (4) adjustment of the use of social media. An important conclusion is that, although India is embracing modernity, Subway has honoured many religious and cultural views in that nation. For example, many Subway restaurants have launched vegan-only meals to respect the Jain population – which does not condone killing anything alive. This paper ends with a discussion that also offers suggestions for future research.

## Review of glocalization theory

Developed by Robertson (1995), glocalization theory is the process by which differences in local cultures emerge from sharing a commonality with one or more global cultures. This happens when social actors borrow a worldwide concept and change it to fit their pre-existing homegrown values. Such re-contextualization helps to understand how turning the global into the local is a fundamentally active, unremitting and fluid process (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2009). Glocalization refutes the common belief that both the local and global are dialectically opposed to one another; rather, they are interdependent entities. That is, the local is frequently being formed and swayed by the global. To illustrate, US giants like Walmart tend to succeed in other countries when minor modifications and specific changes become customised to their local market. In regards to local Walmart stores in India, known as Bharti-Walmart, managers frequently play Bollywood pop music and have cafés serving Indian food platters (*thalis*), so that consumers do not feel alienated from their culture (Matusitz and Reyers, 2010).

This interchange between the local and the global, however, may result in questioning cultural uniformity versus cultural diversity. Giulianotti (2015: 288) calls this the ‘duality of glocality’, whereby worldwide cultures convey the permutation of both convergence and divergence (i.e. homogenization and heterogenization). For example, Disneyland Paris initially failed because it was functioning off US standards. Once the park catered to French needs (e.g. by selling alcohol and turning shows and settings into more authentically French spectacles and displays), Disneyland Paris became known as Europe’s number one tourist attraction (Matusitz, 2010). As this implies, glocalization provides a passage to empowerment and possibility in that it is not self-limiting (Blatter, 2004).

What is typically considered local is principally contained within the global. This means globalization – the solidity of the world as a whole – involves linking environments, and as in any tradition, demands the invention of locality (Robertson, 1995). Put another way, globalization is not eliminating conventional environments; rather, it is intermingling with them in some type of vicinity, i.e. glocalization (Roudometof, 2015). Researchers have studied this phenomenon throughout a variety of different contexts, including (but not limited to) the following: education (Caena, 2014); urban studies (Paganoni, 2012); consumer culture (Matusitz, 2010); the sociology of sport (Giulianotti and Robertson, 2009); and most of all fast food (where individuals must eat fast, leave quickly and usually eat meals off the premises) (Metin and Kizgin, 2015).

Although every culture has its own indigenous fast foods, contact with worldwide chains has increased, with many consumers (poor and rich) highly fascinated by these items. US fast food

companies (e.g. Coca-Cola, Nestlé and McDonald's) usually arrive first when a nation launches its market. This is where grand openings can become important occasions. Thousands lined up for hours when Beijing launched its first McDonald's in 1992 (Witkowski, 2007). In 1994, a seven-mile line of cars in Kuwait waited outside a new McDonald's drive-through window. What makes these companies thrive in other cultures is that their so-called global items are constantly revised to suit different consumer tastes. China carries approximately 100 different varieties of Nestlé that cannot be found elsewhere (e.g. sesame-flavoured chocolate) (Witkowski, 2007). In Turkey, a burger at McDonald's is served with yogurt sauce and is called a Beefy Alaturka Sandwich. The McDonald's burger is also referenced as a McKrokot (The Netherlands), McKebab (India), Teriyaki Burger (Japan) and a McRice Burger (Hong Kong). These examples demonstrate how customers are hybridizing the local and global (Metin and Kizgin, 2015).

However, throughout decades, convenience eating has been linked to higher rates of obesity with consumers taking in more saturated fatty acids, sodium, as well as encountering lower levels of fibre, calcium and iron (Isganaitis and Lustig, 2005). Researchers such as Holsten (2009) indicate that there is a positive correlation between regularly fast food dining and putting on weight. With US fast food companies growing in developing countries like India, reaching Western obesity trends is becoming a risk (Daniel et al., 2011). Among Asia-Pacific countries (28 countries total), Ali and Nath (2013) found that India ranks tenth for the most regular fast food consumption, seventh place out of ten for weekly fast food intake, and tenth place for being the most frequent fast food patrons worldwide. Over 70% of Indian consumers in one online survey reported that they ate food from to-go eateries at least once a month, if not more often. From this percentage, 37% even mentioned placing to-go orders about once a week (Ali and Nath, 2013).

These statistics clearly show how obesity can become an issue. In fact, the WHO predicts that while there are approximately 25 million Indians who currently have diabetes, 57 million will have it by 2025, according to the latest trends. In Delhi alone, 76% of women suffer from intestinal obesity (Anand, 2011). On an international scale, obesity leaves over a billion people overweight with roughly 300 million clinically obese and at risk for chronic disease and disability (Witkowski, 2007). To reverse this dilemma, there is one fast food restaurant that promotes a healthy lifestyle with its fresh ingredients: Subway. In this paper, the focus will be on how incorporating the Subway chain in India can be meaningful in terms of catering to Indian philosophy and values. To obtain an understanding of how glocalization has worked in India, this paper will look at its history in fast food marketing.

## **Glocalization of fast food in India**

The idea of fast food has not always left a deep impression on urban consciousness. Many Indian consumers still do not acknowledge fast food as a field with its explicit boundaries and complications (Nandy, 2004). In India, a nutritionist or columnist is hardly ever heard being plaintive about the emerging popularity of fast food. McDonald's is often seen as a reasonably trendy family style restaurant. Pizza Hut is also viewed as an apparatus for rich Indian youth who have money to splurge. Nevertheless, the trend for cooking less and eating away from home is not new to the Indian economy. Looking at India's history, fast food developed in the late 19th century colonial period, specifically in larger cities like Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. It mainly served the needs of daily long distance political travellers. Many restaurant menus carried English or French names like patties and omelettes with no relevance to the West in terms of looks, tastes or odour. Being qualified as street food by most Europeans and sophisticated Indians, their intricate labour exhaustive spicing and cooking made them unique for Asian palates – implanting the seed for glocalization (Nandy, 2004).

Nirula's, founded in 1934, was India's first official fast food venture. It began as an ice-cream parlour and later incorporated items like burgers and pizzas. Connecting successfully with numerous networks (e.g. hotels and pastry shops), it enlarged to over 60 outlets in five different regions, delivering Indian cuisine to more than 50,000 customers daily. Likewise, prior to the 1990s, Wimpy's was *the* only multinational restaurant in India that mixed both Indian and international flavours to attract customers (Goyal and Singh, 2007). Other franchises like McDonald's, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), Domino's and Pizza Hut followed shortly after, enticing locals by promoting their products as fusion cuisines (Srivastava, 2015). To show the trend in growth alone, one hundred Domino stores were built from 1995 to 2001 in some of India's largest cities (Anand, 2011).

As suburbanization and industrial development have expanded in India with the nation's political economy becoming well-suited for global capitalism, the mechanics and growth of food fare has lingered portentously. Today India has *the* largest consumption market worldwide, according to the President of Franchise in India, Gaurav Marya. Indeed, India's fast food industry is rising by 40% a year and has generated billions of dollars since 2005. With discussions and plans on expanding popular fast food chains, such as Dunkin' Donuts, Popeye's Chicken and Burger King, one of the main concerns has been whether or not these restaurants could cater to every location's unique tastes. Not even ethnic food is easy to sell in a place known for a variety of dishes. Food diversity in India is an inherent trait of its varied culture with different provinces and states within. To put this into perspective, residents in Bengal (West India) usually like their own cuisine, but when it comes to consuming or preparing food outside the home, they are more inclined to pick some type of Mughal (North Indian) or European food, otherwise known as Indianized British food with elaborate French/Italian labels. They reason that Bengali food is not 'restaurant quality', particularly because cafés serving it are stereotyped as lowbrow eating places. This also goes to show that many Indians prefer having home-cooked mealtimes – an idea buttressed both individually and religiously (Nandy, 2004).

### *Adaptation to ingredients and prices*

Initially, Indian consumers believed that multinational fast food outlets only served meat, which led them to protest against such outlets. These corporate organizations began receiving approval once they modified their products to basic Indian meal requirements with non-vegetarian options, eliminating beef and pork items completely from their menus. McDonald's India, for example, advertises the McVeggies in place of the traditional burger. It is a breaded patty consisting of vegetables, potatoes, rice, spices and eggless mayonnaise along with a sesame toasted bun (Witkowski, 2007). Fast food is also too expensive according to national standards. A typical burger is around Rs 50 (US\$ 80). To fix the issue, Domino's re-launched its 'Pizza Mania' bargain by selling pizzas for Rs 35 (US\$ 56). This encouraged other players like McDonald's to reduce their prices as well. What is interesting, however, is that fast food is consumed and marketed toward middle-class and higher-income neighbourhoods in India as opposed to lower-income individuals in the US (Aloia et al., 2013; Powell and Chaloupka, 2009).

### *Food purchasing behaviours*

Food purchasing behaviours are inspected as a measure of cultural ideology. This does not necessarily denote material and social needs *per se*; rather, it is about history, custom, apathy and an artistic responsiveness for forming eating arrangements. In India (and many other countries for that matter), eating out often is correlated with the desire to request home deliveries and take outs, as well as chomping on more snacks, sandwiches and other US foods. This usually leads to a fall in

the consumption of conventional food and a change in eating habits (Srivastava, 2015). Srivastava (2015) argues that this decline in India is a result of rising incomes and quicker development supported by socio-economic aims, such as decreasing household size, higher entry to the economy of working women and growing affluence. While home delivery has increased by 20%, high real estate costs have been an issue. Some expert reports specify that while global standards are roughly 15% of rental sales, India's are as high as 25%.

In spite of all these contentions, the fast food industry is adapting to Indian food requirements and becoming a popular part of life, particularly among Indian youth and in small towns (Goyal and Singh, 2007; Gupta, 2003). Gupta (2003) found that snack time (followed by dinner and lunch) is the most desired period for Indians to stop at fast food outlets. Young consumers, in particular, may go at least once a week, but their dynamic lifestyles can be difficult to keep up with. Trying to get a hold of travellers forced many chains to open outlets at several locations including highways, malls, airports and metro stations. Because their potential customers are pressed for time, restaurant chains like Yum! in India are counting on rapid service kiosks at airports. Such implementation limits the amount of time two people spend in a restaurant from roughly 30 to 12 minutes. As all this reveals, India is embracing modernity. Yet, notwithstanding this modernity, there is still a feeling of respect for culture, health, humans and animals, which are not only Indian values, but also, as this paper will show, are Jain values.

## **Subway: general glocalization perspectives**

Subway is now the largest developing fast food franchise in the world (Herold, 2015). It currently has about 44,000 restaurants catering to people in more than 100 countries (Subway.com). Launched in 1974, it is now ranked as the number one fast food chain – and it has been for several years in a row (Perrigot et al., 2009). Its success not only stems from the fact that it does not partake in company ownership anywhere in the world; it also has changed the way other fast food chains compete. Thanks to menus that reflect freshness, convenience and health in various products, consumers are free to pick their own fillings and build their own meal as opposed to purchasing a typical hamburger at McDonald's, the latter which largely impedes the idea of individual choice (Burch and Lawrence, 2005).

No fast food restaurant has concentrated on the well-being of its food to the extent that Subway has over the past two decades. With more restaurants than McDonald's, Subway's message of diet and health has encouraged other fast food chains to reconfigure their image by offering a wider selection of healthier menu options. In 2000, Subway's well-known Jared campaign began sharing the story of Jared Fogle, who dropped 245 pounds after consuming Subway sandwiches for a year (Pitta, 2010). This campaign had a large impact on patrons as was evident in a 48% one-year sales increase for the restaurant (McGrath and MacMillan, 2005). While Subway also offers not-so-healthy items, this promotion marketed seven types of 'subs' with lower than seven grams of fat. Nonetheless, obesity rates keep climbing worldwide. The role fast food plays in an individual's diet is significant, since Americans and many other nationalities devour approximately one-third of their daily calories while eating out (Wootan et al., 2006). In spite of this, Subway has expanded its business around the world by glocalizing its products to fit different consumer wants.

In Great Britain, Subway has embraced the 'Eat Fresh' temperament by coming up with its own local fare of 'subs'. The Tuna Sub, for example, is the daily feature on Fridays for just £1.99. Yet, it contradicts Subway's healthy eating campaign in that it has 530 calories and 31 grams of fat, which is higher than a hamburger and fries. In France, the Subway craze started emerging once the country began journal, TV and social network advertising (e.g. Facebook) (Perrigot et al., 2009). In places like Sweden, self-service technology (SST) is huge for glocalizing products, where touch

screen ordering systems are used at Subway drive-through locations. This increased sales by US\$750 per week (Antonsson et al., 2011). Another success in Sweden is the five-dollar foot long (55 SEK), originally buttressed by Stuart Frankel who came up with the idea during periods of US economic recession. This idea accumulated more than four billion dollars worldwide. Frankel's five dollar foot long idea proves how a large corporation can take an idea (not based out of headquarters) and glocalize it. The issue in Sweden, on the other hand, is that customers are not very proactive in their eating choices. Unlike US customers who know precisely what they desire and how they want it, Swedish customers are not accustomed to making their own choices when it comes to eating. More preference is given to glancing at a menu and choosing from it, hence, Subway glocalized its customer relations in Sweden (Antonsson et al., 2011).

Looking at the aforementioned examples, it can be seen how Subway can customise its brand to a variety of different cultures. What is missing, however, is how chains like Subway cherish local social rituals and belief systems. This is what makes the glocalization of Subway in India a unique case. By examining aspects like different ingredients, marketing strategies, and restaurant settings, Subway's glocalization strategies in India serve as an example for appreciating social bonding and healthy eating vis-à-vis fast food.

## **Glocalization of Subway in India**

Subway launched its very first store in New Delhi, India in 2001. Today, there are over 500 restaurants in 70 cities around the country (Subway.com.in). One leading Subway retailer, Manpreet Gulri, says Subway plans on having 600 stores in India by early 2016. He attributes the company's success to new online ordering systems, Point of Sale (POS) technology for sales efficiency, diversity in location (e.g. urban and rural cities) and catering to consumer needs and preferences. India's retail industry is renowned as one of the most vibrant and fastest growing in the world. As a matter of fact, in 2013, the Brand Equity Foundation found that India's retail sector brought in roughly 69% of total revenues just in food and groceries alone (Das, 2015).

Although Subway is a global brand with a menu and diner setting relatively similar throughout the world, it takes great pride in revering and valuing local customs and food favourites, which gives it a reputation for providing healthier options to typical junk food. While keeping international favourites like the Turkey and Chicken Teriyaki sandwiches, Subway India also has sandwiches without beef or pork, making local veggie choices like the Veggie Patty, Paneer Tikka (a common South Asian curd cheese cut in cubelets) and Aloo Patty (potato cake) quite popular (Paul and Roy, 2014). This is important because due to local religious beliefs (e.g. Jainism and Hinduism), one in three Indians is a vegetarian. Taking this into account, Subway India keeps on making local additions like the Veggie Shammi (lentil based patty), Corn & Peas and the Green Pea Patty. Glocalization theory suggests that modifications like these are necessary if a global company such as Subway wants to succeed in different countries.

## ***Adjustment of restaurant ambience***

India is a civilization filled with long-held cultural traditions such as relating to elders, mutual family rituals and strong religious viewpoints. Intertwined with these long-held cultural traditions are dietary habits unique to the country. Although home-made cooking has been more preferable and holds a family's self-esteem over time, fast food catering services in India have to date generated over US\$570 billion dollars of income (Paul and Roy, 2014). Since India's independence in 1947, Indians' lifestyles have bypassed several changes with households welcoming food with expediency in preparation and acquisition. With many homes not having a kitchen to prepare food, the

tendency to rely on convenience foods is especially apparent in the metropolitan cities and slowly moving to urban parts across the country with the introduction of quick service restaurants (QSR) (Dutta et al., 2014).

Dining out is seen as an enjoyable pastime to be experienced with good company. In a society where food combines with regimes of convenience, respect and socialization, pleasure and ambience regulate food choice (Aloia et al., 2013). In a study conducted by Anaud (2011), roughly 24% of fast food fans in India said quality of service and health hazards were factors when picking a fast food chain. With many restaurants having unsanitary conditions, 83% believed fast food outlets should deliver data on hygiene conditions with 70% saying it would increase their total number of visits. Even more, 68% demanded having nutritional information for all menu items displayed (Anaud, 2011). While Subway India provides such data on their website with five 'subs' being 97% fat free, they do not release information on where they get their fillings from (Subway.com.in).

Eating home cooked food as a family has been an Indian tradition (Dash, 2005). There have been several reasons for this. One fast food survey administered by Goyal and Singh (2007) revealed that 81% of Indian consumers were worried about high prices, the richness of fatty food and its effect on the stomach. They also mentioned that the ambience at home is healthier because food is more wholesome, tasty, garden-fresh, clean and hearty for the body (Goyal and Singh, 2007). Subway's concept of preparing food right in front of a customer has changed this mentality in India since customers can see how Subway food is being prepared. Unlike Subway around the world, Subway India actually makes bread from scratch and fresh daily. According to its website (Subway.com.in), for improved conditions of hygiene, Subway India also does not use azodicarbonamide – a chemical incorporated to make leather and exercise mats – in their bread (whereas Subway restaurants in the US do).

Subway India's commercial food service is not just based on the menu, price value, or speed of service, but also the physical makeup of the restaurant as well. Lahue (2000) suggested that physical ambience is an integral concern when searching for places to dine. In fact, an Indian consumer's willingness to pay is often based on ambience (Dutta et al., 2014). Introducing their egg and mayonnaise 'sub' at Rs 50 (US\$ 80), one television commercial displayed how Subway sandwiches are an important part of everyday life events and can be celebrated at Subway (e.g. expectancy, graduation, etc.) (Campaign India Team, 2013). Ambience also includes restaurant appearance, design, available seating, reputation and staff hospitality, while convenience entails accessibility to destination, easy vehicle parking and easy transportation (Ali and Nath, 2013). Restaurant attributes like these make Subway highly effective in attracting vegan consumers.

### *Adoption of Jain values*

Jainism is an Indian religion that teaches a method of non-violence towards all living beings, including animals (Long, 2009). To emphasize the importance of vegetarian living in India, over 80% of respondents in one assessment indicated they preferred eating vegetarian whether it is in a fast food or family-style restaurant (Ali and Nath, 2013). In Jainism, devotion to living beings is so high that many of its followers do not munch on vegetables coming from a root due to their belief that bugs and worms may be destroyed in the process of growing them. For Jains, animal protein, eggs and most vegetables are prohibited. Even spices like onion and garlic are avoided. Approximately five million (i.e. 0.4% of the nation's 1.2 billion population) Jains live in India, mostly in the region of Gujarat. In respect for these Jain beliefs, Subway India keeps vegetarian and non-vegetarian checkout counters distant from one another. The chain even launched complete vegetarian eateries at certain locations, mainly Gujarat where the company plans on expanding (Verma, 2014). Some other additions Subway India have localized to fit the Jain way of life are the

Mexican Bean Patty (red and black beans with Mexican spices), Green Peas Patty, Hara Bhara Sub (spinach mixed with Indian spices) and the Chatpata Chana Sub (Indian chickpea curry) (Subway.com.in).

### *Adjustment of advertising practices*

In the 1990s, once India's economy became more flexible and tax deductible, increased appreciation for Western fast food grew large sums of profit accumulated in a country still mostly divided by the caste system (Ciochetto, 2004). Language is an important aspect for advertising in India, mainly print and television. While relying on a local language demonstrates a form of patriotism, it does spark a sense for universality. English is featured in various kinds of advertisements. In a study conducted by Bhatia (1992), advertising messages in rural India reflect the very process of glocalization by mixing English with local languages.

This is where advertisers have fashioned their own styles and criteria for incorporating and integrating English. Observing a Subway print advertisement for the Aloo Patty 'sub', the 'Subway Eat Fresh' and 'all day, every day' logo remains the same while the price of each caters to the local economy. What would be considered a five dollar foot-long 'sub' in the US becomes 80 cents to the Indian consumer. This particular advertisement is also part of Subway India's 'SUBWAY WAH!' programme where marketing manager Sanjiv Pandey says the aim is to create a valuable experience enjoyed by consumers of all incomes. The 'WAH' gives an extra sentimental dimension to the local culture because it means 'Hey' in Hindi. It being the largest word in the print advertisement magnifies the fact that Indians are not trying to condemn their identity, but moderately adjust a global product to their liking (Business Wire India, 2013). This elevates the charm and strength in their messages; mingling different languages in a promotional memorandum becomes the semantic correspondent of an individual having their loaf of bread and consuming it (Bhatia, 1992).

Like Coca-Cola products, Subway advertisements have also blended English and Hindi (i.e. Hinglish) in television commercials (TVC). According to *Business Week*, Hinglish serves to generate income from the influx of younger buyers after years of economic failures (Ciochetto, 2004). Some commercials are even broadcasted completely in English since it is recognized as a national language. Kudchedkar (2002) contends that the international language has been one of the most powerful contributors in the country's progress for harmony. Indeed, the emotiveness behind nationality and nationalism are fundamentally gifts from the English language and the collected body of literature in India (Kudchedkar, 2002).

Putting this in the context of Indian Subway commercials, the Sanskrit term *Desi* (i.e. a real native of India) is linked to local flavours and spices (e.g. tandoori and chili) that represent generations of Indian food culture. These local flavours and spices are promoted with the slogan 'Missing that Desi flavor?' and images of tossed Indian spices and traditional folk music in the background. One of these commercials also contains a character relevant to Indian religion (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uysKLx9gshY>). Writer and advertising executive, Ambi Parameswaran says that many products and services in India are custom-made to make religion more conspicuous even though youth appear nonchalant about it (Ali, 2014). In the YouTube video called 'Subway Avengers', four actors pose as action heroes for the 2015 movie *Avengers: Age of Ultron* (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7gHHiT47n1w>). While they try compelling one consumer to give up their 'sub' for a photograph with them (i.e. selfie), the consumer says no, indicating the taste is well worth it. Commercials like these serve two purposes in regards to glocalization: (a) they popularize American cinema in India; and (b) they promote the newest additions to the Subway India range (De Zoysa and Newman, 2002). In the case of the Avenger commercial that would be the Chicken Cordon Bleu (a French inspiration) and Double Aloo Melt.

## *Adjustment of the use of social media*

The Indian people are huge fans of social media services where applications like Facebook and Instagram offer a unique twist. Instagram is becoming widely popular in India, outnumbering Facebook and Twitter when it comes down to taking photographs. With the iPhone becoming more affordable, an app like Instagram gives Indians pride in revealing the positive side of their country. This is exactly what Jaipur-centred linguist Priyanshu Sharma did, which is how he became one of the most shadowed Instagrammers from India where most of his adherents are not even Indian (Rajan, 2013).

Looking at India's Subway feed on Instagram, there are numerous close-up pictures of 'subs' and 'combo' values with messages and hashtags connected to local culture. One photograph caption says, 'Sub-brah: When brothers say hello with their subs' followed by the hashtags #subway, #subwayeatfresh, #freshness, #bros, #subwayindia and #tasteandhealth (see <https://instagram.com/subwayindia/>). The purposes for this are two-fold: (a) to gain more followers through hashtags; and (b) to promote healthy eating. McGloin and Eslami (2014) maintain that mobile health (mHealth) offers a personalized and convenient incentive for learning and communicating health to others, as well as facilitating the individual's ability to share and watch their state of health via text messaging and cellphone solicitations.

As for value 'combos', one picture advertisement on Subway India's Instagram presented their Paneer Tikka 'sub', a Lipton ice tea, and their own version of Lay's potato chips called India's Magic Masala. In contrast to international Subway franchises that typically use green and yellow colouring to promote their product, this advertisement used pink, blue, and teal green, which are colours associated with calmness and friendship in Hinduism. This coincides with the promotional line 'Desilicious Dosti' where Dosti means 'Friends forever' in Hindi. In this religion, colours play a vital role in how an individual sees and mingles with the universe, particularly when relating to gods of stability like Vishnu. Each colour is believed to release a definite indicator that touches an individual's mental and physical conditions. Research has proven that colours can intensely disturb temperaments and emotions to the extent of elevating metabolism, blood pressure, alertness and sometimes fatigue (Feisner and Reed, 2013).

Returning to the same advertisement, green signifies living in peace and harmony and blue represents the ability to conquer adverse situations. The pink ties everything together through its symbolic meaning of love, friendship and faithfulness. Together, colours like these in general have a profound impact on increasing sales by attracting customers based on their colour preferences (Nezhad and Kavehnezhad, 2013). Therefore, to reverse the negative outcome marketing has on obesity in India (Witkowski, 2007) Subway can use colours to persuade their customers to eat more healthily. Some Hindus, alternatively, may be induced to indulge in sweets by receiving an inflow of photographs showing cookies on Instagram. Yet, the feeds main health memo sends a collective message of responsibility in enjoying everything in moderation, which is an ancient Buddhist proverb upheld by Guatama Buddha who preached against gluttony and depravity (Sen, 2004).

India currently follows the United States and Brazil regarding the number of Facebook users and its marketing influence (Carter, 2013). With close to 100 million Indian users, Facebook is increasingly appealing to groups at lower incomes, countenancing a hitherto unreachable trans-classified division/caste social experience. Rangaswamy and Arora's (2015) study on urban Indian youth showed that being introduced to the internet on Facebook has offered more ways to learn English, keyboard typing, enhance sociable behaviours and obtain general data via Facebook-facilitated exchanges. Put another way, Facebook creates an indispensable computer-generated religious space where an individual can challenge and conquer second-hand forms of traditional ideas of identity, social confidence, signs of social location, and communities of friendship and love (Rangaswamy and Arora, 2015).

Subway India has its own Facebook page with over 580,000 likes where an individual will find the latest commercial/print advertisements. What makes this medium so useful and appealing in India is the fact that it blends the global within the local by means of symbiosis. One print advertisement promotes the Chicken Tandoori (i.e. roasted chicken marinated in yogurt tossed in spices like cumin and cayenne pepper) sandwich with a Bollywood theme alongside the text 'Bite into your Desi side' (see <https://www.facebook.com/SubwayIndia>). Tandoori is associated with a cooking oven developed in the Punjab region of India. It has fulfilled the north-western regions at night by building immediate communities around kebab nooks in Delhi (Almeida, 2012). Building upon this, one virtual commercial on Subway India's Facebook page shows a heterosexual couple cutting a 'sub' together for Valentine's Day. This breaks India's traditional notion of pre-arranged marriages. Some studies (e.g. Sharangpani, 2010) reveal that traditional customs like matrimony in South Asia are now transitioning to current methods of networking. Young Indians are getting more relaxed about meeting others on the web, chiefly NRIs (non-resident Indians), who are isolated from their own local linkages and ethnoreligious communities (Sharangpani, 2010).

Despite promoting American cinema (e.g. *Avengers*), speaking English and using catch words like 'mouthwatering', the site's owners also promote the company by incorporating cultural contests for prizes as well as wishing their customers happiness during local holidays. Some of their contests encompass taking a Subway Desi Dialogue quiz where customers compete in an online conversation regarding Bollywood trivia and winners have a chance to win cinema tickets. In terms of promoting universal holidays like Friday the 13th and Valentine's Day, one post wished their supporters a 'Happy Holi' (see <https://www.facebook.com/SubwayIndia>). Holi is a Hindu carnival related to the Hindu fairytale of the endless love of Lord Krishna and Radha. It takes place in the spring and rejoices good harvests and fruitfulness of the land. Tradition has it that coloured powder called *gulaal* is thrown on participants during the festival to celebrate ethnic and cultural diversity worldwide (Booth, 2013).

## Discussion and future research

What this paper has demonstrated is that glocalization can respond to the needs of those who desire Western fast food chains by making menu items healthier and suited towards vegetarian populations. As for Subway India, advertising has played a central role in connecting the global with the local, despite decades of social hardships imposed by the caste system. The English language itself is appreciated as a national language where Indian pride and harmony come at the centre as it mixes with Hindi semantics. The 'SUBWAY WAH' print advertisement for the Aloo Patty reveals how the words 'Subway Eat Fresh' and 'WAH' (i.e. 'Hey' in Hindi) intertwine to alert consumers about an offer they can afford by adjusting a five dollar foot-long to 80 cents. Commercials like 'Subway Avengers' and 'Desi-Romance' also represent generations of Indian food culture by connecting the term Desi (i.e. local native of India), images of Indian spices, religious characters, and traditional folk music (popularizing religion), American cinema and the newest additions to Subway India range in the process.

Glocalization helps explain how a worldwide concept can become successful by catering to local values and customs. As has been shown with Subway India's Instagram, close-up pictures of 'subs' and 'combo' values along with hashtags connected to local culture help gain more customers as well as promoting healthy living. With the iPhone becoming a popular commodity available to many, mobile health provides an incentive for sharing and communicating health to others (McGloin and Eslami, 2014). In further regards to reducing India's rising obesity rate, Subway has incorporated Hindu philosophy of colours to elevate their advertisements towards healthier consumer habits (Feisner and Reed, 2013). Overall, the message behind Subway India's Instagram

feed basically emulates the Buddhist proverb 'Enjoy in moderation' (Sen, 2004). Subway India's Facebook also helps condemn unfavourable traditions like pre-arranged marriages by engaging young people in a virtue-religious place where they can meet others and partake in contests for prizes, as well as feel welcomed by receiving posts on cultural traditions (e.g. 'Happy Holi'). Finally, it was noteworthy to find how Subway has catered to India's Jain population by opening up separate shops and creating new 'subs' (e.g. Mexican Bean Patty) that are vegan friendly.

For future research, it would be thought-provoking to see how advertisements persuade Indian children and teens towards choosing Subway over other fast food options. If so, does eating Subway lead to weight loss or weight gain? Researchers should consider conducting a longitudinal study on the effects of online, print and commercial promotions regarding this matter. According to Witkowski (2007), TVC showing foods were played in up to 50% of children's commercials in India. The WHO recommends creating innovative and/or improving current strategies on food advertising communications – whether through self-regulation or voluntary – to children so as to moderate the influence on children of eating food high in fats, sugar, or salt (Galbraith-Emami and Lobstein, 2013).

As the big fast food chains localize around the world, obesity is an issue that needs further regulations and solutions. Subway India is an extraordinary example of how local culture can be maintained by advertising health and well-being. For this reason, it is the authors' hope that this analysis of glocalization has alerted readers on how important it is for fast food giants to take healthier initiatives while catering to individuals in all cultures.

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# Lesotho's 2015 Legislative Election: Providing or Undermining Stability?

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## Abstract

Political unrest in 2014 threatened Lesotho's newly found democratic stability. Observers focus on educating the public about the electoral system and encouraging pre-election coalition discussions. However, this analysis suggests that such remedies ignore the institutional influences of Lesotho's electoral system that undermine both public understanding and stability. Furthermore, a statistical analysis of district competition finds the 2015 elections to be largely consistent with previous elections, but that the percentage of rejected ballots correlates with a district victory for the largest party. Although this may simply be a statistical anomaly, the findings highlight structural challenges and reconsideration of electoral reforms.

## Keywords

Lesotho, mixed member system, political stability, electoral reform, district competition

## Introduction

Lesotho gradually transitioned from authoritarian rule to democracy in the 1990s (see Matlosa, 2006), after a history of dominant parties, coups and a limited role for opposition voices (e.g. Cho and Bratton, 2006; Gumbi, 1995; McCartney, 1973; Olaleye, 2003). Despite challenges in establishing democratic roots post-independence (Makoa, 2004), even in the absence of religious tensions or ethnic divisions (e.g. Maundeni, 2010), Lesotho saw relatively peaceful elections following reforms for a new electoral system in 2002. Lesotho currently employs a mixed member system which allocates seats to both single member districts (SMDs) as well as through proportional representation (PR) within the same legislative chamber. This reform to a mixed system in part intended to produce a more representative National Assembly (Elklit, 2002), by ensuring significant representation to

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the opposition. The shift marked the country's first free and fair election in 2002, despite protests by the opposition (Makoa, 2004), and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) providing marginal means for domestic groups or international observers to challenge election results (Makoa, 2004). Nevertheless, institutional reforms appeared to signal the beginning of democratic consolidation, reflected in the elections of 2007 and 2012 (Rich et al., 2014); the latter seen as the best political climate since democratization efforts in the early 1990s (Letsie, 2013).

However, political instability in 2014, which culminated in an attempted coup d'état and intervention by external third-party mediators, led to an early election for February 2015 that may have undermined popular faith in whether the electoral system could yield stable governing coalitions. Furthermore, whether this electoral system could promote long-term stability in the country in no small part rests on popular perception of the electoral system as fair. In this vein, the Commonwealth Special Envoy's report on Lesotho—completed just prior to the crisis—calls for two additional measures to deepen democracy: first, making citizens aware of the workings of the electoral system, specifically how votes affect electoral outcomes and the subsequent process of government formation; and, second, parties considering pre-election coalitions and explaining this to voters (Prasad, 2014). However, the recommendations neither suggested changes to Lesotho's lack of formal thresholds for the PR seats, nor the legal requirement under Section 82(1)(b) of the constitution, which requires the National Assembly to form a government within 14 days of the general election.

Although a vast literature on mixed legislative systems has emerged since 1990, few of these works address their impact in countries with limited democratic roots, especially those which were not formerly communist. In addition, Lesotho is rarely included in cross-national analyses of mixed systems, although a cursory evaluation suggests that Lesotho's electoral institutional context does not make it an outlier among the broader population of cases.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, little work on mixed systems attempts to tie this literature to the growing research on electoral fraud. Considering the added complexity of mixed systems and the general public's ignorance of how votes translate into seats in this context, this provides the potential for at least the perception of fraud. The research presented here suggests that the Commonwealth Special Envoy, while well intentioned, may be overlooking areas in which Lesotho's electoral institutions and electoral administration undermines citizens' confidence in the electoral process' fairness and ability to deliver political stability.

The format of this analysis is as follows. First, a brief summary of mixed member systems and Lesotho's institutional framework is presented. This is followed by a summary of the 2014 political crisis and subsequent election. After a brief comparison of 2015 district competition to previous elections, empirical analysis of district victories for the Democratic Congress uncovers a correlation between victory and the percentage of rejected ballots. While not a smoking gun, and additional evidence suggests the actual substantive effect is negligible, such a correlation may be cause for concern within the unstable Lesotho context. In conclusion, additional suggestions regarding means to encourage democratic stability in Lesotho are presented.

## **Mixed member systems and Lesotho**

The literature on mixed systems builds upon Duverger's Law (Duverger, 1954) and its expectation of two-party competition in SMDs and multiparty competition under PR. Proponents of mixed member systems expected the two seat types to operate as if independent from one another (e.g. Lancaster and Patterson, 1990; Moser and Scheiner, 2004), with constituency focus in two-party dominated district races and national policy in multiparty races for PR seats. Others argued that the simple existence of two electoral rules within the same chamber created a form of contamination

and thus Duverger's Law should not hold (e.g. Cox and Schoppa, 2002; Ferrara et al., 2005; Herron and Nishikawa, 2001).

Lesotho enacted a mixed system in no small part due to the one-party dominance under a single member district system (e.g. Matlosa, 1999; Molomo, 1999). Lesotho's type of mixed system is more consistent with the contamination thesis. First, as a mixed member proportional (MMP), the electoral system requires the overall distribution of seats to be proportional. Such systems, also including Germany and New Zealand, contrast with mixed member majoritarian (MMM), where the results of district competition do not influence the distribution of PR seats.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, Lesotho uses a single ballot rather than the more common two-ballot system. Here, much like Mexico, voters choose a district candidate and these district votes are then aggregated to allocate PR seats. Voters do not directly vote for PR seats and thus cannot split their votes between SMD and PR tiers. Thus supporters of smaller parties must vote for non-viable district candidates to potentially win PR seats. Similarly, parties must run non-viable district candidates to be eligible for PR seats. Furthermore, the literature on MMP systems, one which potentially informed the decision to enact such a system in Lesotho, rests largely on evidence from Germany and New Zealand, two stable democracies. Meanwhile, little literature directly tackles the role of a single ballot mixed system, with few countries (notably Albania and South Korea) having experience under both one and two-ballot forms. Thus, while the complexities of two-vote MMP systems are believed to discourage strategic voting (e.g. Reynolds et al., 2005), the one-vote system potentially exacerbates the practice.

## **The 2014 political crisis and 2015 election**

The general election of February 2015 has its origins in the political crisis that occurred during the second-half of 2014. The crisis centered on the leaders of the two major political parties of the ruling coalition, Prime Minister Thomas Thabane of the All Basotho Convention (ABC) and Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa Metsing of the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD). Although the third coalition partner, the Basotho National Party (BNP) led by Sports Minister Thesele Maseribane, did not actively participate in the confrontation, it reportedly sided with the LCD in 2014 before moving against in 2015 (Letuka, 2015). Thabane and Metsing had come to power in June 2012 after electorally defeating the Lesotho Convention for Democracy Ntsu Mokhele (LCD-NM) led by then Prime Minister Bethuel Pakalitha Mosisili.

In the context of this paper's analysis of electoral institutions, it is important to note that until 2012 all three leaders had belonged to the LCD. Thabane created the ABC after Mosisili refused to give up leadership of the party; Mosisili formed the LCD-NM; and Metsing led the remaining LCD membership. Thus, the electoral calculations of the three leaders, which led to the LCD's fragmentation, occurred under the same rules that governed the 2015 elections. Indeed, extant research posits that these rules increase party fragmentation; make coalition formation contingent on office and rent seeking individual leaders rather than parties' ideological or policy preferences (Kapa, 2008); as well as engender coalition governments that hinder effective governance (Clottey, 2014).

Perhaps ironically, the MMP electoral system was chosen due to the claims that the old SMD system stifled competition. Even after the authoritarian rule which effectively disenfranchised smaller parties ended (see Cho and Bratton, 2006), lopsided parliamentary representation continued. For example, in the 1998 election, the LCD won 79 of 80 seats.

The 2014 crisis began with Thabane's anticorruption drives, which members of the opposition considered as a method of persecuting his political rivals. The first targets centered on members of the Mosisili administration, including Timothy Thahane the former Finance Minister accused of defrauding a farm, Monyane Moleleki the former natural resources minister accused of rigging

contracts for diamonds (Jordan, 2014a). In June 2014, Metsing threatened to withdraw his party's support from the ruling coalition and called for a vote of no confidence (Wanjiru, 2015). To stop this challenge, Thabane suspended parliament. At this juncture, Metsing was also accused of misallocation of funds for the acquisition of equipment, which he declared as politically motivated (Tefo, 2014a). He subsequently challenged the acquisition of information on his bank accounts as unconstitutional at the Constitutional Court (Tefo, 2014b).

Additionally, according to diplomats, the Lesotho Defense Forces (LDF) and the Lesotho Mounted Police (LMP) allegedly split on party lines: the LDF supporting Metsing and the LMP backing Thabane ("Lesotho army denies prime minister's coup accusation," 2014). Consequently, after Thabane sought to replace the commander of the LDF Lieutenant-General Tlali Kamoli with Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao, the LDF occupied the police headquarters, disarmed the police ("Lesotho military seizes police headquarters in possible coup attempt," 2014), and killed a police officer in the process ("Army confined to barracks as Lesotho votes," 2015). General Kamoli subsequently accused Prime Minister Thabane of using the LMP to attack opponents (Mohloboli, 2014). The police stated that LDF personnel were looking for incriminating files related to corruption and "politically motivated bomb attacks" against General Kamoli and other LDF personnel during their occupation of various police stations ("Renegade Lesotho general seizes weapons," 2014).

Faced with the disarming of the police and the jamming of communications media, which indicated a coup, Thabane fled to South Africa and implicitly accused Metsing of collaborating with General Kamoli ("Zuma to meet Thabane in South Africa as Lesotho calms," 2014). Subsequently, Minister of Public Service Motloheloa Phooko took over as interim Prime Minister. Mediation by South Africa's Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, supported by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, led to Thabane's return to Lesotho under an SADC protection force. In turn, after the South African intervention, Generals Kamoli and Mahao and the Police Commissioner Khotatso Ts'oono were temporarily exiled to Uganda, South Sudan, and Algeria respectively, to learn how a military functions in a democracy; Mahao and Ts'oono being given positions within the bureaucracy of the African Union (Dikarabo, 2014).

In order to settle the political impasse, parliament was dissolved in December 2014 (Office of the Government Secretary, Lesotho, 2014). It is pertinent to mention, parliament dissolved itself after passing the budget, but the vote of no confidence was not undertaken (Jordan, 2014b) based on the agreement between political parties, which was brokered by Cyril Ramaphosa and enshrined in the Maseru Facilitation Declaration (South Africa, 2014). Subsequently, a general election was held on 28 February 2015 under the aegis of the SADC force, while the Lesotho Army and Police were confined to their barracks (Wanjiru, 2015).

The major political parties in this election were the ABC led by Thabane, the LCD headed by Metsing, Democratic Congress (DC) headed by Mosilsili, and the BNP led by Maseribane. It was reported that the DC and LCD had formed a pre-electoral alliance (BBC News, 2015).

Despite incidents of pre-electoral violence between members of the LDF and the police force ("2 soldiers shot ahead of Lesotho elections," 2015), the SADC electoral observers declared the elections to have been "peaceful, transparent, credible, free and fair" (Nkoana-Mashanabe, 2015). The United Nations (UN) and the United States government also declared the elections to be free and fair, commending the IEC of Lesotho's efforts (United Nations and Secretary General Ban, 2015, United States and Secretary of State John Kerry, 2015).

The three largest parties were: the DC with 47 seats, the ABC with 46 seats, and the LCD with 12 seats. The DC and LCD-dominated coalition, led by Mosilsili as Prime Minister and Metsing as the Deputy Prime Minister, took over as the new government. In early April 2015, General Kamoli returned from exile to resume his duties as the Army Commander, but General Maaparankoe

**Table 1.** Breakdown of seats in 2015 election.

	District	PR
Democratic Congress (DC)	37	10
All Basotho Convention (ABC)	40	6
Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD)	2	10
Basotho National Party (BNP)	1	6
Other parties	0	8

Mahao—in contravention of his appointment as army commander by ex-Prime Minister Thabane—was to remain a brigadier (Ngatane, 2015).

In conclusion, the electoral turnout was low, approximately 47%, while the margin of victory in popular votes was thin: the DC having acquired 3551 votes more than the ABC, or less than one percent of the over half million votes cast. However, Dimpho Motsamai, an expert based at the Institute for Security Studies at Pretoria, posits that political leaders *not* the MMP electoral institutions were responsible for the democratic election: in fact, the electoral institutions prevented the one-party dominance that repeatedly caused political violence under the old system (Allison, 2015). While one-party dominance was again avoided by the MMP system, the electoral format did little to manufacture a stable majority. Nor does the electoral format encourage public understanding of how the two electoral seats interact, a common concern among mixed systems.

## Empirical analysis

How do the 2015 elections compare to both theoretical expectations on mixed systems and maintaining democratic goals, particularly democratic stability, in Lesotho? Table 1 breaks down the distribution of seats by the two electoral tiers. The results clearly show the continued strength of 2012's largest parties, the DC and the ABC. Meanwhile the total number of parties winning at least one seat was the same as 2002 (10) down from a peak of 12 in 2012. The effective number of parties, a weighted measurement of size of electoral or legislative parties, further declined in 2015, from 3.67 in 2012 down to 3.18, due in large part to the success of the DC and ABC. Furthermore, while turnout was low (46.61%), no party boycotted the election.

The necessity for a coalition government following the 2015 election, when parties had ill prepared for such an outcome, is a common outcome among MMP systems and thus should not have been a surprise. After all, this was also the outcome in 2007, when the DC won a plurality of seats (48 out of 120), yet ultimately became the main opposition to an ABC-led ruling coalition. In contrast, in 2015, the DC ultimately coordinated with the LCD and five other parties to cobble together a majority. While this may meet the short-term needs of a minimal winning coalition, it also allows for smaller parties to essentially blackmail larger parties for greater concessions or risk a change in power. Thus, while promoting multiparty competition is one aspect intended to create stability, in terms of governability, this may be a hindrance.

Since Lesotho uses a one-vote system and districts outnumber PR seats, an examination of district competition is warranted. The average vote concentration among the top two district candidates of 77.66% of the vote is consistent with the contamination thesis. This was not dissimilar from the last three elections (2002, 2007, 2012) where the concentration ranged from 72.31 to 81.80%. Similarly winners averaged just slightly less than half the vote (49.76%), indicative of the party fragmentation at the district level, where the average number of candidates reached 14 and peaked at 18. This differs little from 2012 where the average number of district candidates was 13.

**Table 2.** The number of district candidates and vote concentration (2002, 2012, and 2015).

	2002		2012		2015	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Number of Candidates	-0.14****	0.27	-2.26****	0.27	-0.39	0.51
Constant	92.08	2.95	101.68	3.58	83.13	7.16
N	78		80		80	
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	0.17		0.47		0.01	

\*\*\*\*p < 0.001.

Admittedly most of these were nonviable entries, but does suggest greater party fractionalization than district competition in institutionalized western democracies.

The 2015 district elections also mirror those of 2012, where district winners averaged 46.8% of the vote, compared to over 57% in both 2002 and 2007. Most districts also remain marginally competitive, with an average winner's margin of 21.86% in 2015, consistent with 2012's election (21.28%), and an improvement from 2002 and 2007 (36.1% and 33.25% respectively). Admittedly, district competition in new and established democracies alike is often noncompetitive in no small part due to constituency services and incumbency advantages. Nevertheless, the relative parity of district victories by the DC and ABC suggest the continuance of two-party dominant competition rather than a return of single party domination.

The 2015 election does seem to differ from previous elections in terms of how the number of district candidates influenced vote concentration. Table 2 presents an ordinary least squares (OLS) regression on the vote concentration among the top two candidates with the number of district candidates as the sole independent variable. Using the data from Rich et al. (2014) and supplemented with 2015 we see that the raw number of district candidates negatively correlates with vote concentration across all three models; however, only in 2015 does it fail to reach statistical significance at all. In other words, it appears that the influence of the also-rans has declined markedly since even 2012. Thus, perhaps indicating that voters are identifying which party's candidates are viable at the district or possibly even in the aggregate party list level, factors which in the long term should reduce the space between electoral expectations and results.

While preliminary district results are largely consistent with previous elections, this gives us a marginal insight into whether the elections were fair. Observers from the SADC declared the elections free and fair, reiterated by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon (SADC, 2015; United Nations, 2015), but this does not mean that fraud may be missed by the naked eye. One means to address potential fraud is through the reported digits in subnational results (e.g. Beber and Scacco, 2012; Mebane, 2006; Mebane and Sekhon, 2004), identifying whether, for example, the rates of ending digits (0–9) in results beyond one or two standard deviations would suggest the possibility of electoral fraud. Put another way, fabricated results tend to over-represent certain ending digits (e.g. 0s and 5s), although any number outside of two standard deviations from the mean would be cause for alarm. Rich et al. (2014) use a similar method and find no systematic evidence of fraud in Lesotho's 2012 election. We replicate these findings for 2015 with separate tests of the reported number of registered voters, total voters, and the number of votes rejected (Table 3). However, none of the digits were beyond one standard deviation below or above the mean, with only one section (the reported number of district registered voters ending in a six) coming close to two standard deviations, thus providing no clear evidence of fraud. Thus, much like 2012, the evidence suggests that vote tallies were not manipulated after the fact.

**Table 3.** Distribution of last digit in district elections.

Ending digit	Registered	Total	Rejected
0	2	2	12
1	6	12	9
2	5	4	9
3	11	12	3
4	9	6	10
5	6	4	9
6	15	11	10
7	7	9	6
8	8	12	7
9	11	8	5
Mean	8	8	8
SD	3.68	3.80	2.71
1SD below	4.32	4.20	5.29
1SD above	11.68	11.80	10.71
2SD below	0.64	0.40	2.58
2SD above	15.36	15.60	13.42

SD: Standard deviation.

**Table 4.** Logit regressions on the election of a DC district candidate.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE	Coeff.	SE
Rejected ballots (%)	2.40****	0.61	2.82****	0.86	1.84*	1.05
Winner's margin (logged)			0.57*	0.33	0.58	0.52
Total votes (logged)			-3.77	2.82	-0.32	3.33
Voter turnout (%)			-0.06	0.11	-0.15	0.12
Number of candidates			-0.23	0.16	-0.05	0.24
Maseru			1.36	0.99	1.21	1.34
DC win in 2012					3.96***	1.01
Constant	-3.47****	0.86	33.98	22.26	3.82	7.57
N	80		80		80	
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup>	0.25		0.38		0.60	
% correctly classified	70.00%		81.25%		87.50%	

\*\*\*\*p &lt; 0.001

\*\*\*p &lt; 0.01

\*p &lt; 0.10

As a second measure, we analyzed rates of the total ballots that were rejected, which ranges from 0.32% to 3.77% of all votes and with a mean of 1.37%. While many reasons may emerge as to why ballots were rejected, a systematic pattern in favor of a party would at the very least justify a closer investigation of the election results. Table 4 presents three logit models with the dependent variable whether or not the district elected a DC candidate. Model 1 includes only one independent variable: the percentage of total ballots that were rejected. Here the results are clear: the percentage of rejected ballots strongly correlate with a DC district victory. Not only

is the pseudo  $R^2$  non-negligible (.25), this model with a sole independent variable correctly classified 70% of cases. Without additional information, such findings should certainly be cause for concern.

Admittedly the percentage of rejected ballots may be obscuring the influence of other factors. For example, it may simply be that the DC did better in close races, where rejected ballots may have a greater influence. Similarly, the total number of votes in the district as well as voter turnout may explain these patterns. Many rejected ballots could be caused by confusion over which parties are running candidates locally; and, a simple bivariate OLS regression confirms a negative correlation between the number of candidates and the percentage of rejected ballots, significant at .01 ( $R^2 = .08$ ). Finally, there may be simply greater confusion about the electoral process in rural areas versus the urban areas.

Model 2 thus includes a measure of the winner's margin in percent (logged), to identify competitive versus non-competitive districts. This is supplemented with controls for the total district votes (logged), district turnout (in percentages), the raw number of district candidates, and a dummy variable for districts in the capital state of Maseru, using this as a proxy for an urban–rural divide. The results are consistent with Model 1, with the percentage of rejected ballots strongly correlating with a DC district win. Furthermore, the number of candidates negatively correlated with a DC victory, while Maseru positively correlated with DC success. These additions considerably improve the pseudo  $R^2$  and raise the percentage of cases correctly classified by the model to 81.25%.

Model 3 includes an additional dummy variable for whether or not the DC won the district in the previous election. While not a perfect proxy for incumbency, this does attempt to capture why DC candidates fared better in certain districts. The results here are largely consistent with the first two models. As expected, a previous DC win in the district strongly correlated with a win in 2015. However, the percentage of rejected ballots still correlated with a DC win, albeit only at the .10 level.

Since logit models are non-linear, predicted probabilities provide additional insight. Using Model 1, the predicted probability of a DC district victory ranges from 6.3% at the rejected minimum of 0.32% of ballots up to 99.63% at the reject maximum at 3.77%. Predicted probabilities from Model 2 (holding all other variables at their mean) produce similar results. A district victory by the DC is predicted at only 4.66% where rejected votes as a share of total votes are at their minimum, compared to 99.63% at their max. Finally, Model 3 sees a similar effect: 9.37% at the minimum and 95.67% at the maximum.

While these results may suggest an effort to reject ballots for partisan purposes, a closer analysis finds no smoking gun. In particular, the percentage of rejected ballots only exceeded the margin of victory in one district race by a little more than 1%: Constituency 10 in Leribe. Nor did this district elect a DC candidate, but rather an ABC candidate. Thus, if the rejection of ballots were intended to sway elections in favor of the DC, the results here suggest that the efforts were ineffective and unnecessary.

## What this means for Lesotho

The results of the 2015 election may provide relief in terms of maintaining competitive elections, but the findings here suggest considerable room for reform. First, public education efforts to boost understanding of the electoral system are certainly a welcome addition. However, this ignores what to a certain extent are predictable concerns under a one-vote MMP system. The system neither encourages easy comprehension of how votes translate into seats nor does it encourage stable ruling coalitions. In the quest to avoid the dummy lists of a two-vote MMP system, Lesotho simply

discarded the second ballot, rather than consider means in which a two-vote system may have been advantageous, either as an MMM system or with rigid requirements that parties slate candidates in both tiers.

Secondly, while greater attention to publicizing pre-election coalitions will likely encourage a greater link between voter expectations and outcomes, such efforts will be undermined if the perceptions of the electoral process remained tarnished. The empirical analysis here suggests a consistent correlation between rejected ballots and a DC victory. Although this pattern may simply be a statistical artifact rather than intentional electoral manipulation, the presence of such patterns may be cause for alarm among electoral losers. After all, the stability of democratic systems relies on parties not only losing elections (Przeworski, 1991), but electoral losers consenting to those losses (e.g. Anderson et al., 2005). Thus, greater effort to uncover the reasons behind rejected ballots and education efforts to limit wasted ballots should assist in building confidence in the electoral institutions.

However, the political parties' mutual distrust—evidenced during the crisis of 2014—could impede their leaders from undertaking the institutional changes suggested here; because the fragile post-electoral equilibrium perhaps exists partially due to the parties' acceptance of extant electoral rules. Consequently, third-parties, whether specific countries or regional and international organizations, need to act as mediators between these political leaders to consensually make the suggested changes in the electoral rules. Mediators can alleviate distrust by increasing communication between political leaders and set the agenda centered on the changes suggested by this paper (Beardsley et al., 2006). Such methods would reduce the need for expensive military interventions to suppress conflicts and, more importantly, the unwarranted loss of life and assets that necessitates them.

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## Notes

1. Using the data from Rich (2015) that covers most district elections in mixed systems from 1990–2012, we reran his original models which control for institutional variations within mixed systems and added a dummy variable for Lesotho. This addition never reached statistical significance, suggesting that the country's district level results are not outliers among the family of mixed systems.
2. Under MMM, the total results may be very disproportional if one party wins more district seats than their PR vote share. Under MMP, party list seats are allocated only after adjusting for district victories.

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# Dam In, Cocoa Out; Pipes In, Oil Out: China's Engagement in Ghana's Energy Sector

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## Abstract

Ghana, like other African countries, suffers a huge infrastructure gap. In recent times China has become a major bilateral source of investment in Ghana's energy infrastructure. This article examines the strategic importance of Chinese infrastructure investment in Ghana's energy sector in recent times. The study is based on field research conducted by the author in Ghana and on the analysis of semi-structured interviews with Ghanaian policy makers, journalists, civil society organizations, academics and individuals. Additional data were collected on some key projects China has been sponsoring in the energy sector. The paper suggests that China has become a key partner in Ghana's development efforts as its provision of infrastructural projects soars and its involvement in Ghana's economy grows. Yet China's engagement presents a complex dynamic given its dual role as financier of energy infrastructure and at the same time a competitor or seeker of Ghana's oil and other natural resources.

## Keywords

Ghana, energy, infrastructure, China, cocoa, oil

## Introduction

As with other African countries, China's economic, political and cultural engagement with Ghana has increased significantly in recent times. China is now Ghana's single largest trading economy. In 2014, bilateral trade between the two countries reached US\$4billion and China's Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to Ghana reached US\$1.11billion the same year, accounting for 65.7% of total FDI to Ghana.<sup>1</sup> Today Ghana-China trade exceeds US\$5billion.<sup>2</sup> However, China's presence and involvement in Ghana's economy is not new; it goes back to pre-independence days.<sup>3</sup> As the first sub-Saharan African nation to gain political independence, Ghana established official diplomatic relations with China in July 1960. Since establishing formal relations, Ghana–China relations have been important for both sides. Ghana occupies an important place in China's Africa policy—both historically and currently. As one of China's closest allies in Africa during the independence struggle, Ghana served as a focal point of entry for China's influence on the continent, and was considered a training ground

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from which to launch the so-called socialist revolution in Africa (Chau, 2007). Moreover, Ghana extended support to China when it needed global endorsement by campaigning and voting for China to gain its seat at the UN and providing diplomatic and political support during the late 1980s.

Similarly, since the 1960s the Chinese government has provided assistance to Ghana within a framework of bilateral cooperation in health, education, industry, agriculture and infrastructure. If ideological motivations were the main forces shaping China's interests in Ghana in the 1960s and 1970s (although that motivation is still present), today, economic, political and geopolitical factors are the main drivers of Ghana–China relations (Aidoo, 2010; Amoah, 2014; Ampratwum et al., 2009).

This paper examines one prominent area of engagement between Ghana and China in recent times—the energy sector. By examining Ghana–China energy relations, I explain how recent Chinese involvement in Ghana's energy sector is impacting Ghana's development, and how the approach China employs in its engagement helps to meet its own foreign policy objectives in Ghana and Africa as a whole. The paper is structured as follows: following the introduction, the next section presents a brief historical background to Ghana–China relations focusing on how their engagements have benefited both countries. This section helps to situate the second part of the paper in its proper historical context. The second section examines China's infrastructure investment in Ghana's oil and gas sector to illustrate the nature of recent Ghana–China interactions and the importance of such engagements for both countries. The paper concludes with some assessment of the implications of China's increasing engagement in Ghana's infrastructural sector and Africa as a whole.

## **Ghana–China relations: the beginning**

Ghana's independence from British colonial rule in 1957 coincided with two main international events that had huge influence on its foreign policy orientation and behavior. The first was the Cold War hostilities between the East and West over the quest for dominance in international affairs; the second was the process of decolonization, which incidentally was supported by the superpowers of the Cold War era—the former Soviet Union and the United States of America. Despite Ghana's historical connections with the West, its interests as a small independent country in need of economic development at home and its quest to be a world player influenced its decision to pursue relations with the East and with China in particular. Thus while keeping ties with Britain, France and USA, the country's first president, Kwame Nkrumah, maintained that there were pragmatic reasons why Ghana should seek and preserve normal relations with the two other powers of the world—the Soviet Union and China.<sup>4</sup> Needless to say, Nkrumah was heavily influential in Ghana's formal interaction with the outside world, including China. He championed African unity and anti-colonial struggle in Africa. Anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, racial equality and political revolution, which were key themes in Nkrumah's foreign policy, appeared to be incongruent with China's interest and position on Afro-Asian unity and solidarity. Nkrumah and Chinese leaders were interested in the establishment of a new world order and they all sought in some form to alter the international political landscape to coincide with their respective interests (Chau, 2014). By 1960 Nkrumah had become fully aware of China's importance to world politics and to his own policies in Africa. Within a month of establishing diplomatic relations, Nkrumah dedicated a portion of his first major speech at the UN General Assembly Meeting to vocally support China. He stated that to make the organization 'more realistic and more effective and useful,' China should be admitted to the UN.<sup>5</sup> From August 14 to 29 1961 Nkrumah paid his first official visit to China and held high-level meetings with Chinese officials, including President Lui Shaoqi and the Premier, Zhou Enlai. Two themes are discernible from their meetings: that Ghana and China had common interest in the

struggle against colonialism and imperialism and that they shared common history (*Peking Review* 1961a: 5-6). It was during this visit that Nkrumah and Zhou Enlai signed the Ghana–China Treaty of Friendship (*Peking Review*, 1961b). In a communiqué issued on August 18 1961, the two countries affirmed their rejection of imperialism and pledged their resolute support to the ongoing anti-colonial struggle in Africa and the importance of such struggle to safeguard world peace.<sup>6</sup> Nkrumah's visit also importantly culminated in the signing of three agreements to develop economic and technical cooperation between the two countries: (1) the Sino-Ghana Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation by which China agreed to a 20 year interest free loan of 7 million Ghana pounds (this agreement also stipulated that China would send to Ghana experts and technicians, train Ghanaian technicians, as well as supply Ghana with equipment and materials); (2) the Sino-Ghanaian Trade and Payments Agreement (this agreement guaranteed an annual 4 million Ghanaian pounds in volume of export for the two countries); (3) the Cultural Cooperation Agreement which meant to open a field in which the two countries could exchange experience and learn from each other in the arts, science and education, and health issues (Huang, 2008: 176; see also Chau, 2014: 83).

Before the end of 1962, Chinese economic assistance was underway in Ghana. In October of 1962, Ghana and China signed the protocol on economic and technical cooperation. The agreement required China to supply to Ghana equipment, building materials, and technical assistance to help Ghana build industrial projects and also to develop the cultivation of rice, freshwater fisheries, and handicraft industries (*Peking Review*, 1962: 23). Although Ghana did not use Chinese loans until about 1965, it is estimated that from 1961 to 1964, a total of about \$40 million of Chinese economic aid was given to Ghana (see Chau, 2014: 88). Although Nkrumah believed in the role of nationalist movements in the struggle for independence, he did not always have the resources to sponsor the emerging freedom fighters. In 1964, Ghana signed an agreement with the Chinese 'for the provision of military equipment and advisers for Ghana's 'freedom fighters'' (Chau, 2014: 89). This agreement signaled the beginning of the training of freedom fighters in the manufacture and use of explosives, guerrilla tactics and fundamentals of armed struggle (Chau, 2014: 89). By early 1966, however, China's influence in Ghana and across Africa was declining. On February 24, 1966, when President Nkrumah made a stopover in China (on his way to Hanoi at the invitation of the President of North Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, with proposals for ending the Vietnam War),<sup>7</sup> he was informed of his overthrow back home in a joint military-police coup d'état. Since China had established very close relations with Nkrumah, his overthrow meant that it would be difficult to forge new ties with the new leadership of Ghana. In October 1966 the two nations severed ties.

After six years of broken relations, Ghana and China restored diplomatic relations in February 1972 when the National Redemption Council (NLC) military government headed by General IK Acheampong was in power. From the 1970s onward, partly due to political upheavals in both countries, the Ghana–China Economic and Technical Cooperation financial agreement, although uninterrupted, was significantly less robust than during the Nkrumah years. ACET estimates that between 1972 and 1980, the Chinese assistance totaled just about \$9.1 million. These funds were distributed to projects in health, agriculture, education, and industry, such as the Juapong Cotton and Textile Factory in the Volta Region (ACET, 2009). Significantly, as Ghana and other African countries were going through economic reforms to sustain economic growth from the late 1970s through to the late 1990s, China played a lesser role compared to Western governments and institutions in shaping African economies. But Ghana's political support for China continued unabated. Notably, from the late 1980s during the tenure of Jerry Rawlings as Ghana's Head of State (1981–2001), Ghana provided diplomatic support to Beijing following the controversial Tiananmen Square incident, as much of the Western world turned against China. The Chinese government rewarded Ghana in 1990 with a grant of \$2.4 million to build the Ghana National Theatre Complex,

an edifice that sits a few blocks away from Nkrumah's mausoleum in Accra (Amoah, 2014; Idun-Arkhurst, 2008).

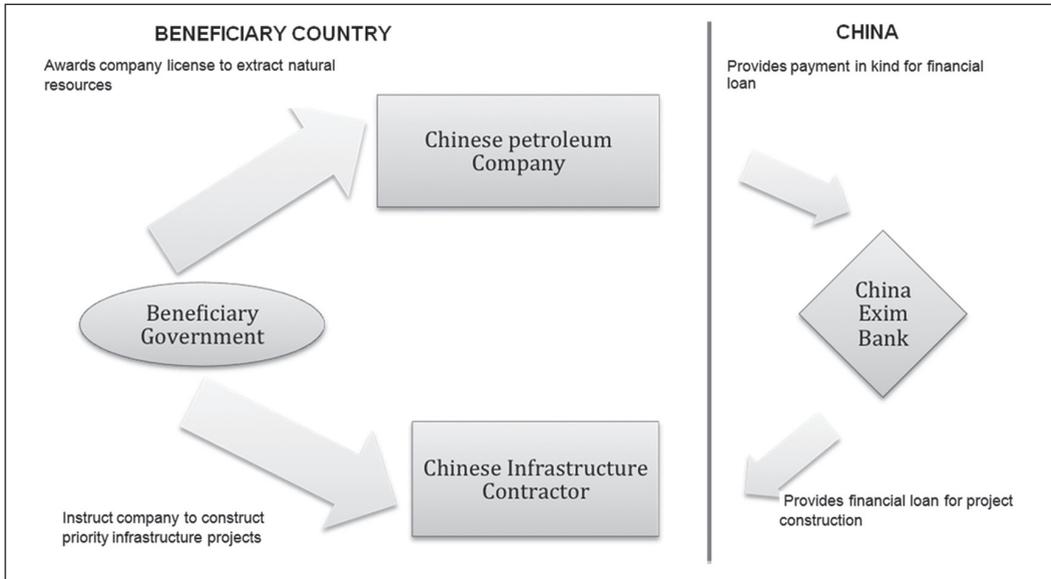
Ghana and China celebrated the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic engagements in 2010 during the Presidency of Ghana's Prof. Evans Atta Mills (2009–2012). Although the era of former President Kufuor (2001–2009) has been described by some as the period that rekindled China's interest in Ghana (due in part to Kufuor's economic diplomacy and several official trips to China),<sup>8</sup> the tenure of President Mills (2009 to 2012) also saw increased relations between Ghana and China. In September 2010 the Chinese announced a US\$3 billion facility for gas and oil-related infrastructure development in Ghana. This facility was negotiated at the highest levels, with Ghana's President Atta-Mills 'snubbing' a high level meeting in New York (at the UN) to stay on in Beijing for the signing ceremony.<sup>9</sup>

Consistent with China's increasing relations with other African countries, and in the spirit of *China's African policy* launched in 2006, there has been an increase in economic, political and cultural cooperation between Ghana and China since 2000. Ongoing frequent exchange of high-level official visits between the two countries is an indication of the continuous friendship they share. Today, Ghana remains an important partner in China's Africa policy, and although China is equally gaining from its engagement with Ghana, many see China's development assistance as highly influential in Ghana's economic and political development, as has been the case historically (Jiang and Jing, 2010; Mohan and Lampert, 2013; Rupp, 2013). Crucially, while China's development assistance to Ghana cuts across various sectors including education, agriculture and health, its investment in Ghana's infrastructure has been of crucial importance to Ghana (see Rupp, 2013). To be sure, China's infrastructural investment in Ghana is not in isolation: during the past decade and a half, China has increased its investment in much of Africa's infrastructure (Foster et al., 2009). Chinese infrastructure investment in Africa is not new either; in the 1960s the Chinese engaged in infrastructure in selected African countries, notably the Tan–Zam Railway in Zambia that symbolizes the most vivid physical expression of Africa–China relations of that era (Monson, 2009; Snow, 1988; Yu, 1971). In recent times, however, this infrastructure investment has been on the ascendency with Chinese firms constructing roads, bridges, hydro-dams, sewage systems, and government buildings across the continent. The \$200 million African Union (AU) new ultra-modern headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, which was inaugurated in 2012, was fully financed and built by China as a gift to the AU. This gesture is symbolic of China's new interest and engagement in Africa.

In several countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Angola, Kenya and Tanzania, Chinese government and multinationals have taken the approach of bundling together business and development assistance packages in funding projects in Africa. This integrated approach is presented by Chinese officials as a win–win model and has both negative and positive implications for African economies. In the next section, I will examine China's unique approach to development assistance and cooperation.

## **China's approach to infrastructure investment in Africa**

China's engagement in Africa is driven by political, economic and cultural factors (Brautigam, 2009; Jiang, 2009). While the objectives of China's bilateral and multilateral relations in Africa are similar to those of other foreign actors in Africa, the approach, terms of engagement and the tools used to develop and leverage these relations differ from those of other actors—particularly Western actors. China seems to recognize a particular complementarity between Africa's endowment as well as its needs and China's capacity to meet these needs. Most African countries are rich in natural resources, but poor infrastructure remains one of the key stumbling blocks to their development. At the same time, China needs Africa's oil and minerals to fuel its growing economy and has



**Figure 1.** Structure of 'Angola Mode' arrangement.

Source: Adapted from Foster et al., 2009.

developed one of the world's largest and most competitive infrastructure construction industries (Habiyaemye, 2013; Jiang, 2009). This economic complementarity between resource rich Africa, faced with infrastructure challenges, and manufacturing giant China, who is proficient with infrastructure construction firms but also confronted with the need for oil and minerals, shapes the dynamics of China's increasing engagement in Africa. The nature of China's investment and development assistance to Africa strengthens this complementary. China offers to its African partners an approach to development cooperation based on an integrated system that bundles trade and investment instead of offering only foreign aid (Moyo, 2009). China's integrated aid strategy and scheme of financing in which it provides its large state-owned firms with export credits, securitized by access to an African country's resources through agreement with the government of the African economy, has been termed 'Infrastructure for resources' or 'Angola mode' (Chen, 2010; Corkin, 2013).

This type of natural resource backed financing deal has become embedded in China's policy of engagement with resource-rich countries in Africa, but it did not originate in China and it is not unprecedented. China adapted this strategy from its engagement with Japan in the 1970s (Brautigam, 2011). According to Brautigam, 'China learned from Japan the current system of using commodities as security for a commercial line of credit that enables a country to finance a specific investment today, and pay for it later with future earnings' (Brautigam, 2011: 5). China believes its experience with Japan was a 'win-win' for both parties, and thus has adopted a similar strategy in Africa. There are incentives associated with this arrangement for both China and the receiving nation since 'securing the investment with a resource flow reduces the risk and allows the interest rate to be lower, and the loan to be cheaper' (Brautigam, 2011:5). Under this arrangement, the funds earmarked for specific projects are not directly transferred to the recipient government (as illustrated in Figure 1). Instead, China signs a framework agreement with the recipient government covering a certain program of infrastructure investments. The projects are then contracted to a

Chinese construction firm. At the same time, a Chinese company is awarded rights to begin procurement or production of the natural resource, be it oil or any other minerals. The Chinese contractor undertakes infrastructure works supported by a credit from Chinese bank, usually Exim Bank. As a guarantee, repayment is in the form of oil produced or other natural resources directed to a Chinese company (Foster et al., 2009).

Hitherto, this mode of financing has been used across Africa (oil in Congo-Brazzaville, sesame in Ethiopia, even tobacco in Zimbabwe) (see Brautigam, 2011: 3). It was used to build the Bui Hydro Dam in Ghana, which I will discuss in detail below. The Bui Dam project required huge capital and the Ghanaian government was finding it difficult to secure funding for the project.<sup>10</sup> While Ghana's traditional partners such as the World Bank were concerned about the environmental impact of the dam as well as the loan repayment plans, China stepped in and offered an innovative solution. The Chinese proposed to accept Ghana paying back the loans in cocoa beans.<sup>11</sup> Similar arrangement was made in Ghana's Gas Pipeline project, as I discuss below.

As stated earlier, this Chinese approach to development assistance and economic cooperation differ from the methods of other economic actors in Africa, both in their content and in the norms of aid practice, and is part of an increasing phenomenon of South-South economic cooperation among developing nations. Key principles espoused under China's support include mutual benefit, reciprocity, and complementarities and the stipulations are grounded in bilateral agreements among states (Foster et al., 2009: xvi). Unlike traditional Official Development Assistance, Chinese infrastructure financing is channeled not through a development agency, but through state-supported institutions such as the Exim Bank (Foster et al., 2009: xvi).

Influenced mainly by their own experience of development and by the requests of recipient countries, the Chinese aid and economic cooperation programs have emphasized infrastructure development at a time when traditional donors, including Washington and other Western countries and organizations, have downplayed these arrangements. While western development assistance have rarely focused on infrastructure, Chinese assistance focuses on the infrastructure sector as China sees sustained development as a key prerequisite for mutually beneficial economic development.<sup>12</sup> As one analyst has observed, since Africa's independence 'there rarely has been such rapid and intense investment in African infrastructure as is going on today' (Reisen, 2007: 8).

Chinese assistance for infrastructure is not without strings, however, as many loans and grants are tied to Chinese input. China builds into its loan considerable use of Chinese inputs since the finance is secured in China and generally is limited to the use of Chinese (and some local African) inputs. Understandably some analysts are critical of China's extraction of natural resources through the mechanism of the Angola Mode.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, China's practice of bundling together aid, trade and investment makes it difficult for researchers to determine their respective effects, and this problem is also complicated by the lack of Chinese transparency. Consequently, some analysts lump loans, investment and aid into one category, which may project an inaccurate image of Chinese influence in Africa. As Brautigam (2009) rightly points out, the amount of Chinese aid reported is often inaccurate, including the confusion of Chinese renminbi (RMB) for US dollars.

Such lack of transparency in China's infrastructure investment, however, does not negate the fact that such projects are crucial and make significant contributions to infrastructure development in Africa. Given the scale of infrastructure deficit across the continent, Chinese infrastructure investments represent a vital contribution to the continent's development. Certainly without roads, affordable telecommunication, and electricity, businesses in Africa cannot operate and African economies will continue to experience severe development hindrances. In many African economies, including Ghana, deficient infrastructure has been identified as one of the key obstacles hampering economic development objectives (see Tables 1 and 2). According to the World Bank, Sub-Saharan Africa lags behind other developing regions on most standard indicators of

**Table 1.** Sub-Saharan Africa infrastructure financing needs.

Infrastructure	Capital expenditure	Operation and maintenance	Total spending
ICT	7.0	2.0	9.0
Irrigation	2.9	0.6	3.5
Power	26.7	14.1	40.8
Transport	8.8	9.4	18.2
Water supply and sanitation	14.9	7.0	21.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>60.3</b>	<b>33.1</b>	<b>93.4</b>

Source: Foster and Briceno-Garmendia, 2009.

**Table 2.** Sub-Saharan Africa infrastructure financing gap.

Item	Power	ICT	Irrigation	Transport	Water	Total
<b>US\$ billion annually</b>						
Infrastructure spending needs	-40.8	-9.0	-3.4	-18.2	-21.9	-93.4
Existing spending	11.6	9.0	0.9	16.2	7.6	45.3
<b>Infrastructure Financing gap</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>14.3</b>	<b>48.1</b>
Efficiency gap	6.0	1.3	0.1	3.8	2.9	17.4
<b>Funding gap</b>	<b>23.2</b>	<b>-1.3</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>-1.9</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>30.7</b>

Source: Foster and Briceno-Garmendia, 2009.

infrastructure development (Foster et al., 2009). The infrastructure gap is a challenge for African countries as it is estimated at about US\$10 billion a year for minimum investment needs and US\$22 billion required to meet the Millennium Development Goals (Bosshard, 2007; see also Foster et al., 2009). Against this backdrop, many African governments have therefore welcomed China's new role as a partner and a source of infrastructure finance. Despite the political and economic success in recent times, Ghana is no exception to this infrastructure deficiency.

### Addressing Ghana's (energy) infrastructure deficit: the China factor<sup>14</sup>

Much of Ghana's recent relations with China are driven by politico-economic conditions in Ghana. Consequently, it is important to understand Ghana's recent political history and development experience to appreciate how and why it seems to have given China such significant *space* in its economy, particularly in its energy sector. Ghana has seen major economic and especially political stability in the last two decades. The commencement of commercial oil production in 2010 combined with prudent economic management has improved the nation's credit rating and made it one of the most preferred destinations in Africa for investment. Ghana has also successfully raised its international reputation through successful elections and peaceful transfer of power. However, Ghana like other African countries faces significant development constraints in the areas of infrastructure and power generation. This deficit has gravely limited the country's ability not only to meet the growing demand of its people but also to attract and absorb large investment for economic growth and job creation. The country has more than an estimated \$2 billion financing gap for necessary infrastructure (Foster and Pushak, 2011). To overcome this infrastructural shortfall, Ghana

has relied on China in recent times as an important development partner for assistance in sectors largely neglected by Ghana's traditional partners, such areas as development of roads, energy and telecommunication infrastructure.

Chinese assistance has become even more critical following the rebasing of Ghana's economy in 2010, effectively making the country a middle income country five years ahead of its original vision, with huge implications on where it can secure development financing. In November 2010, Ghana became a middle-income country through a somewhat unconventional and in many ways unexpected approach: a technical statistical adjustment (Todd and Majerowicz, 2012). While it had seen GDP growth from 1.4% in the 1970s to 5.5% for the past decade, 'a GDP rebasing exercise recalculated how to measure the economy and Ghana suddenly found that its official GDP per capita was not under \$800 as previously thought but rather \$1,363' (Todd and Majerowicz, 2012: 1). This accelerated leap put the country into a new income category overnight and had profound consequences for Ghana.<sup>15</sup> Since income categories are used by many international organizations to classify countries, for differential treatment, there was an immediate lessening of Ghana's eligibility for concessional finance from the World Bank, Ghana's single most important creditor for the past three decades (Todd and Majerowicz, 2012).

This loss of concessional finance is taking a toll on Ghana's economy, and Ghanaian government officials acknowledge this fiscal peril. Notably, the Finance Minister, Seth Terkper, has said in an interview that Ghana's lower middle-income status has had an impact on the country's ability to borrow on soft terms, thereby delaying key infrastructural projects. According to the Minister, 'as a middle income country, some of the sources from which we [Ghana] borrow on very soft terms are no longer available to us [Ghana]. They are dwindling.'<sup>16</sup> For example, 'the World Bank, which gives Ghana the softest loans for roads, power projects, harbours etc., has reduced the length of time for the repayment of these loans and has increased interest rates after the 2011 economic status categorisation.' According to the Minister, instead of the 40-year duration for the repayment of the loans, 'now we [Ghana] can only borrow from that same source [World Bank] for 25 years. The interest rate has gone up...from 0.75% to 1.5%.'<sup>17</sup> Since Ghana continues to face pressing infrastructure challenges, losing previously reliable sources for financing infrastructure development places intense pressure on the already precarious situation. No sector is more affected by the current situation than the energy sector.

As in most African countries, Ghana has long been battling the problem of supply of consistent energy. Inconsistent electricity supply not only affects the domestic or household level, but has led to a drastic scale back and even shut down of large industrial operations over the last several years. Although unreliable access to electricity is not new (Ghana suffered energy crises in 1983, 1998, and 2006/7), the recent energy crisis has taken on a persistent pattern unknown in previous years (Rupp, 2013:106). While the nation has attempted to boost its supply of energy over the past few years by considering other sources of energy, Ghana's consumption of electricity outstripped supply as far back as the mid-1990s as a result of the increase in consumption and the ambitious National Electrification Program, which aimed to bring electricity to rural communities.<sup>18</sup> The demand for power is now estimated to be growing in excess of 10% per annum with the electricity supply gap in Ghana oscillating between 300 and 600 MW.<sup>19</sup> This shortage and the resulting electricity fluctuations are detrimental to businesses, individuals, and the nation as a whole. For example, Idun-Arkhurst reports that in 2007 the Volta Aluminum Company (VALCO), Ghana's major foreign exchange earner and an important source of raw materials for many of Ghana's local companies, was compelled to shut down temporarily for the 11th time in its 40-year history due to chronic power and water shortages (2008:7). Similarly, Coca-Cola also lost \$4,000 for every day without power (Idun-Arkhurst, 2008: 7).

As of the time of this article, an ongoing power rationing (or 'load shedding' as government calls it) in Ghana has forced some electricity consumers to endure days of blackout, whereas others experience power outages every four to six hours.<sup>20</sup> The effects and frustrations posed by the consistent power outages are felt in workplaces, homes, schools and hospitals. The storage of food, academic activity, and artisans such as hairdressers, welders, and health care providers are all dramatically affected by the power shortage.<sup>21</sup>

While many factors account for the shortage of electricity, one of the most significant is the fact that since 1965, Ghana has relied principally on Hydro sources. Hydro sources, however, dictate that consistent power supply depends on availability of rainwater to fuel hydro dams, such as the Akosombo, Kpong, and recently the Bui Dam. Due to low rainfall in the catchment area of the Volta River in recent years, the water level of all the dams, especially the Akosombo reservoir, has fallen critically. This scarcity has led to attempts to look for other sources of power such as solar, wind, tidal wave, and biomass, but also gas fired thermal power following the oil discovery in 2007 in Ghana.

All of these developments have made it even more crucial for the Ghanaian government to target prospective partners interested in such sectors of Ghana's economy. Against this economic backdrop, China has become a key partner in Ghana's quest for energy security. Chinese assistance in recent times suggests that it recognizes the dire need for energy infrastructure in Ghana, its ability to fill this gap (and how filling this gap helps its own energy needs at home), and its competitive advantage over Ghana's traditional partners that do not prioritize infrastructure development as part of their development assistance.

Two Chinese financed projects in Ghana are notable for their scope and provide insight into the Ghana-China relationship and China's integrated strategy of 'resources for infrastructure' approach. These are the Bui hydro Dam, and the Atuabo Gas Pipeline. These two examples illustrate how China funds major projects in Ghana, and the impacts of Chinese investment on local development.

### **Case I: Bui Hydro Dam and Ghana's cocoa**

The Bui Dam is one of the largest Chinese-funded projects in Ghana. The dam is located on the Black Volta River at the border of Bole (Northern Region) and Bamda (Brong-Ahafo region) districts in the North-western Ghana with portions of the dam project falling with the Bui National Park (see dam location on Ghana map, Figure 2).<sup>22</sup> According to the Bui Power Authority, although the vision to construct the dam gained momentum in the 2000s, the development of a hydropower scheme on the Black Volta River at the Bui Gorge had been the subject of many studies: the Russian firm J.S Zhuk Hydroproject conducted detailed studies in 1966; a feasibility study was undertaken by Snowy Mountains Eng. Corp (SMEC) of Australia in 1976, and Coyne and Bollier of France undertook a feasibility study in 1995 (Bui Power Authority, 2012).<sup>23</sup>

The aim of the Bui Dam project has always been to bring electricity to rural communities that lie far beyond the reach of the national electrical grid. However, the project did not receive the needed funding from Ghana's partners, including the World Bank, which declined financing it. In October 2006 Coyne and Bellier updated their 1995 feasibility study to enable the commencement of the project after the Chinese government in 2005/06 expressed willingness to extend funding for the Bui Dam and Sinohydro agreed to build the dam. In 2007 the Bui Power Authority Act (Act 740) was enacted by the Parliament of Ghana and received the assent of the President in July of the same year to establish an authority known as the Bui Power Authority (BPA) to plan, executive, and manage the Bui Hydroelectric Project (Bui Power Authority, 2012).



**Figure 2.** Map of Ghana (showing Bui Dam location).  
 Source: <http://ghanamap.facts.co/ghanamapof/ghanamap.php> (with author’s insert).

Former President of Ghana, John Kufuor, cut the sod for the commencement of the project on August 24, 2007 and Sinohydro started construction of the main Dam in 2009. The current President, John Mahama, commissioned the first generator in May 2013 and the dam was inaugurated in December 2013 with a capacity of 400 megawatt.

**Table 3.** Bui Dam Finance Plan.

Source	Amount in millions (US\$)
Concessional loan (CHINA Government)	263.5
Buyers' credit (EXIMBANK)	298.5
Sub total	562.0
Government of Ghana counterpart fund	60.0
Original total project cost	622.0
Additional funds <sup>24</sup>	168
<b>Final total project cost</b>	<b>790.0</b>

Source: Bui Power Authority, 2012.

## Finance plan

Funding for the Project was based on a hybrid credit facility comprising a concessional loan from the Chinese government and buyers' credit facility from the Export and Import Bank of China (Eximbank). The original total project cost was about US\$622 million, consisting of a concessional loan of \$263.5 million (with a fixed interest rate of 2% with a grace period of 5 years and a maturity period of 20 years); a buyers' credit of \$298.5 million (with 12 years' maturity, a grace period of 5 years, and an interest rate set at a margin of 1.075% over the prevailing Commercial Interest Reference Rates [CIRR]); and US\$60 million from the Government of Ghana. According to the officials of the Bui Power Authority (2012), the project experienced a funding shortfall arising from the unanticipated effects of the global financial crisis of 2009 as well as of unforeseen essential works including the diversion of a power line, reservoir clearing, and development of fisheries in the Bui reservoir. The Bui Dam finance plan is outlined in Table 3.

The bilateral agreement between Ghana and China meant that the concessional loan did not attract a guarantee or security, as it was treated as a full faith credit of the Government of Ghana. The buyer's credit, however, was treated as secured facility and secured through net revenue from a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) and receivables from the sale of cocoa beans to China (see Habia, 2009).

## Cocoa and loan repayment arrangement

As in other China EximBank resource-secured loans, the Bui Dam project finance was guaranteed not through oil or minerals, but through export sales of cocoa beans. The Ghana Cocoa Board entered into a Cocoa sales agreement with China's Genertec International Corporation of Beijing. According to a BPA official, the Chinese guaranteed to purchase 30,000 tonnes of cocoa per year from the Ghanaian government at current world market prices – rather than a fixed price – until the dam became operational.<sup>25</sup> Cocoa revenues were deposited in an escrow account with the EximBank back payments from Ghana. Until the Bui Dam becomes operational and begins to generate revenue to service the loan cocoa revenues are deposited in an escrow account with the EximBank as security for loan repayments (note that during the construction period there is a moratorium on the payment of the principal, which means that only interest has to be paid in that period).<sup>26</sup> If all the funds in the escrow account are not needed to pay the interest, then the excess amount reverts to the Ghanaian government (Ministry of Finance and the Central Bank). Once the dam is operational within five years of the signing of the loan agreement, the cocoa agreement ends. Other details from BPA officials suggest that when the Bui Dam is operational and the cocoa agreement expires, 85% of the proceeds from sales of energy generated by the Bui Dam will be placed in an escrow



**Figure 3.** Bui Hydro Dam.

Source: Bui Power Authority (2013).

account held by China EximBank to service the debt. The remaining 15% will be used to meet the Bui Power Authority's administration costs. If not all the 85% is needed for debt servicing, the excess amount will revert to the Government of Ghana. If Ghana decides not to withdraw the excess money from the escrow account, the funds will earn interest.

As stated earlier, the loan agreement also required Ghana's Ministry of Energy to enter a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) with the Electricity Company of Ghana (ECG) for the purchase of the energy to be generated from the Bui plant. The price was tentatively set within the range of 3.5–5.5 US cents/KWh.<sup>27</sup>

### **Bui Dam: benefits for Ghana, and China**

The Bui Dam (Figure 3) reveals several aspects of Chinese recent engagements in Ghana and Africa as a whole. The interaction leading to the construction of the dam is symbolic of the new era of China–Ghana relations. The arrangements also represent the changing nature of the relationship between Ghana and its traditional western financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the IMF. As it was revealed to me during interviews with key officials,<sup>28</sup> the Ghanaian government initially sought financing from the World Bank, but the bank withdrew its support for the project following an environmental and social impact assessment in the Bui National Park area that apparently revealed adverse environmental impacts, such as loss of fauna and flora, as well as the social cost of displacing local inhabitants. Not long after this assessment that triggered the World Bank's refusal to finance, the Chinese government agreed to take up the project following President Kufuor's visit to China in 2006.<sup>29</sup>

Notably, the Bui Dam project was financed through a resource-secured loan and a hybrid finance facility. This innovative financing scheme shows how Chinese officials can combine different financial instruments to support a large project. Part of the finance might qualify as ODA, but not the entire package. This financial structuring also gives some insight into the way in which Chinese banks can secure their loans with decreased risk—a resource-backed arrangement that allows them to provide more debt finance than might otherwise be the case.

Moreover, China and Ghana see the project as an example of the so-called win-win approach to development cooperation espoused by the Chinese in their engagements across Africa. Whereas the government of Ghana has been facing a persistent energy crisis, Ghana's growth potential has significantly slowed with businesses scaling back or shutting down operations. Thus the government of Ghana is desperate to relieve its energy crises that have bedeviled it in the last several years, but lacks the financing resources to increase the country's energy supply capacity. China's willingness to extend funding for the Bui Dam and Sinohydro's commitment to build the dam at the time when Western donors and financial institutions were unwilling to fund the construction of the dam came as relief to the Ghanaian government.

The Ghanaian government hails the addition of 400 megawatts of electricity to the national capacity as an important step towards bringing the energy crises under control. The government believes that "the energy crises in Ghana could be a lot worse had it not been the Bui Dam coming on stream."<sup>30</sup> Although the project was designed primarily for hydropower generation, it also includes the development of an irrigation scheme for agricultural development and presents an opportunity for enhanced ecotourism and fisheries. The Bui project also includes a Resettlement and Community Support Program.<sup>31</sup> According to the Bui Power Authority (2012), in addition to the electricity generated, close to 6,000 Ghanaian artisans / laborers have been employed on site at the construction's peak, and others will benefit from the improvement in health, educational, and social facilities, as well as increased irrigation and fisheries development potential at the site.

Moreover, there are other wider benefits of Bui for Ghana's economic development. Although electricity generation is the central aim, Ghanaian authorities hope to boost consumption of Ghana cocoa and their overall exports to China. Over the last several years chocolate consumption in China is increasing, particularly at the higher end of the market. Ghanaian cocoa is a major export and therefore source of revenue for the Ghanaian government (see Hensengerth, 2013: 295).

The Bui Dam project also fits into China's own economic and political interests. China's increasing need for energy and political support and Ghana's ability to repay China's loans with guaranteed arrangements were attractive to the Chinese. In the case of Bui Dam, Sinohydro, China's state-owned construction and hydro engineering company, profits from the project, and China is virtually guaranteed repayment, because Ghana can sell its cocoa and the excess energy produced by the dam. Furthermore, according to BPA, at its peak, the project employed close to 300 Chinese and 80 Pakistani expatriate staff. The project also gave access to Ghana's local market for Chinese imported machines and equipment. Aside from the strategic considerations of energy security and employment creation, other economic and political arguments apply. The Chinese government has been encouraging labor- and energy-intensive Chinese companies in particular to move abroad, since companies at home are meant to move up the value chain, pollution laws are becoming stricter, and labor costs are on the rise in the booming coastal provinces (Brautigam, 2010). Importantly, as Chen and Orr argue in a survey of Chinese construction companies, Chinese firms are looking for long-term engagement in foreign markets and Africa presents China a sustained and substantial opportunity for improving revenue and international competitiveness (Chen and Orr, 2009: 1207–1209).

Notably, the Chinese agreed to fund this project at a time when increasing international criticism of China's engagement with African countries has emerged. China has been perceived as

indifferent to or even supportive of repressive regimes and for undermining progress made in good governance across Africa with its policy of non-interference in domestic politics and support for so-called repressive regimes such as Zimbabwe (see Manji and Marks, 2007; Vines and Campos, 2010). China has focused on Ghana since the last decade to give visibility to its Africa policies. Thus, as Ghana is clearly one of Africa's successful democracies, China points to its relations with Ghana to support its denial that Beijing is not engaging African despots. China has thus used this project in Ghana to highlight the practical nature of co-development, mutual benefit, and win-win approaches to development cooperation. This assertion of mutual benefit is predictably recognized in some important quarters in Ghana. For example, the win-win understanding is echoed in a speech delivered by Mr Ken Dapaa, the former Minister of Energy under the government of John Kufuor, at the sod cutting ceremony of the Bui Dam. Mr Dapaa said, 'Mr Chairman... as for the President and the members of Sinohydro corporation team, I would like to say that the negotiations were tough, but both sides worked with the spirit of a give and take to make the Engineering, Procurement and Construction contract a win-win contract. This spirit has brought us together as one family and I am very certain that this relation would be maintained during the development phase' (quoted in Habia 2009: 112–113). These expressions suggest the Ghanaian officials' sense of China's economic value to them and the extensive role they are willing to allow China in the country. The friendship and cooperation between Ghana and China on this particular project encourages political solidarity and stimulates other sectors, including Ghana's nascent oil and gas industry.

## **Case 2: Atuabo Gas project and Ghana's oil**

Following Ghana's discovery of oil in commercial quantities in 2007 at the Jubilee Field and subsequent production of oil, former President Atta Mills commissioned a task force to review and make recommendations on how best to deploy Ghana's oil and gas resources for national development through its gas commercialization infrastructure system.<sup>32</sup> The task force recommended an evacuation and treatment of associated gas from the Jubilee Field production. This led to the creation of the Ghana Gas Company that was assigned the responsibility 'to build, own and operate infrastructure required for the gathering, processing, transporting and marketing of natural gas resources.'<sup>33</sup> Ghana Gas also recommended the development of gas processing infrastructure projects in Atuabo, Domunli, and Esiam in the Ellembele and the Jomoro districts in the Western region of Ghana.

The Atuabo Gas project located on the coast of western Ghana is part of the Western Corridor Gas Infrastructure Project of the government of Ghana (see Figure 4). The project includes the installation of offshore pipeline from the Jubilee Field; a gas processing plant with a capacity to process 150 million standard cubic feet of gas; a Natural Gas Liquids export system for the export of LPG; a construction of a 120 km pipeline to further transport processed gas to the Aboadze thermal power station; and an office complex. Construction work on the gas plant started in August 2012 with the Chinese state owned enterprise Sinopec International Petroleum Corporation as the lead contractors. The plant will receive and treat raw gas from the offshore Floating Production, Storage and Offloading (FPSO) facility named 'Kwame Nkrumah' (after Ghana's first President).<sup>34</sup> The plant began commercial production in 2015.<sup>35</sup>

## **Finance plan**

In 2010, Ghana's former President Mills led a business delegation to China to finalize negotiation for a \$3 billion loan facility to Ghana. This loan facility is dedicated to the Western Corridor Gas Infrastructure Development Project for construction or rehabilitation of roads, ports, and oil and



**Figure 4.** Atuabo Gas Plant (a portion of plant under construction).

Source: Ghana Gas Company, 2013.

gas processing. Out of that amount, \$1 billion was allocated for the Gas processing infrastructure projects at Atuabo, Domunli, and Esiama in Ghana. The facility was secured from the Chinese Development Bank (CDB) on a non-concessional basis through Ghana's Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. The government of Ghana is to raise 15% of the total amount while the CDB funds the remaining 85%.<sup>36</sup> The loan is to be paid at LIBOR (London Interbank Offered Rate) plus 2.95 per cent with an upfront fee of 0.2% and commitment fees of 1% per year.

### **Oil and loan repayment arrangement**

The whole US\$850 million (part of the \$3 billion loan) investment program of Ghana Gas is collateralized against Ghana's share of crude oil from the Jubilee field.<sup>37</sup> Ghana National Petroleum Company (GNPC) and UNIPEC signed a commercial agreement that committed Ghana to supply crude oil to the Chinese to repay the \$3 billion loan. Under the agreement UNIPEC has secured an off-taker contract to lift Ghana's share of crude from the Jubilee Field, in which Ghana is committed to supply about 13,000 barrels of oil daily for fifteen-and-a-half years to pay the \$3 billion loan. The Ghanaian parliament gave its assent to the agreement in February 2012 following a long and heated debate between the majority (National Democratic Congress), which was in support of the deal, and the minority (led by the New Patriotic Party), which felt that the commercial agreement was exploitive and not in Ghana's interest in the long term.

As with the Bui Dam, the \$3 billion infrastructure loan has raised a number of issues that continue to be debated in the media and other circles. The controversies surround Ghana's government forfeiting to meet its part of the bargain.<sup>38</sup> This forfeiture is compounded by the fact that the agreement anticipates that 60% of the value of contracts involved in the gas project will go to Chinese vendors. This one-sided allocation of future value was noted by many observers, including civil society organization the Danquah Institute, which believed that the Chinese deal was not value for money.<sup>39</sup> Some also suggest the price of the individual projects were forecast in deceptively broad

terms so that when the deals are finalized, the ordinary Ghanaian will not be able to determine whether the arrangements are value for money or even where the budgeted money actually goes (Mohan, 2015: 50). There are also issues around the country's level of national debt, which has increased exponentially from \$8 billion to around \$20 billion under the National Democratic Congress government since it took power in 2008 (Mohan 2015: 50).

### **What does Ghana benefit from the Atuabo plant?**

As with the Bui Dam project, the Ghana government is pursuing this project against all the criticisms highlighted above because of the perceived strategic importance of the project to Ghana's energy independence. Ghana has suffered continued power outages across the country, in large part owing to disruptions on the supply side. For several years now Ghana imports gas from neighboring Nigeria via the West African Gas Pipeline (WAGP). As has been noted, over the years damage to the pipeline and high volatility in Nigerian exports have led to repeated gas shortfalls in Ghana.<sup>40</sup> This situation has forced the Ghanaian government to replace gas with oil in its thermal generators, costing government millions of dollars per day. The biggest expectation of the plant is that the gas facility will help to close the gap between electricity supply and demand in Ghana. Gas from Atuabo will feed the VRA's Aboadze thermal plant, offering a more stable and lower cost source of supply. Also, the reduced oil import burden is important to the Ghanaian government, given its rising debt load and heavy budget deficit.<sup>41</sup> In addition to supplying gas to the Aboadze thermal plant, the plant will also produce liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) at a peak production rate of 4,900b/d, for domestic use.<sup>42</sup> Currently, all of Ghana's LPG is produced at the Tema Oil Refinery (TOR), whose capacity is around 1,500b/d, but its output significantly lower.<sup>43</sup>

Besides power generation, the projects will create employment opportunities for Ghanaian nationals, especially those training for job opportunities in the oil and gas sector (Darkwah, 2013). Other benefits include the creation of new infrastructure to support a vibrant petroleum and petrochemical industry and provide a new economic growth pole for Ghana starting with the Western Region.<sup>44</sup>

### **How will China benefit?**

For China, this project presents a win-win situation: China can ensure that the commercial loan is repaid, and obtains the much-needed oil, and establish contracts for its construction and procurement firms. The \$3 billion CDB loan to Ghana for the gas infrastructure means that at least three Chinese firms are involved in Ghana's nascent oil and gas sector. As part of the Master Facility Agreement (MFA), Sinopec, the lead contractor, secured the contract to construct the gas infrastructure under a \$850 million subsidiary agreement. Second, SAF Petroleum Investments, a subsidiary of Sinopec, procures items required for the gas project and resells them to Sinopec. Third, UNIPEC is another subsidiary of Sinopec and is considered China's largest international trade company. Its business focuses on trading in crude oil and LNG. As stated earlier, as part of the MFA, Ghana is required to supply 13,000 barrels of oil daily for fifteen-and-a-half years to pay the \$3 billion loan. UNIPEC secured an off-taker contract to extract Ghana's share of crude from the Jubilee Field.<sup>45</sup>

### **Conclusion: implications of China's approach to infrastructure development in Ghana/Africa**

China's increasing involvement in the energy infrastructural sector in Africa can represent a critical entry point to understand the broader implications of the China–Africa relationship and how China's approach to the continent differs from those represented by other donors.

The two cases discussed above reveal a number of important features in China's engagement in Ghana and Africa in general. First, China increasingly favors a deal structure now called the 'Angola mode' or 'resources for infrastructure' system in which the borrowing country repays the infrastructure development loan through natural resources. As discussed, with this arrangement the funds for the infrastructure are not directly transferred to the government (as the case of the Bui Dam and Gas plant project show). Instead, China signs a framework agreement with the government covering a specific program of infrastructure investments (Brautigam, 2009; Foster et al., 2009). The government of the beneficiary country awards a Chinese contractor to undertake infrastructure works (determined by the receiving government), supported by a credit from China Ex-Im Bank. Repayment of the loan is in the form of commodity provided to China. This commodity-backed loan, based somewhat on a barter system,<sup>46</sup> has a long history on the African continent (Azarya and Chazan, 1987: 117,127). It seems Chinese officials have found a common economic language with African governments in their negotiation over resource backed loans. Evidently, while Western countries and companies will normally expect hard currency in return for their investments or loans (see Sieber-Gasser, 2011; Teunissen, 2005), this deal structure shows that Chinese officials are happy to accept 'innovative' ways of payment from their African counterparts. Moreover, this approach seems to correspond to the Chinese interest in natural resource supply from Africa, and at the same time meets African interests in access to finance and infrastructure development. This exchange method allows countries with resources but limited credit-worthiness to use the exploitation of natural resources with the development of infrastructure assets.

But, China's joint state-business approach to project funding in Africa has implications on the receiving country's ability to determine fund use. Since the Chinese government has close relationships with many Chinese companies, Beijing is able to give aid and then require the funds be spent on specified Chinese contractors. This arrangement will likely result in the receiving government often being sidelined or forced to deal with new partners, resulting in lack of local control. In the case of Ghana, the sole source negotiation that characterizes the Angola Mode arrangement circumvents the 2003 Public Procurement Act. Moreover, despite a Local Content Bill being debated in Ghana's parliament targeting 90% local content in the petroleum industry by year 2020, the Ghanaian negotiators accepted 60% of contracts going to Chinese vendors in the MFA regarding the Gas project. Also, as mentioned above, cheap credits from the Chinese government allow Chinese companies to underbid their competitors and engage in possible collusion. This criticism unfolds against the political backdrop that Chinese aid has raised concerns in the donor community for its lack of transparency on the loans provided and missing provisions for improving aid effectiveness. Moreover, some charge that China is only focused on building African infrastructure with little attention to the institutional and operational considerations; and it has refused to adopt the environmental and social safeguard standards adopted by others, such as the World Bank.<sup>47</sup>

All these concerns notwithstanding, China's approach in its engagement with Ghana and other African countries suggests that it is charting an innovative path in relation to development cooperation and assistance to African countries. Influenced mainly by its own experience of development, its needs and that of recipient African countries, the Chinese government shows innovative understanding and practices of development. The 'Angola mode' of backing infrastructure deals with natural resources, the mixed-package financing mode of commercial and concessional loans, and the so-called no-strings policy regarding political and economic governance are in sharp contrast to the practice of the countries of the global North (Davies, 2008; Rotberg, 2008; Grimm et al., 2011; Hensengerth, 2013). Chinese economic cooperation and assistance emphasize infrastructural development that has been neglected by Western countries and institutions over the years. China is

increasingly becoming a partner and an actor that provides resources to African countries to implement projects that are deemed important for social and economic development.

The contribution of infrastructural development to broader economic and social development, particularly in Africa, is now widely acknowledged (see Foster et al., 2009; Amoah, 2014). China's focus on infrastructural development in Africa, which includes the construction of hydroelectric dams, roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, health centers and other government buildings, is making definite contribution to improving the lives of the continent's people.<sup>48</sup> Moreover, the involvement of Chinese multinational companies in Africa means that there is the potential for China's engagement to benefit not just African countries but China and Chinese commercial interests as well. There will also be job creation and access to cheaper goods and services than Africans would from their traditional partners, as well as the possibility of technology transfer. For Chinese companies, their global aspirations in Africa would be realized.

However, there are several issues that need to be resolved in order for the aforementioned benefits to be fully realized. While China's engagement, based on developing win-win outcomes, may provide very substantial resources for critically needed infrastructure, at the same time, China's substantial assistance raises concerns about debt sustainability and natural resource management. To ensure that Chinese investments have a positive impact, African governments need to, as a matter of urgency, establish and enforce adequate regulatory framework to ensure transparency in decision-making and the implementation of environmental and social safeguard policies, to encourage the transfer of skills and technology, and to require foreign actors to use local labor and construction materials. These broad regulations should be applied to all investors, whether from China, Europe or America. If the issues are not properly addressed, African economies will not only miss out on much needed infrastructural development, but worsen their overall socio-economic condition. Ghana like many other African countries has many development partners but there is evidence to suggest that China's increased involvement in Ghana has encouraged other nations to step up their engagement in Ghana (Harrison, 2012). This may bode well for Ghana's development and Ghana seem to welcome this 'competition' between foreign nations since it results in more development assistance.<sup>49</sup> But it is crucial for Ghana to ensure that China will continue to provide financing within a framework consistent with the latter's long-term debt sustainability and in line with its strategic development plans.

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### **Notes**

1. Ghanaweb 2014: 'China-Ghana trade yields US 4billion', December 24. Available at: <http://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/artikel.php?ID=340278> (accessed March 19, 2015).
2. See 'Ghana-China trade exceeds \$5billion.' Available at: <http://news.myjoyonline.com/business/2015/July-4th/ghana-china-trade-exceeds-5-billion.php> (accessed July 4, 2015).

3. Interactions between Ghana and China to some extent begun even before the establishment of formal diplomatic relations in 1960. Chinese officials started to engage or court the attention of Kwame Nkrumah before Ghana's independence in 1957. See Chau, Donovan. *Exploiting Africa: The Influence of Maoist China in Algeria, Ghana, and Tanzania*. Naval Institute Press, 2014. Moreover, Akurang-Parry's research has shown that as far back as 1874 Chinese labor were brought into the Gold Coast (now Ghana) by the Colonial administrators to provide labor for their needs. See Kwabena O. Akurang-Parry 'We cast about for a remedy': Chinese Labor and African Opposition in the Gold Coast, 1874–1914. *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* No. 2 (2001), pp. 365-384.
4. See Kwame Nkrumah, *Ghana's Policy at Home and Abroad*, (Washington, DC: information office, embassy of the Ghana, 1957), 3. This is a reprint of Nkrumah's Speech delivered to the Ghanaian parliament on August 29, 1957. Available at: <http://www.wdl.org/en/item/651/view/1/17/> (accessed on March 18, 2015).
5. Kwame Nkrumah UN Speech, quoted in Chau, Donovan. *Exploiting Africa*, 81.
6. Based on archival research in Accra, Ghana (Ghana Archives July-August 2012). Treaty can also be found in 'Treaty of friendship, *Peking Review* 4(34) (25 August 1961): 6.
7. For an interesting discussion on Nkrumah's attempt to settle the conflict that brought China and the United States to the brink of hostilities (the Vietnam War) see Snow (1988: 109). See also Armah, 2004.
8. Ghana-China relations under Kufuor saw massive infrastructural projects supported by China, of which the flagship example is the Bui Dam Project. See Bofo Arthur, 2007; see also Amoah, 2014.
9. See Business and Financial Times: 'China's romance with Ghana'. Available at: <http://www.business-timesafrica.net/btm/details.cfm?prodcid=6&tblNewsCatID=47&tblNewsID=461> (accessed March 10, 2015).
10. Interview with Bui Power Authority Official, Accra, August 2012.
11. Interview with Bui Power Authority Official, Accra, August 2012.
12. Interview with Chinese academic, Peking University, Beijing March 28, 2014.
13. Williams, J. 'Rethinking China's 'Exploitation' of Africa - China Hands.' 2014. Available at: <http://www.chinahandsmagazine.com/2014-jameswilliams-rethinkingexploitation.html> (accessed March 13, 2015).
14. It is important to mention that China is not the only foreign entity that is engaged in Ghana's energy sector. Ghana's energy sector continues to expand its capacity and continues to receive foreign assistance and government funds. India, Spain, and other countries have assisted with millions of dollars enabling Ghana to undertake energy related projects across rural areas in Ghana. But so far China has contributed in most substantive terms considering the number of projects and amount of funds involved.
15. It is instructive to note that a middle income status also comes with other opportunities that are useful for the country in questions not least of which is that it also opens doors for other sources of raising revenues including the international bonds market.
16. See Myjoyonline: 'Ghana's middle income status impedes infrastructural dev't but IMANI disagrees.' 2013. Available at: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/business/2013/November-24th/finance-minister-says-ghanas-middle-income-status-impedes-infrastructural-devt-but-imani-disagrees.php> (accessed February 26, 2015).
17. Ibid.
18. According to Ghana's President Mahama (during his 2015 State of the Nation Address to Parliament) access to electricity in Ghana is 76% and ranked 2nd only to South Africa in sub-Saharan Africa. See 'Ghana News – Full audio: State of the Nation Address.' Available at: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2015/February-26th/full-audio-state-of-the-nation-address.php> (accessed February 26, 2015). For details about the National Electrification program see 'Guide to Electric Power in Ghana' 2005.
19. 'Ghana News – Full audio: State of the Nation Address.' Available at: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2015/February-26th/full-audio-state-of-the-nation-address.php> (accessed February 26, 2015).
20. See more at Graphic Online: Prepare for intensified load shedding- GRIDCO <http://graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/37615-prepare-for-intensified-load-shedding-gridco.html#sthash.KzAZ4hvV.dpuf>
21. Ghana News – Full audio: State of the Nation Address. Available at: <http://www.myjoyonline.com/news/2015/February-26th/full-audio-state-of-the-nation-address.php> (accessed February 26, 2015).
22. Bui Power Authority-Ghana. Available at: <http://www.buipowerauthority.com/> (accessed March 6, 2015).

23. For a history of the Bui Dam see Fink M (2005). Integrating the world commission on dams recommendations in large dam planning processes: The case of Bui, Ghana. Dortmund: Mimeo. See also Habia, 2009.
24. It was confirmed in an interview with BPA official, in September 2012 that the government of Ghana secured an unanticipated \$168 million in 2013 to complete the project.
25. Interview with Bui Power Authority Official, Accra September 2012.
26. Based and interview with Bui Power Authority official September 2012; and Report by Ghana's Parliamentary Finance Committee July 2007.
27. Report by Ghana's Parliamentary Finance Committee July 2007 cited in Habia, 2009: 63.
28. Interview with Ghana Government official, Accra, August 2012.
29. Ibid.
30. Minister of Power, Dr Kwabena Donkor, at a press conference in Accra in February 2015
31. 'Bui Power Authority-Ghana' website. Available at: <http://www.buipowerauthority.com/>.
32. Interview with Ghana Gas official in Accra, September, 2012, Accra.
33. Ghana Gas Company website. Available at: <http://www.ghanagas.com.gh/en/about-us/profile.php> (accessed February 24, 2015).
34. Interview with Ghana Gas Official in Accra, September 2012. See also: <http://graphic.com.gh/features/features/24155-atuabo-gas-processing-plant-solution-to-energy-crisis.html>.
35. SpyGhana: Ghana's Atuabo gas plant begins commercial production. Available at: <http://www.spyghana.com/ghanas-atuabo-gas-plant-begins-commercial-production/> (accessed May 1, 2015).
36. See Ghana Gas: Finance plan. Available at: <http://www.ghanagas.com.gh/en/the-project/financing-plan.php> (accessed February 25, 2015).
37. In July, 2014 in a rather surprising twist to the saga of the \$3 billion CDB loan Ghana government announced a proposal to take only \$1.5 billion instead of the \$3 billion as originally signed.
38. Interview with Franklin Cudjoe, CEO IMANI (Policy Think Tank), Accra. August, 2012.
39. Interview with Gabby Ochere Darko, Director Danquah Institute Accra, August 2012.
40. See "Atuabo gas project start-up will boost Ghana's energy sector". Available at: <http://www.businessmonitor.com/news-and-views/atuabo-gas-project-start-up-will-boost-ghanas-energy-sector#sthash.iFYxPaIT.dpuf>.
41. See "Atuabo gas project start-up will boost Ghana's energy sector". Available at: <http://www.businessmonitor.com/news-and-views/atuabo-gas-project-start-up-will-boost-ghanas-energy-sector#sthash.iFYxPaIT.dpuf>.
42. See <http://thebftonline.com/content/atuabo-ready-first-gas> (accessed March 10, 2015).
43. See: <http://www.businessmonitor.com/news-and-views/atuabo-gas-project-start-up-will-boost-ghanas-energy-sector#sthash.iFYxPaIT.dpuf>.
44. See Benefits: Ghana Gas Company. Available at: <http://www.ghanagas.com.gh/en/the-project/benefits.php> (accessed March 12, 2015).
45. Interview with Ghana Gas Official, Accra September 2012.
46. Barter system describes an alternative form of trade, independent from the exchange of money. It works in such a way that rather than goods for money, goods are exchanged for other goods or for natural resources.
47. See Bosshard (2008) for a critique of Chinese investments in Africa.
48. Interview with Ghana Government official Accra, August 2012.
49. Interview with Ghana Government official Accra, August 2012.

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# Doing Politics in the Recent Arab Uprisings: Towards a Political Discourse Analysis of the Arab Spring Slogans

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## Abstract

The present paper aims to analyse a number of those slogans collected from the sit-in quarters in Egypt, Libya and Yemen. Using political discourse analysis, it unravels various typical discourse structures and strategies that are used in slogans in the construction of a sub-genre of political discourse in the Arab world. Drawing data from several mediums, including banners, wall graffiti, audio-visual instruments, chanting, speeches and songs, this paper tries to show the extent to which the slogans serve as a medium by which political complaints and comments are dispensed and consumed. This paper draws on a rhetorical analysis to find out their persuasive effect on shaping the Arab intellect and on the change of the political atmosphere in the region. Lastly, this paper attempts to show to what extent the slogans meet the standards of political discourse and whether they can be considered as a sub-genre of political discourse or not.

## Keywords

Slogans, Arab Spring, critical discourse analysis, political, discourse, genre

## Introduction

The revolutionary tsunami which has broken out in several countries of the Middle East in the last few years has brought about a massive number of slogans and has initiated a new sub-genre of

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political discourse in the Arab world. Such slogans have been introduced via many mediums, including banners, wall graffiti, audio-visual instruments, chanting, speeches and songs. The present paper aims to analyse a number of slogans collected from the sit-in quarters in Egypt, Libya and Yemen. Using critical discourse analysis (CDA), particularly van Dijk's (1997) political discourse analysis (PDA), various typical discourse structures and strategies that are used in slogans in the construction of a sub-genre of political discourse in the Arab world are unravelled (See Appendix for some relevant background internet sources).

In fact, slogans are not something new. The etymology of the word shows that the term is derived from the Gaelic *slaughghairm* which means 'army cry' or 'war cry' (Sharp, 1984). The word was used by the Scottish clan with a view to inspiring the members of the clan to fight fiercely for its protection or the extension of its glory (Sharp, 1984: v). Similarly, slogans have also played a vital role in inspiring people to unite and achieve the interests of their countries and to restore their national pride.

In general, although the slogans under investigation are crafted in different countries, they do represent the socio-cultural concerns of the Arab Nation at large. This paper classifies the slogans under several categories and comes out with a discourse analysis of them. It shall assume that the slogans reflect the use of language in the Arab society. At the same time, it is noted that the slogans are not attributable to known authors. However, they serve as a medium through which a considerable number of socio-political issues that are likely to be unmentionable elsewhere are raised. The slogans provide the medium through which message composers can state their cases in the knowledge they are on the safe side and are shielded from political or social sanctions that are likely to be imposed by authorities and the community on members with opposing views. Such sanctions or political revenges are very widespread in different Middle Eastern countries.

The present paper aims to find out to what extent the slogans which have reverberated in the uprisings of the Middle East serve as a medium by means of which political complaints and comments may be transmitted. In turn, the paper aims to find out whether those slogans meet the standards of political discourse (van Dijk, 1997) and whether they can be considered as a sub-genre of political discourse or not.

## Literature review

Several studies have dealt with political discourse in general. The use of rhetoric operations, for instance, has been the focus of a considerable number of studies (e.g. Billig, 1991, 1995; Bitzer, 1981; Campbell and Jamieson, 1990; Chilton, 1988; Dolan and Dumm, 1993; Hirschman, 1991; Kiewe, 1994; Tetlock, 1993; Windt and Ingold, 1987).

Slogans have also attracted the attention of many scholars. Denton (1980), Sharp (1984) and Urdang and Robbins (1984) among others have examined their use in political discourse. The use of slogans as a means of displaying dominant ideology has also been investigated in a number of studies such as Condit and Lucaites (1993), Denton (1980), Kaul (2010) Lu (1999) and Lu (2004).

Studies on the Arab Spring slogans, however, are a rarity in proportion to the great bulk of the slogans produced. It can be safely said that the slogans of the Egyptian uprising have been given a special attention by a considerable number of scholars. A collection of papers on the translation of the discourse used by protesters in Al-Tahrir Square of Egypt was published in 2012: Keraitim and Mehrez (2012) have discussed the semiotics of the Egyptian revolution; Taba and Combs (2012) have dealt with the transformation discourse of the revolution; the translation of the visual output of the Tahrir and the street art of the revolution have been examined by Gribbon and Hawns (2012) and Sanders IV (2012); and the poetics of the uprising have been examined by Sanders IV and Visona (2012).

Another collection of studies on the language of the Arab Spring was published by Orient-Institut Studies in 2013. The collection includes papers that deal with the various arts of the revolution. Gonzalez-Quijano (2013) has dealt with the use of rap as an art of the revolution, Dubois (2013) has discussed the street songs of the Syrian revolution and Abaza (2013) has conducted a study on the use of satire, laughter and mourning in Cairo's Graffiti. The volume also includes Srage's (2013) study, which deals with the phenomenon of the 'clause equivalent' of the slogan 'Irḥal', meaning go/get out/leave. Srage (2013) has argued that this one-word statement formulates a highly significant, semantically condensed verbal clause and concluded that young people adopted the form and content of this concise imperative in order to affirm their awareness of the priorities of political change, i.e. the departure of the regime.

Neggaz (2013) has analysed the linguistic transformations of Syrian Arabic that have been taking place since the start of the revolution in March 2011. That study has concluded that the Arabic language and its Syrian dialectal forms have witnessed some transformations such as new word formations, semantic changes and the creation of new proverbs. Although the title of the Neggaz study implies that it is concerned with linguistic transformations in general, that study is more concerned with the semantic change Syrian Arabic has witnessed because of the revolution.

In a similar vein, Lahlali (2014) has analysed some textual, social, cultural and political aspects of the slogans used during the Egyptian revolution of 2011. That analysis has shown that the slogans reflect a variety of themes and a diversity of political perspectives. It has concluded that the political orientation of Egyptian society has shaped the slogans. Furthermore, Lahlali (2014: 12) has pointed out that the language register used 'echoes the diversity of Egyptian society and the different political orientations of its groups, including, amongst others, Islamic, secularist and liberal views'.

In addition, Al-Haq and Hussein (2012) have attempted a sociolinguistic analysis of four hundred slogans collected from different places in Tunisia and Egypt using the internet, TV channels, and newspapers with a view to investigating the language functions that the slogans convey. Their analysis has revealed that slogans fulfil twenty linguistic functions among which humiliation constituted the prevailing one.

Colla (2012) has also conducted a study on the Arab Spring slogan 'the people want', pointing out that the slogan has been used excessively to the extent that it loses its glamour. Colla (2012) has argued that ambiguity has shadowed this slogan almost from the beginning and the slogan has been used as the discursive scaffolding for hanging every new demand, even though those demands are sometimes incoherent and contradictory.

It seems that most of the above studies are more concerned with the various art forms of the revolution rather than slogans in particular. Even those studies that deal with the Arab Spring slogans are more concerned with the topical and ideological aspects of the slogans rather than their linguistic features. In other words, they deal with the predominant topics involved in the slogans such as hope and aspiration, the call for reprimand and prosecution, the call for immediate resignation of presidents as well as the call for freedom and liberty. As a result, the above studies seem more related to political science rather than to PDA.

The current study is different from the studies available in the literature in a number of aspects. Firstly, the scope of study goes beyond the discourse of Egyptian revolution to the discourse used in other Arab countries. Despite the fact that all Arab Spring countries have gone through similar sufferings and troubles, some slogans have exhibited clear ideological and varietal differences. Secondly, unlike the above-mentioned studies, the current study does not only investigate the thematic aspects of the slogans; it rather attempts a detailed PDA of them with a view to finding out the strategies adopted by protesters to persuade the audience of the validity of their claims and to achieve what Chomsky and Herman (1988) called 'manufacturing consent'. As far as the current

authors are aware, there are no studies that attempt a CDA or a PDA of the slogans. The current study is a PDA of the slogans because it is interested in 'tying language to politically, socially, or culturally contentious issues and in intervening in these issues in some way' (Gee and Handford, 2012: 5).

## Theoretical considerations

Critical discourse analysis is used theoretically and analytically to unravel the ideologies and attitudes and power relations behind discourses whether written, oral or both. According to Fairclough (1995: 133), CDA is:

discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor in securing power and hegemony.

Although many studies have been done using CDA, especially in unravelling hegemonic discourses, ideologies, and the role and power structure embedded in both oral and written texts, there is a dearth of studies using PDA. However, the analytical framework for this paper is influenced by PDA as suggested by van Dijk (1997).

van Dijk has extensively published on CDA and he has particularly focused on 'the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance' (van Dijk, 1993: 283). van Dijk (1997) has introduced PDA as an extension of CDA admitting that it is a broad and an ambiguous concept that may refer to the analysis of 'political discourse' or to a political approach to discourse and discourse analysis, as is the case with CDA. PDA, within the framework of CDA is mainly concerned with the 'the reproduction of political *power*, *power abuse* or *domination* through political discourse, including the various forms of resistance or counter-power against such forms of discursive dominance' (van Dijk, 1997: 11).

According to van Dijk (1997), political discourse is determined by its actors such as politicians (e.g. the presidents, the prime ministers, political institutions, etc.). This refers to the kind of discourse generated by politicians in fulfilling their political mandates, as in addressing political meetings.

Despite his argument that PDA can be narrowed down to the set of activities politicians engage in, van Dijk (1997) has pointed out that politicians are not the only participants in the domain of politics and thus PDA should also include 'the various *recipients* in political communicative events, such as the public, the people, citizens, the masses, and other groups or categories' (van Dijk, 1997: 13).

That is to say, political discourse may go beyond the circles of professional politicians and political institutions to involve different recipients of the communicative event such as the public.

Defining political discourse is, therefore, not a straightforward matter. While some analysts restrict it to politicians and core political events, other analysts define it so broadly that almost any discourse may be considered political. van Dijk (1997: 15) has warned against the extension of the scope of political discourse saying:

However, in order to avoid the extension of politics and political discourse to a domain that is so large that it would coincide with the study of public discourse in general we shall not treat such forms of discourse-with-possible-political-effects as political discourse. That is, corporate, medical or educational discourse, even when public and even when affecting the life of (many) citizens, will here not be included as forms

of political discourse. And although we may readily subscribe to the well-known feminist slogan that the personal is political, we shall similarly not take all interpersonal talk (not even of gender) as political discourse.

Based on the participants and the content of the slogans, it can be argued that the Arab Spring slogans constitute a political discourse. The context of the political discourse of the study under investigation involves a myriad of participants. That is to say, political parties, the mass people, work unions, educators, students, proletarians, women associations, ethnic groups, etc. are involved in various political activities including peaceful demonstrating, protesting, civil disobedience and long marches. In terms of content, the slogans deal with a range of politically-related issues such as political change, dictatorship, oppression, democracy, justice, freedom, equality, accountability, reconciliation, toppling the regimes and trialling their officials, etc. However, participants and content may not be sufficiently decisive factors to label slogans as a political discourse. A consideration of the text and its context is a basic criterion to determine whether a text or discourse is a proper political discourse or not.

Hence, to locate the Arab Spring slogans in the realm of political discourse, the focus should not only be on the participants or the topics, but rather there is a need to investigate other discourse structures. Although van Dijk (1997: 25) has argued that the structures of political discourse are seldom exclusive, he has emphasized that 'typical and effective discourse in political contexts may well have *preferred structures and strategies* that are functional in the adequate accomplishment of political actions in political contexts' (van Dijk, 1997: 25). Those various levels and dimensions of discourse structure need to be examined if seeking the typical discourse structures and strategies that have 'this status of preferred discursive methods of doing politics' (van Dijk, 1997: 25).

Since the early 1980s, political discourse has been tackled from different perspectives (e.g. descriptive, psychological and critical). However, following a descriptive approach or a psychological approach is not sufficient to have a detailed PDA of any political event. The approach of discourse structures advocated by van Dijk has been chosen because it strikes a balance between linguistic analysis and political analysis. PDA can have a lot to offer political science and can contribute to answering genuine political questions if it focuses on features of discourse that are relevant to the purpose or function of the political process or event whose discursive dimension is being analysed (van Dijk, 1997: 38). It is argued here that focusing on the discourse structures of slogans is relevant in precisely this sense, as the purpose of the slogans may be to convince the audience (i.e. citizens, the Arab nation and the international community) that a certain course of action or view is right. The predominant role of language and discourse structures in PDA is also echoed by Wilson (2003: 13) who has argued that 'certain core features will, and must, remain constant in the field of political discourse, and central to this is the role of language and language structure, and its manipulation for political message construction and political effect'.

In terms of discourse structures, van Dijk (1997) has argued that political discourse is often organized around particular topics, superstructures or textual 'schemata', local semantics, lexicon, syntax, rhetorical operations, expression structures and speech acts. The current paper seeks to determine to what extent some of these discourse structures are deployed in the Arab Spring slogans.

## Methodological issues

### *Data collection*

The data of the study consists of the transcripts of a number of slogans that were used by the demonstrators in some Arab countries, namely, Egypt, Libya and Yemen. The slogans appeared on the banners raised by demonstrators or were repeatedly verbally chanted during demonstrations. The

slogans were widely circulated by various TV channels (e.g. Aljazeera, Al-Arabiya and BBC Arabic) and in various media articles, blogs, videos and social networks including Facebook and Twitter. The collected slogans deal with various socio-political issues in the three Arab countries mentioned above but have implications for the entire Arab world in general. They straddle colloquial and standard Arabic and serve as a microcosm for the slogans used in other Arab Spring countries. The current study totally agrees with Colla (2012) who has argued that the Egyptians like the Tunisians before them were aware that ‘they were not only singing to themselves – they were self-consciously performing revolution for the entire Arab world’. Thus the selection of the slogans is not motivated by political considerations (e.g. failing states vs. non-failing ones), simply because all the Arab states that witnessed uprisings are failing in the eyes of the protesters. It can be claimed that the Arab Spring slogans are homogeneous and they share a lot in common even though their discursive content is sometimes slightly localized (i.e. looks more Egyptian, Yemeni or Libyan).

All the slogans were kept intact and they did not undergo any modifications or corrections. In this paper, 62 tokens of the slogans collected are used as the database for analysis.

### *Data analysis*

The co-evolution of language and politics is undeniable. Chilton (2004: 16) has aptly pointed out that ‘political actors themselves are well aware of the importance of how language is used even in the act of denying the fact’. The protesters have therefore employed a lengthy list of politico-linguistic devices to resist the power of the regimes in their relevant countries. The current analysis attempts to find out the various discourse structures used by protesters with a view to representing their ideological square ‘de/emphasize good/bad things of US/Them’ (van Dijk, 1998).

The slogans will be analysed within the framework of CDA. In particular, van Dijk’s (1997) PDA will be used. As suggested by van Dijk (1997) the various typical discourse structures and strategies that pertain to political discourse at various levels and dimensions will be discussed. The focus is on the slogan’s topics, textual schemata, local semantics, lexicon, syntax, rhetoric, expression structures and speech acts. In doing so, the current study will be in a position to show how Arab protesters who have been powerless for quite some time used the ‘loaded weapon’ (Bolinger, 1980) called language to mock, oppose and resist the discourse of the totalitarian regimes that have used language to control, marginalize, assimilate and eliminate them for decades. It has to be made clear that although this study’s analysis is politico-linguistic, it is more concerned with the manipulation of language in the slogans since, in general, this is what differentiates PDA from other areas of political research found, say, in political science.

## **Discussion**

### *Topics*

van Dijk argues that ‘topica’ or ‘typology’ is not given enough attention in discourse analysis. Topica refers to the analysis of diverse discourses, what they mean, the situations surrounding them and the contexts in which they occur (van Dijk, 1997: 26). Based on their contents, the Arab Spring slogans can be analysed under a number of topics relevant to protesters’ religious, socio-economic, cultural and political perspectives.

*Political humour and satire.* van Dijk (1997: 28) suggests that political topics are mainly about political actors. Arab ex-leaders and their actions were a matter of ridicule in a number of slogans. A

considerable number of humorous and satirical slogans were on the lips of Arab protesters. The current study finds that protestors use their knowledge of Arab culture and rhetoric to generate satirical messages embedded in political humour. In Libya, for instance, some of the slogans read as in (1):

1. *Al-sha'b yūrīd 'ilāj al-za'īm.* [The people want the treatment of the leader.] *Al-sha'b yūrīd tafsīr al-khiṭāb.* [The people want to interpret the speech of Qadhafi.] *Al-sha'b yūrīd ḥubūb ḥalwasah mārikat Al-Qadhāfi.* [The People want Qadhafi Brand hallucination tablets.]

In each case, the famous Arab-world-wide slogan *al-sha'b yūrīd isqāṭ al-nizām* 'The people want the fall of the regime' has been twisted and modified satirically. In the first slogan, the addresser wants to say that the Libyan people want to treat their leader as insane. This slogan is released as a response to the first speech delivered by Qadhafi in the aftermath of the outbreak of the Libyan uprising in Bani Ghazi and Al-Baiḍa'a. In that speech, he appeared stressed and bizarre. He incoherently talked about different issues and thus the slogan refers to this aspect of the speech. In the same speech, Qadhafi accused the opposition of providing the youth with drugs and thus they were fighting him because they were in a state of intoxication. Therefore, the revolutionaries satirically responded to him saying that they have given up hashish and are really looking for Qadhafi-brand drugs.

Expression of political humour and satire is not only through linguistic means alone, but also through multimodality, which combines verbal and visual semiotic materials to generate political messages. Consider the multimodal political humour in (2):

2. *Al-sha'b yūrīd taghyīr al-ṭa'ām.* [The people want the change of the food.]

In Egypt, the above slogan appears under a picture of a bowl of butter beans to refer to the famous national dish in the Sudan and Egypt. Thus, the message is that protesters, here, no longer wish the fall or the change of the regime but rather the change of the food they have been eating day and night. The multimodal discourse structures suggest that mere change in regime is nothing if the well-being of the people remains a matter of great concern.

In the slogans above, *al-sha'b* 'the people' is the participant; the action of changing the regime, the opinion of having Qadhafi drug, or changing the food all have 'a general, official, institutional or public nature' (van Dijk, 1997: 26). The slogans show a general decision taken by the people to control the political process and to oppose and challenge its policies, as well as to point at a different and better future for the ordinary citizens.

*Political evaluation.* van Dijk (1997: 28) posits that topics often feature typical polarized appraisals of 'politicians, public figures, and organizations and their actions'. The corpus shows several instances of references to politicians and their actions. Some of the evaluations are in the form of swear words directed at presidents, their wives or at their political systems as a whole. Consider, for example, slogan (3):

3. *Ṣāhib al-ḍarbah al-jawiyah hua kabīr al-balṭajiyah.* [The person who led the air strike [on Israel and of whom we were proud] is the greatest of thugs.]

In (3), Mubarak of Egypt has been described to be *balṭaji* 'a thug'. This word has been widely circulated throughout the Arab World. It is a swear and colloquial word that means the person who takes advantage of power and abuses or mistreats others verbally, emotionally or physically. Thus,

Mubarak, the pilot, who is believed to be the leader of the successful 1973 air strike on Israel, is described as the greatest of all thugs. Another example of political insult is given in (4):

4. *Ya Mu‘amar ya abu shafshufah al-sha‘b al-lībi tauwah tashufah.* [O Muamar, whose hair can never be combed, you will see now how easily the Libyan people can topple you.]

Here, *abu shafshufah* is a relatively new term in Arabic. It has not been in use before the Libyan uprising. It refers to the uncombed hair of Qadhafi, which is part of his strange personality as they claim.

The slogans above depict what van Dijk describes as the ‘strategic principle of all ideological and political discourse...Emphasis/de-emphasis of Our/Their Good/Bad Actions’ (van Dijk, 1997: 28). Thus, Qadhafi’s apparently unkempt hair is exaggerated to emphasize his strange characteristics.

**Political threats.** Political discourse is also replete with political threats aimed at real or perceived political opponents. Threats of revolt or insurrection against the regime are used in the predicates of several slogans and in all the countries that witnessed the uprisings. Consider, for example, the following slogans:

5. *Lāzim lāzim Ḥusni yaghūr ... qā‘idīn huna 9 shuhūr.* [Husni must step down. [For this cause], we are ready to stay [in squares] for nine months.]  
 6. *Mush ḥanihda mush ḥaninām ḥata yasqū al-nizām.* [We will neither slow down [the pace of our protest] nor will we have a wink of sleep till the fall of the regime.]

In these slogans, threats are directed to the Egyptian former president personally and to his regime. In (5), Mubarak must disappear and leave power; otherwise, the protesters will patiently remain in the freedom squares for months. In (6), however, the whole regime is threatened by the protesters who are determined to escalate their activities until the fall of the regime.

**Nationalism, resentment of current policies and accountability.** Slogans have also dealt with various aspects of the political domain. The demands of the protesters are not confined to their domestic affairs. National issues in general and the Palestinian Cause in particular have found their own place in the slogans. Egyptians, who are viewed as the pioneers of Arab Nationalism, are not pleased with their country’s stance towards the Palestinians, as is clear in (7):

7. *Ḥusni biyh Ḥusni biyh quli muḥāṣir Ghazah liyh.* [Hosni, Bey! Hosni, Bey, tell me, ‘why do you siege Gaza?’]

Here, the demonstrators are trying to find out a justified and convincing answer from Mubarak for the blockade they claim he put on Gaza. The slogan exhibits their resentment at what they deem a savage policy that aggravates the sufferings of their Palestinian brothers. Even worse, their regime prevents the flow of essential needs for the Palestinians while it supplies Israel with gas at trivial prices. This issue of selling gas to Israel provokes the Egyptians even more and they chanted:

8. *Bā‘ū al-dawlah wa bā‘ū al-ghāz ... dūl ‘awizīn al-wal‘ah bi-jāz.* [They sold out the state, the sold out the gas. We need to ignite gas and burn them to death.]

That is, the regime needs to be burnt because it wastes the natural resources of the country by selling the gas for low prices that are not in harmony with the global prices.

*Standard of living.* Political discourse does not refer only to various elements of the political domain; it usually combines its topics with those from other societal domains (van Dijk, 1997: 25). A considerable number of people in the Arab Spring countries live under or just above the poverty line, which the World Bank sets at \$2 a day (The World Bank, 2013). The standard of living and the miserable conditions of most of the Arabs are, therefore, reflected in the slogans, as is clear in (9):

9. *Ya Suzān qulī li-al-biyh kilo al-'ds bi-'asharah jiniyh.* [O Suzan! tell the Bey, one kg of lentils costs ten Egyptian pounds.]

Here, people who are afflicted with poverty cannot even get their essential needs. Lentils, which is the national dish for a high percentage of Egyptians is no longer affordable. A kilo of lentils costs ten Egyptian pounds. Another example is given in (10):

10. *Hū yalbas ākhar mawḍah wa-ḥna ni-nām al-'ashrah bi-'uḍah.* [While [the president] wears the latest fashion trends, ten of us sleep in a stuffy room.]

Here, the housing crisis that bothers most of the Egyptians is highlighted in the slogans. In (10), while the president is very wealthy and leads a very comfortable life wearing the latest fashion, the poor citizens cannot find a proper accommodation. Ten people share a single room.

### *Superstructures or textual 'schemata'*

Each discourse genre is characterized by schematic forms that differ according to the communicative goal, audience, information load, etc. (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996: 54ff; Swales, 1990; van Dijk, 1997: 29). Political slogans like any other genre have their own schematic patterning. That is to say, they have particular canonical and conventional forms that define their genre membership. Protesters promote their ideas by using brief, clear, eye-catching and musical slogans that easily stick to minds due to their special sound pattern. Parallelism, antimetabole, colloquialism, alliteration, assonance and antithesis are all devices of the textual schemata of political slogans. A detailed analysis of these devices is given in the Rhetorical Operations section.

Another schematic feature resides in the tendency of the composers of slogans to violate syntactic, stylistic and rhetorical norms to communicate particular political messages. In fact, this is not a disadvantage of slogans; it is rather a merit. As Crystal points out 'there are several situations where it is perfectly in order to be strange, and indeed where the breaking of linguistic rules is seen as a positive feature of communication' (Crystal, 2003: 400). Thus, by violating certain linguistic and rhetorical norms slogans are able to communicate their message efficaciously. Besides, slogans can be multimodal in the sense that they convey their communicative goal through both image and text. Some slogans are painted onto banners along with pictures of martyrs or/and opponents. Multimodal slogans tend to promote the image of the revolutionaries and to distort the image of opponents. A Yemeni slogan, for example, contains a photograph of one of the martyrs and a distorted photograph of the Yemeni former president in which he appears burnt beyond recognition along with his notorious nickname '*afāsh*'. The slogan reads *al-sha'ab yurīd muḥakamat al-safāḥ* 'the people want the trail of the shedder of blood'. Other slogans are even supplemented with some cartoons as in the following:



Source: Sublat 'umān (2011)

Here, the slogan 'the people want to topple the regime' is represented in the form of a cartoon. A hand is shown and two fingers are up, a well-known symbol of victory or martyrdom. The slogan *al-sha'ab qāla kalimatah* 'the people has said his say' is emphasized in the cartoon by a bold and large font and a rope was hanging around the neck of Qathafi. The cartoon has made meanings more 'prominent for obvious partisan reasons' (van Dijk, 1997: 29).

It can be argued that the slogans genre has some schematic features that do not even concur with logical reasoning. However, slogans become catchier when they deviate from the norms. Besides, slogans can be flexible in their schematic forms. Although brevity is a canonical feature of slogans, the Arab Spring brings with it some intertextual slogans that cite the opening lines of famous Arab poets such as Abu Al-Qasim Al-Shābi's 1933 poem, 'The will to live'.

In brief, the schematic forms of slogans tend to emphasize some meaning for obvious partisan reasons (i.e. to promote their beliefs, ideas, etc.) and thus they foreground them. They, however, hide significant information if it is negative to their cause by putting it in less prominent textual categories or by deleting it altogether (van Dijk, 1997: 29).

### *Local semantics and lexicon*

Those involved in political discourse, according to van Dijk (1997: 30) 'tend to emphasize all meanings that are positive about themselves and their own group (nation, party, ideology, etc.) and negative about the Others, while they will hide, mitigate, play-down, leave implicit, etc. information that will give them a bad impression and their opponents a good impression'. A cursory look at the slogans shows that the slogans related to the revolutionaries carry positive meanings. They present the anti-regime activists as the Utopian and unified group that aspires to change the society for the best. In reality, however, political parties that participated in the uprising embrace different ideologies and policies and they never act as a unified group. For instance, while the socialists, Islamists, communists, Nasserites and many others played a vital role in the uprisings and there is a long history of conflict and poor governance among those groups, the slogans do not contain information that may bring bad fame to those forces. Despite the fact that some of those factions, as noted above have been in power before and they did not rule their countries properly too, there is not even a single slogan that refers to their past.

At the lexical level, the choice of the words shows a very clear kind of bias for ‘partisan principles of the Ideological Square’ (van Dijk, 1997: 33). While the youth in all the Arab countries are *thuwwār* ‘revolutionaries’, the pro-regimes are *balātighah* ‘thugs’. While the youth are *musālimīn* ‘peaceful’, the others are *ʾirhābiyīn* ‘terrorists’, *qatalah* ‘murderers’ and *saḡāhīn* ‘manslayers’. In addition, the youth are described in the slogans as *al-shabāb al-ḥilu* ‘the good people’ and their opponents as *al-shabāb al-waḥīsh* ‘the bad people’. On the contrary, the regimes’ alliances have described the ‘peaceful revolution’ of the youth as *ḡawḡah* ‘chaos’, *takhrīb* ‘vandalism’ and *ḡitnah* ‘sabotage’. *ḡaḡāt al-taghyīr* ‘Change squares’ (where demonstrators rally), are described by opponents as *ḡaḡāt al-taghrīr* ‘delusion or misguidance squares’. Even the people who have been killed are sometimes called *shuhadā* ‘martyrs’ and at other times, they do not deserve that rank and they are just *qatla* ‘killed people’.

Moreover, violent actions by both sides have been euphemized. In Yemen, for instance, some of the protesters have attacked the official institutions and have called them *suḡuḡ silmi li-al-muʾasāsāt al-rasmīyah* ‘a peaceful fall of official institutions’. Thus, the attack on public institutions is a peaceful occupation (see: <http://www.al-tagheer.com/news28542.html>); the use of ‘peaceful’ in the previous collocation is a euphemized expression for a hostile act. Similarly, in all the Arab Spring countries, a considerable number of innocent people, protesters and security forces have been killed, but such killing of innocents is sometimes called *ḡifāʿan* ‘an *anafs* ‘self-defence’ or *qatl ghayr ʿamd* ‘collateral killing’.

Hence, the anti-regimes and pro-regimes demonstrators have used a massive repertoire of words/expressions that should be collected and compiled. They have managed to ‘create new sets of words to talk about things for which they previously used the same words as everybody else’ (Fawcett, 1997: 5).

### Syntax and pro-forms

van Dijk (1997) lists a number of morpho-syntactic features that are related to political discourse in English. These include the use of pronouns, variations of word order, the use of specific syntactic categories, active and passive constructions, nominalizations, clause embedding, sentence complexity and other ways to express underlying meanings in sentence structures. The current study’s data show that the syntactic style is subtly manipulated in the slogans to project particular ideologies and stances.

*Use of pronouns.* One of the syntactic features in political slogans is the use of deictic pronouns *naḡnu* vs. *hum* (van Dijk, 1997). Such use of pronouns serves pragmatic and semantic functions (van Dijk, 1997). Consider, for instance, the slogan given in (10) above, in which, *ḡū* ‘he’ is used to refer to Mubarak and *wiḡna* ‘we’ refers to the Egyptian youth or the Egyptians in general. The slogan differentiates between the luxurious life of the president and the collective misery of the other Egyptians.

In other cases, the plural pronoun *hum* ‘they’ is used to refer to the whole regime, as is obvious in (11):

11. *Huma bi yaklū ḡamām wa baḡ... wa kul al-shaʿab jaluh al-ḡaḡḡ.* [While they [the regime] eat pigeons and ducks, all the people get hypertension.]

In some other cases, the cataphoric pronoun *naḡnu* is used and followed directly with its reference as in (12):

12. *Ya yaman naḥnu shabābik*  
*fatihīn li-thawrah bābik*  
*lā ḥizbyah wa lā aḥzāb*  
*thawratana thawrat shabāb*  
 [O Yemen! **We are your youth**  
 We are opening your door to the uprising  
 No partisanship! No parties,  
 Our uprising is the uprising of the Youth.]

All the examples above clearly state the sense of solidarity and inclusion when it comes to the youth or the people and the sense of exclusion of the regime and its supporters.

*Use of vocatives.* Name-calling is widely used by politicians on different occasions. This strategy has been widely used in the slogans. The corpus shows a number of instances where the revolutionaries or the pro-regime supporters use vocatives followed by a name with a view to gaining advantage over, or defending themselves from opponents. The examples given below state this strategy:

13. *Ya Qadhāfī ya jabān, al-sha‘ab Al-lībī lā yuhān.* [O Qadhafi! O Coward! The Libyan people will not be disgraced.]  
 14. *Ya ‘ali ya safāḥ, baqī dahfah wa nirtāḥ.* [O Ali! O shedder of blood! There is little time left and we will get rid of you.]  
 15. *Ya Jamāl qūl la-būk ... al-sha‘ab al-miṣri yikrahūk.* [O Jamal, Tell your father, ‘the Egyptian people hate you’.]

In the above examples, the technique of name-calling is used by protesters to intentionally deride the Libyan, Yemeni and Egyptian former presidents and to construct negative impressions or opinions about them. Qadhafi is described as a coward, Saleh is viewed as a man indulging in bloodshed and Mubarak is hated and detested by his people. On other occasions, name-calling has been used in a sympathetic manner where people sympathize with political icons who actively participated in the development of their countries. An example of such icons is the late Yemeni president, whom the protesters address in (16):

16. *Ya Ḥamdi ‘ud ‘ud ... sha‘bak yishḥat ‘a-al-ḥudūd.* [Oh Hamdi [the former president of Yemen], Come back! Come back! Your people are begging on the borders.]

In (16), the former president of Yemen, the Late Ibrahim Al-Hamdi is called. The slogan emotionally addresses him and tells him about the miserable conditions of his people. The people who used to have a thriving life during his reign have been turned into beggars.

*Imperative sentences.* Halliday (1994: 69) points out that there are four basic speech roles: giving information; demanding information; giving goods and services; and demanding goods and services. The last one refers to what is traditionally called Command. Demanding goods and services has been the mainstay of many slogans, as is clear in both (17) and (18):

17. *Irḥal irḥal ya jabān ... ya ‘amīl Al-Amrikān.* [Depart! Depart! Coward. You are the agent of the Americans.]  
 18. *Khudh ‘ilatak wa itla‘ bara Libya ḥa-tibqa ḥurah.* [Take your family and get out, Libya will remain free.]

In the two examples above, the command verbs *Irḥal* and *Khudh* have been used to address the former Egyptian and Libyan presidents respectively to step down and to leave their countries. The use of such verbs reflects the defiant spirit of the protesters as well as their self-confidence of victory. In other words, it reflects their power as revolutionaries against the regime.

Halliday (1970) states that one function of imperative clauses is to command others to do something, as in (17) and (18); the other function is to invite the audience to do something together. The latter is usually indicated by the format 'Let's'. An example of this function is the slogan given below:

19. *Nuḏī nuḏī ya Bani Ghāzī jalakī al-yawm alī titraji.* [Let's Revolt, Let's Revolt, Bani Ghazi! What you wish has come true today.]

**Antimetabole.** Antimetabole is defined as 'Figure of emphasis in which the words in one phrase or clause are replicated, exactly or closely, in reverse grammatical order in the next phrase or clause; an inverted order of repeated words in adjacent phrases or clauses (A–B, B–A)' (see: <http://www.americanrhetoric.com/figures/antimetabole.htm>). An example of antimetabole is given in (20):

20. *Raʿīs min ajl al-yaman lā yaman min ajl al-raʿīs.* [A president for the sake of Yemen rather than Yemen for the sake of the president.]

**Ellipsis.** Ellipsis is a cohesive device in which part of a structure is omitted. The use of ellipsis is common in the slogans as is obvious in (21) and (22) respectively:

21. *Ya Qadhāfī dawrak ja ḍum al-khaymah wa dīr ʿazā.* [O Qathafi, your turn has come! Remove your tent and start a mourning ceremony.]  
 22. *Thawrah thawrah ḥata al-naṣr ... bukra Libya tuḥaṣil Maṣr.* [Our uprising will continue until we gain victory. Tomorrow Libya will follow Egypt.]

Slogan (21) can be interpreted as 'Oh, Qathafi, your turn to step down has come', but the part after *dawrak* 'turn' has been ellipticized. Similarly, in (22), *bukra Libya tuḥaṣil maṣr* 'tomorrow, Libya will follow Egypt' contains an elliptical part that can be interpreted as 'tomorrow Libya will follow the track of revolution like Egypt.'

**Nominalization.** Some of the slogans are nominalized in the sense that the verb has been turned into a noun. Such verbs are followed by an expanded noun phrase. This kind of structure is called *iḏāfa* or annexion phrase. Consider, for instance, (23) and (24):

23. *Isqāṭ al-nizām al-fardī al-ʿusarī al-istibdādī huwa maṭlabuna.* [Toppling the authoritarian individual family regime is our demand.]  
 24. *Maṭlabuna huwa tanḥyat al-raʿīs ʿali ʿbda-allah Ṣaliḥ ʿan al-riʿasah wa kāfat aqāribah min al-marākiz al-qiyādiyyah fī al-muʿsāsāt al-ʿaskiryah wa al-madaniyah.* [Our demand is removing President Ali Abdullah Saleh from presidency and [removing] all his relatives from leadership positions in the military and civil institutions.]

Another common nominalization structure found in the slogans is that of a verbless nominal clause where a verb is ellipticized, as (25) shows:

25. *Libiya fī alqalb makānik.* [Libya! in our hearts you are.]

In the above example, the verb that can be semantically interpreted as *is* or *exists* is omitted.

**Shifting word order.** Some slogans deviate from the standard word order of Arabic for topicalization purposes. In other words, the verbal clause can be nominalized by changing the verb–subject–object order to the subject–object–verb order. This shift in word order puts emphasis on the topic of the slogan.

In addition, the verb is used in the imperfect aspect in order to show the immediacy of the action even though the event has already occurred (Watson, 1999: 170). An example of this type of structure is the famous and widely-circulated slogan given in (26):

26. *Al-shaʿb yurīd taghyīr al-nizām.* [The people want to change the regime.]

In the above example, the normal word order is *yurīd al-shaʿb taghyīr al-nizām*, ‘want the people the change of the regime’.

Although the people have already made up their mind and taken the initiative to topple the regimes, the imperfect aspect has been used.

In fact, *al-shaʿb* has been topicalized by all parties with a view to foregrounding their demands. While *al-shaʿb* has been thematized in the slogans of the revolutionaries to emphasize the demand of toppling the regime, the same word has been thematized by the pro-regime allies to emphasize several demands, as is clear in the following slogans:

27. *Al-shaʿb yurīd ikhlā al-maydān.* [The people want to evacuate the square [of protesters]].

28. *Al-shaʿb yurīd inhā al-ʿiṭṣām.* [The people want to end sit-ins/protests.]

29. *Al-shaʿb yurīd ḥifz al-dimā.* [The people want to preserve lives.]

Topicalization has also been used by revolutionaries with an aim to emphasize the bad things of outgroups, as is obvious in (30):

30. *Al-imām Yaḥya 16 sanah... Al-imām Aḥmid 13 sanah... Al-imām ʿali 33 sanah.* [Imam Yahia [has ruled for] 16 years... Imam Ahmed [for] 13 years... Imam Ali [for] 33 years.]

In (30), the former president of Yemen has been foregrounded and described as an imam because he has ruled for more years than the notorious kings of Yemen, namely Imam Yahya and Imam Ahmed. This kind of syntactic topicalization emphasizes the president’s lust for power and his tyranny. In line with van Dijk’s (1997: 34) ideological square, syntactic topicalization emphasizes the good aspects of the anti-regime supporters and the bad ones of the regime and its supporters.

### Rhetorical operations

The main goal of politics is to persuade. Rhetoric, therefore, plays a very vital role in this process of persuasion. The Arab Spring slogans are characterized by the employment of a ‘smash hits’ selection of rhetorical devices. The use of rhetorical devices makes slogans memorable and easy to be chanted and remembered. It is through those devices that the slogans reach a broad potential audience. Various Arab Spring slogans were also heavy in the extensive use of figures of speech. A few of these are illustrated below.

*Alliterations, rhyme and morphological repetition.* Many slogans have employed deliberate use of phonic patterns for expressive purposes. Alliteration, for instance, is widely used. Alliteration is the repetition of the same sound in two or more words. This kind of sound repetition creates a musical tone that embellishes the language and helps the listeners or addressees enjoy it. Some slogans that use alliteration are given below:

31. *Bin ‘ali bi-yunadīk ... funduq Jaddah mustanīk.* [The son of Ali [the toppled Tunisian president] calls you.... Jeddah’s hotel awaits you.]
32. *Wa yadīna fī yadīn ba‘ḍīna wa Al-Qadhāfī mā yurhbna.* [As long as we join hands, Qadhafi will never intimidate us.]

Rhyme is also widely used in Arabic political discourse to embellish it and to attract the attention of addressees. In the slogans under investigation, rhyme has been used over and over again. Some examples are given below:

33. *Libya fī al-qalb makānik... Libya namūt ‘ala shanik.* [Libya! You are in our hearts! For your sake we shall die.]
34. *Niḥna lā khawnah wa lā kilāb... niḥna ma‘ākum ya shabāb.* [We are neither disloyal [citizens] nor dogs, we are supporting you, the Youth.]
35. *Ya ima na‘īsh su‘adā fawqa al-arḍ au shuhadā taḥta al-arḍ.* [We shall either live happily on earth or martyrs under the earth.]

In addition, different types of morphological repetitions have been noticed in the slogans. Arabic abounds in the use of both pattern repetition and root repetition to fulfil stylistic and rhetorical purposes or as a means of textual cohesion. In (35), the same pattern *fu‘alā* is used in two words *su‘adā* ‘happy’ and *shuhadā* ‘martyrs’ in close proximity. Root repetition is also common in the slogans. Yemeni revolutionaries who established their camps in a close area to Sana’a University, the top university in the country, chanted:

36. *Lā dirāsah wa lā tadrīs ḥata yasquṭ al-ra‘īs.* [We will neither study nor teach till the president steps down.]

Here, both *dirāsah* ‘study’ and *tadrīs* ‘teaching’ are derived from the same root *darasa* ‘to learn’.

*Simile.* Simile is an aesthetic and rhetorical device that is frequently used in the slogans. In a simile, a given entity is compared with another in praise, dispraise, ornamentation, or repugnance using particular words/particles like *as* or *like* in English and *mithl* or *ka* or *kʿai* in Arabic. The corpus shows that there is a tendency to use single similes in dispraise of the regimes as is shown in (37):

37. *Bism kuli al-fanānīn ḥukmak zifī wa zai al-ṭīn.* [By the name of all artists your reign is dirty and as filthy as a pigsty/rag.]

In Egyptian Arabic, the word *ṭīn* is commonly used to refer to something disguisable and bad. Therefore, the reign of Mubarak is compared with *ṭīn* ‘mud’. The colloquial word *zai* ‘like’ is used as a simile particle. Thus, both the likened-to and the likened share one feature (i.e. filthiness).

Another example of simile is used by Yemeni protestors, as in (38):

38. *Ya 'ali ya safāh ... lā tabki mithla al-timsāh.* [O Ali, the shedder of blood ... weep not like a crocodile.]

The slogan refers to Saleh of Yemen, who was bitterly condemned by opponents for giving orders to shoot the innocent demonstrators in Sana'a. More than 50 people were dead and dozens of them were injured. As a result, Saleh has formed an investigation committee to probe into the matter. The protesters consider this step by him as an attempt to hide the heinous crime of killing the peaceful citizens. In their view, the president's weeping and alleged sadness are compared to the tears of the crocodile. Here again, both the likened-to and the likened share one feature (i.e. shedding fake tears).

**Hyperbole.** The slogan composers have used this mode of semantic embellishment to make excessive exaggeration about the state of someone or something, as in (39) and (40):

39. *Ya 'ali irḥal irḥal al-kursi tiḥtak dhaḥal.* [O Ali, Step down! Step down! Your throne has got rusted.]  
 40. *Qul li-Mu'amar wa ṣigharah al-sha'ab al-Lībi bukraḥ fī darah.* [Say to Muamar and his family, the Libyan people will be in his house tomorrow.]

In (39), the protesters have chanted that president Saleh must leave power and they claim that his presidential seat got rusted due to the long term he spent in power. In (40), the slogan indicates that the Libyan people as a whole will flood Qaddafi's home the following day. The use of this figurative device shows that a considerable number of furious Libyan protestors will reach his palace and will be able to topple him.

**Metonymy.** Metonymy is frequently used in political discourse in Arabic. It is a figure of speech in which a thing or concept is replaced with the name of something intimately connected to it. Metonymy differs from metaphor. While metaphor's *association* is by similarity between two concepts, that of metonymy is by *contiguity* (Courtney, 1990: 75). An example of the use of metonymy is given in (41):

41. *Ya 'ali 'ataf farshak... min ta'iz yasquṭ 'arshak.* [O, Ali! Fold your bed... Your throne will certainly fall by the Taizi revolutionaries.]

In the above instance, *'arshak* 'your throne' that is associated with royalty and power has been used as metonym for it. A kind of metonymy is synecdoche (i.e. a part of speech in which a specific part of something is used to refer to the whole). This figure of speech has also been frequently used in the slogans, as is obvious in the example above, wherein the phrase *'ataf farshak* 'pack and fold your mattress' has been used to refer to the whole process of leaving power. Saleh is not required to pack his bed but to step down. Another example is shown in (42):

42. *Ya mubārak ya khasīs dam Al-Miṣri mush rakhīs.* [O Mubarak, the wicked! the blood of the Egyptian is never cheap.]

The expression *dam Al-Miṣri* has been used as synecdoche, in the sense that it is not only the blood of the Egyptians that is not cheap but the Egyptians as a whole are not cheap.

According to Abdul-Roaf (2006: 234) 'the major function of metonymy is to allude to a characteristic feature of someone and cover it up with a given linguistic expression instead of explicitly

mentioning it. This pragmatic function is employed by the communicator in both praise and dis-praise'. In both (43) and (44), metonymy of attribute is used to refer to the characteristic traits of both Saleh and Qadhafi respectively:

43. *Allah yumhīl wa lā yuhmīl ya 'alī ya 'af āsh.* [O, Afash! God's mill grinds slow but sure.]  
 44. *Ya Mu'amar ya bu shafshufah...* [Oh Qaddafi abu shafsufah! [a man of shaggy hair].]

Saleh is described as *'af āsh* 'a floating useless thing' and Qadhafi is disparagingly called *abū shafshufah*, or a man with messy and shaggy hair.

**Antithesis.** Antithesis is a semantic embellishment, which means the combination of two opposite things whether they are allegorical or non-allegorical. This device is also used in the slogans. Consider, for instance, the following example used by the Libyan protestors:

45. *Lā 'ilāh 'ila Allah Al-Qadhāfi 'adu Allah... Lā 'ilāh 'ila Allah al-shahīd ḥabīb Allah.* [There is no God but Allah, Qadhafi is the enemy of God... There is no God but Allah, the martyr is the beloved of God.]

Here, the antithesis is represented by the occurrence of two contradictory statements: the first is that Qadhafi is the enemy of God and the second is that the martyr is the beloved of Him.

**Parallelism.** The persuasiveness of the slogans is sometimes heightened through the use of parallel structures, as (46) shows:

46. *Thawrah fī tunis thawra fī maṣr thawra fī libiya ḥata al-naṣr.* [An uprising in Tunisia... An uprising in Egypt and an uprising in Libya until we gain victory.]

Here, three successive clauses within the sentence have employed the same syntactic structure. Another example is illustrated in (47):

47. *Ya shabāb ma tikhafush ... Qathāfi ma nibush*  
*Ya banāt lā tabkūsh ... al-shuhadā mā yamutūsh.*  
 [Oh Youth! Never get scared, we do not want Qadhafi anymore. Oh girls, never weep, Martyrs never die.]

Here, the parallel syntactic structure (vocative + noun+ negation particle + present verb, noun + negative particle + present verb) is used in the two sentences of the slogan.

**Repetition.** The rhetorical strategy of repetition is employed in the slogans for a number of reasons including, emphasis, emotional effect, amplification, etc. An example of rhetorical repetition is given in (48):

48. *'ahdak wala wala wa raḥ... lā ṭawār' ya safāḥ*  
*Thawra thawra silmiyah ... min saḥāt al-ḥuriyah*  
*Ya 'alī zūl zūl... ḥukmak ma 'ād lu maf'ūl.*  
 [Your rule has gone has gone ... [There is] no emergency, Blood shedder!  
 An uprising, a peaceful uprising has started in the squares of freedom.  
 Oh Ali depart, depart, your regime no longer exists.]

### Expression structures

Another element valued in a political discourse is that of expression structures. There is no exaggeration if it is claimed that the protesters left no stone unturned to present their slogans. The way the expression structures of sounds and graphics are shown plays 'an indirect function in emphasizing or de-emphasizing partisan meanings' (van Dijk, 1999: 36).

While some of the slogans were written to be chanted, they were presented in a skillful graphic manner. Bold fonts and eye-catching colours have been used. The demonstrators have employed and initiated various means through which they express their slogans. The ideational meaning has been expressed through banners, carving in bread, tattoo, graffitiists, photographs and drawings. Some slogans have even been written with blood. Thus, different semiotic systems have been used and they worked together semantically (Halliday and Hasan, 1985: 4). This makes slogans a representative genre of social semiotics where meanings are projected via a range of modes, such as language, images, comics, televisions and the like. It has been customary to notice protesters carrying banners with images and texts as has been mentioned earlier. Some slogans have been written, sung and represented visually.

### Speech acts and interaction

A speech act can be defined as the action performed by a speaker with an utterance. A pragmatic analysis of the Arab Spring slogans indicates that the slogans' composers employ several speech illocutionary forces. Many slogans are directives in the form of commands and orders as noticed in (49):

49. *Irhal ya'ni imshi ... wila mā tifhamshi.* [Depart means leave... Do not you understand?]

Encouragement is also a very common speech act in the slogans, as is clear in (50):

50. *Zīd taḥadi zīd ya ṣaqrī al-waḥīd.* [Go on in your challenge [to the protesters], Go on, mighty falcon!]

Here, Qadhafi is encouraged by his supporters to be more stubborn and to take the challenge.

Some slogans have featured advice and warning as in (51), where the youth are advised to continue their uprising until change is attained. At the same time, the slogan warns them not to launch a long-term uprising because the continuous revolution is destructive chaos:

51. *Thawra ḥata al-naṣr wa al-taghyīr wa laysat thawra īla al-'abad fa-al-thawra al-mustimarah fauḍah mudamirah.* [The uprising should continue until it wins victory and change is fulfilled. It should not be longer because the continuous uprising means continuous chaos.]

Threat as a speech act is also very prevalent in the slogans, as is stated in (52):

52. *ʾah ya ḥukumat hishik bishik... bukrāh al-sha'b Al-Miṣri yakushik.* [Oh, incompetent/unworthy government, tomorrow the Egyptian people will throw you out.]

Here, Mubarak's incompetent government is threatened to be swept away. In addition, some slogans serve an assertive function as in (53):

53. *Mush ḥanihda mush ḥaninām ḥata yasquṭ alnizām.* [We will neither slow down [the pace of our protest] nor will we have a wink of sleep till the fall of the regime.]

In (53), the protesters assert that they will not calm down till the fall of the regime.

Other speech acts frequently used in the slogans are accusation and counter-accusation. In (54), for example, the pro-Qadhafi demonstrators accuse the Qatar-based Al-Jazeera channel of being notoriously ignoble:

54. *Ya jazīrah ya ḥaqīrah al-qā'id mā nibu ghairah.* [O Jazeera, how ignoble are you! We accept none but our leader.]

On the other hand, the anti-regime protesters have apologized to it for the false accusations of Qadhafi supporters, as is clear in (55):

55. *Wa Allah manik ḥaqīrah na'tadhir lik ya Al-Jazīrah.* [We swear by God you are a channel of vaunted reputation. We apologize to you, Jazeera.]

Denial of accusations raised by opponents is also reflected in a number of other slogans, as is obvious in (34) above and (56):

56. *Khazaytana ya 'ali ... ayn Amrīka ayn ṭali.* [You brought us a bad name, Ali... Neither America nor others is behind our uprising.]

In (34), the anti-regime Libyans deny being treacherous and in (57), the anti-regime Yemenis deny the former president's accusation that they are backed by America.

Another political act common in the slogans is that of legitimation. Disclaimer has sometimes been used as a discursive strategy. Several slogans present something positive at first, and then reject it by employing a particular term such as *lakin* (van Dijk, 1995, 1998). This serves as a positive representation of self-legitimation and negative representation of other-de-legitimation (van Dijk, 1995, 1998, 2006). Consider, for example, the slogan given in (57):

57. *Ta'iz musulimah wa lakinaha sa-tantafīḍ wa tashta'il radan 'ala maḥraqatikum.* [Ta'iz is a city of peace. However, it will revolt in response to your holocaust.]

The slogan shows that the Yemeni province of *Ta'iz* is peaceful in nature and in practice, but its people will carry the arm to defend themselves as a reaction to attacking the freedom square in *Ta'iz*. Such an incident has been called *al-maḥraqah* 'the Holocaust' as a reminder of the Holocaust of the Jews at the hands of the Nazi leader, Hitler. The slogan clearly legitimates the use of the arm in the face of the security forces. Similarly, religion has been used as a discourse strategy of legitimizing self-defence and war. The Qurā'nic verse '*kutba 'ikum al-qitāl wa hwa kurh lakum*' 'Fighting is prescribed for you, and ye dislike it' has been used by protesters in many Arab Spring countries.

As van Dijk (1997: 37) points out legitimation is not 'a speech act in the strict sense, but a complex social act or process that may be accomplished by other speech acts, such as assertions, denials, counter-accusations, and so on'. Consider, for example (58), in which Saleh's supporters chant for him to continue in power in compliance with the constitutional and election legitimation. The supporters have counter-argued Saleh's opponents who call for the fall of Saleh's regime. For instance, several speech acts are in play in (58), such as assertion and the denial of the opponents' claim that Saleh is no longer the legitimate president of the Republic:

58. *Al-sh'ab yurīd 'ali 'abdallah Ṣālīḥ wa yujasid baqā'ah iḥtirām al-shar'iyah al-dustūriyah wa al-intikhābiyah alti istmadha min fawzih fī intikhābāt tanafusiyah li-al-riyasaḥ*

*al-yamanyah*. [The people want Ali Abdullah Saleh. [His presence embodies respect for the constitutional and election legitimacy he drew from his victory in competitive elections for the presidency of Yemen.]

As opposed to *al-shar'iyah al-dustūriyah* 'constitutional legitimation' of the regime, the revolutionaries have also legitimated their uprising calling it, *al-shar'iyah al-thawriyah* 'revolutionary legitimation'.

Some slogans have also taken the form of questions. The toppled presidents have been questioned on more than one occasion. Mubarak, for example, has been asked by the protesters to clarify how he possessed 70 billion dollars in (59):

59. *Ya Mubārak ya ṭayār minlak 70 milyār*. [O Mubarak! The pilot, how can you accumulate a wealth of 70 billion dollar?]

The question here is not a question in the strict sense (i.e. it does not need any answer from the respondent). It rather intends to show how corrupt Mubarak is.

Another illocutionary act in the slogans is that of appeal to God. Both pro- and anti-regime in Yemen, for example, appeal and pray to God to help them. While the protesters supplicate to God to assist them to get rid of the president, as is obvious in (60), Saleh's supporters pray to God to grant him victory and success as in (61):

60. *Ya Allah ya allah yasquṭ 'ali 'abdallah*. [We pray to you God! We pray to you God! Ali Abdullah will fall.]

61. *Ya Allah ya Allah inṣur 'ali 'abdallah*. [We pray to you God! We pray to you God! Grant Ali Abdullah your victory.]

It is obvious then that Arab Spring slogans exhibit universal features. Although the current study is not concerned with finding out the specificity of the Arab slogans and their differences from the slogans used worldwide, it would be useful to show some of those differences. In terms of linguistic features, Arab Spring slogans, like slogans used elsewhere, are mapped onto the various levels of linguistics from lexis to pragmatics to enable the demonstrators to coerce, represent and misrepresent, legitimize and delegitimize (Chilton and Schäffner, 1997: 211–215). In terms of the macropropositions or topics of the slogans, the Arab Spring slogans show some difference. Arabs are really preoccupied with the concept of leadership and thus the slogans tend to be more revolutionary. This is somewhat different from slogans produced in other regions, which are for the most part reformist. In addition, the topics of slogans in other regions are likely to be semantically modalized (Lycan, 1994; van Dijk, 1997) in the sense that events and actions may be permitted or obligatory, wished or regretted, and so on (Coates, 1990; Maynard, 1993). Most of the Arab slogans, however, encompass actions that must be fulfilled. In other words, Arab Spring slogans are less semantically modalized for permission, wish or regret. Most of the slogans show the obligatory actions of toppling the regimes, trailing them and humiliating them.

Therefore, it can be claimed that the format of the Arab Spring slogans and slogans in other regions have become rather homogeneous even though their discursive content is increasingly localized. Slogans are widely used in the entire world and their spread can be parallel to McDonaldisation (Machin and van Leeuwen, 2004: 99). That is to say, while the formats of McDonald's burgers are the same in the whole world, local versions of McDonald's burgers are sold in different regions in the world.

## Conclusion

The Arab Spring slogans have become an evolving sub-genre of political discourse. The slogans collected from different parts of the Arab world have shown that the slogans meet the various typical discourse structures and strategies that pertain to political discourse at various levels and dimensions. The slogans' topics, textual schemata, local semantics, lexicon, syntax and pro-forms, rhetorical operations and expression structures justify that they are an essential element of the overall political discourse (van Dijk, 1997). The slogans deal with political as well as social topics. They have their own unique schematic structures and superstructures. The local semantics of the slogans tend to better the image of the in-groups and distort the image of out-groups. A lengthy list of words has come into existence during the uprisings. The syntax of the slogan is characterized by brevity, the avoidance of complex sentences, nominalization, special use of pronouns (i.e. positive use of the pronoun 'we' and negative association with the pronoun 'they'), and unique use of foregrounding and backgrounding with a view to emphasizing or de-emphasizing something. Besides, the slogans employ a 'smash hits' selection of rhetorical devices. The slogans are full of similes, metaphors, metonymies, antithesis, etc. Prosodic features decorate almost all the slogans. Cohesive devices such as parallelism, ellipsis and morphological repetition are craftily and skilfully used. As for expression structure, slogans appear in different forms and shapes. Some of the slogans are multimodal where text, image and music go hand in hand. Finally, slogans serve multiple speech acts. Directives, questions, appeal and pray, accusation and counter-accusations, legitimation, etc. are found in the slogans.

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## Appendix

### *Internet video files*

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# Symbolic Status of Space: Event Centre Culture and Patronage in Nigeria

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## Abstract

Traditional and social dimensions of wedding celebrations have been altered by modernity. Such alteration is apparent in the emerging culture of conducting wedding ceremonies in event centres as against the use of traditional family social space. This paper investigates the reasons underlying this emerging culture and its symbolism. Findings indicate that conducting marriages in event centres eased stresses associated with celebration. Convenience, accessibility, proximity, and cost influenced the choice of event centres used by celebrants. Event centres are categorised as big, medium and small relative to cost and facilities present. Hence, patronage of any of these leads to social categorisation and delineation of the users as 'rich' and 'poor', and confers high valuation on the users and the event.

## Keywords

Event centres, event managers, social celebrations, culture and Ibadan

## Introduction

Traditional and social dimensions of wedding celebrations have been altered by modernity and space construction in Nigeria. Contraction of marriage goes beyond the consenting future husband and wife as it involves the participation and acceptance of the union by parents and relations. Their involvement, no doubt, makes marriage an agreement between families that allows their children to become husband and wife. Wedding ceremonies confer social acceptability on marriages as people invited serve as witnesses. Relatives, friends, neighbours, and other well-wishers make the occasion eventful with their presence. This is significant for the couple as Tade and Aiyebo (2014) note, because the sociability of the Yoruba is weaved around family ties, making it necessary for the involvement of kin and non-kin in events like marriage.

Social change spurred by urbanisation, acculturation and patrilocal residence, and modern social construction of space have all contributed to alter the extant culture of conducting wedding ceremonies among the Yoruba. The current trend represents a fusion between the cultural and social, the indigenous and foreign, as well as the traditional nuptial rites and the white wedding.

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This kind of change has also been noticed by scholars in South Africa. In his study, Mbembe (2004) explains that changes in metropolitan modernity spurred increasing prevalence of the commodity system and rationalisation of the social, resulting in the liquidation of tradition and its subsequent replacement by self-stylisation.

For a wedding to be worthwhile, sound organisation must be made to ensure that the physical (venue and accommodation) and material (foods and drinks) components are well coordinated. These components, however, must be conducted within a social space: the event centre. We define event centres as edifices or spaces constructed to meet social event needs such as weddings, meetings, naming ceremonies and funerals. Of all social celebrations in Nigeria, marriage is the most conducted in event centres. Such centres may be enclosed in a building, semi-enclosed or open fields. Event centres are in different categories. The first category of event centres consists of major conference and convention centres that are usually centres of excellence. They are built according to landmark architectural designs and are usually constructed by the government. The second category consists of centres that are usually built by individuals or institutions for the purpose of hosting social events like wedding receptions, naming ceremonies, birthdays and other social events. While the focus of this paper is on the latter, we also narrow it down to weddings conducted within this space.

More critical is the growing demand for use of event centres in Nigeria. These needs presently are still unmet. This is because, with about 167 million people (National Population Commission, 2012), Nigeria faces chronic infrastructural deficits in different sectors of national life). Estates are developed without catering for recreational facilities or social centres. Yet, with a largely youthful population, chances of increase in marriage solemnisation may suggest the need for event centres. While the family compound still exists among the Yoruba, attention is now being shifted to the use of event centres. More important is how the use of event centres is fast becoming a symbolic marker of social status and valuation of people. Studies in South Africa have shown how construction of buildings marks social class distinction. Commenting on the development of Johannesburg, Mbembe (2004) stated that it followed functional and utilitarian development paths which provide for zones of work, living, recreation and transportation. Consumption patterns of facilities provided in these zones follow class differentials indicating high and low classes. This leads to what Ward (2001) describes as the proletarianisation of commodity desire and stylisation of consumption.

What is consumed by individuals defines social status and reifies class identities. Phadi and Ceruti (2011) demonstrate this in their study in Soweto, positing that consumption features prominently in how people class themselves. Such constructions revolve around affordability, self-sufficiency, support, comparison, youth culture and language. Zussman (1985) notes the fluidity of the concept of class identities, opining that context (physical and social) shapes class identities. Hence, event centres consumption can be used as a sign of middle class reproduction and distinction. Therefore, the paper explores factors underlying the use of event centres for weddings and how the event hall social space is used to construct and stratify people.

Studies in event management and event tourism have identified suitable, accessible and cost-effective venues as critical to the success of social events (De Witt, 2006; Getz, 2005; Getz and Brown, 2006; Hoeksema, 2008; Kruger, 2006; Van der Westhuizen, 2003). Shone and Parry (2004: 81) emphasise that the event manager must plan and identify the event's key management issues, which requires a systematic approach; they coordinate both the supply and the demand aspects (Getz and Brown, 2006). Getz (1997) identifies key issues to be considered in choosing the appropriate venues such as suitability of facilities, high levels of hygiene, accessibility, crowd management, food safety requirements, security and emergency response. In his research on wedding tourism, De Witt (2006) stressed the need for a venue to have sufficient parking, special seating for the elderly and

children, facilities for the disabled, available toilets/changing rooms, suitable accommodation, a reception area at a reasonable distance from the wine farms, and wine farms that are capable of meeting the organisers' and visitors' needs. Hoeksema (2008) avers that such a venue must be cost effective for the guest, and offer event facilities and services.

Although there is a good deal of research on event tourism (Getz, 2000, 2009; Sherwood, 2007), an investigation into the consumption of event centres will give insight into the emerging lifestyle, taste and consumption of celebrants who are mostly middle class. The demarcation of event halls into big, medium and small connotes recognition of class differentials needing further sociological examination.

## Theory of the Leisure Class

Thorsten Veblen's ([1925] 1970) theory of the leisure class provides an appropriate framework to explain the consumption culture of event centres in Ibadan. This is because the type of event centre used and the name of the outfit embeds in it a social classification. According to Veblen's theory, greater weight should be given to social and cultural influences on economic activity. Conspicuous consumption refers to the purchasing decisions that people make out of the concern for their social status. The use of event centres is laced with social class definition and societal valuation of the financial worth of the person. By simply occupying a structure for a wedding ceremony, the celebrant is not only discussed in relation to the wedding but categorised into a specific social class. The type of event halls hired reflects possession, taste and social groupings, and the need to keep such status. In a South African study, middle class identities are expressed with a contextual texture which is unique to how class is perceived in South Africa decades after apartheid, but several processes resemble studies from elsewhere, such as observations that '... middle class, individualized identities [are] generated by a continuous process of comparison "up" and "down"' (Crompton, 2008: 92; see also Bottero, 2005: 240–242). Devine (2005: 153), and Savage (2002: 64) note that, in the US and Britain, 'middle class' means 'ordinary' or 'normal'. Kelley and Evans (1995: 157) attribute this to 'reference-group effects'. In other words, we tend to associate with people similar to ourselves and see the world as an enlarged version of this reference group. 'Even very high-status people place many others above themselves, and very low status people see others even lower... hence, most people locate themselves near the middle of the class hierarchy' (Kelley and Evans, 1995: 157). Torreson (2012) explains that class is a contextual category that hinges on evolving combinations of material economic conditions, cultural values and people's subjective experience of their social location vis-à-vis others in the same or in asymmetrical positions. This is why the conspicuous consumption of event centres relates to social class definition as people tend to compare themselves and rank themselves relative to others.

According to Bourdieu (1985: 204), 'all consumption and more generally, all practice, is "conspicuous-," visible, whether or not it is performed *in order to be seen*; it is distinctive, whether or not it springs from the intention of being "conspicuous", standing out, of distinguishing oneself or behaving with distinction-. It follows that the 'stylisation of life' in a distinctive way may involve the choice of clothes, cars, selection of 'appropriate social spaces for a group befitting of their definition by themselves and by outsiders'. In this work, we view event centres as a symbolic space of lifestyle construction. Bourdieu (1985: 203–204) avers that the social world is organised around 'the logic of difference, differential deviation thereby constituting significant distinction. In other words, the social space and the differences that "spontaneously" emerge within it, tends to function symbolically as a space of lifestyles of groups characterised by different life-styles'. In this sense, the decision to use an event centre may be described as social in relation to how individuals want to be seen and rated. Individual subjective perception about a social phenomenon is affected by the

agent's objective position in social space. The meaning an individual gives to an action varies, and meanings are not fixed but dynamic. Individuals have different motives and reasons for hiring one particular event centre. Such reasons may be oriented to the behaviour of others in relation to same event and their social standing. Event centres are gradually becoming symbols of affluence and a mark of class in Ibadan. The more expensive the event centres the higher the ascribed/perceived status of the celebrant, hence creating a symbol of class.

## Methods

The research was exploratory and descriptive, and was carried out in Ibadan between June and December 2014. Ibadan, the capital of Oyo State, is the third largest metropolitan area in Nigeria after Lagos and Kano. It is home to about 1.34 million people (National Population Commission, 2006). Purposive sampling was used to select event centres in the city using the prices of each to form three categories of small (between \$600 and \$1,000), medium (\$1,666 and \$2,333) and big event centres (above \$2,666). In all, four (4) small, four (4) medium and three (3) big event centres were selected, respectively, across the city. Using a prepared guide, in-depth interviews were used to extract data from 10 managers of event centres and 20 married individuals who had used such centres for their wedding ceremonies. The interviews conducted with managers provided data on patronage of event centres, and the reasons for the growth in event centres in Ibadan. Married participants supplied data on reasons for using event centres, their class symbolism and dynamics. Each interview lasted 30 minutes and was recorded with a digital voice recorder. Data were transcribed and emerging themes were then subjected to manual content analysis in line with the goals of the study.

### *Factors Underlying the Growth and Patronage of Event Centres*

Adoption and patronage of event centres for both corporate and social celebrations is becoming a norm in Nigeria in general and within the Ibadan Metropolis in particular. Just like every other sector of a 'modernising' society, traditional modes of social celebrations are being overtaken by 'modern' and 'civilised' ways of organising events. Hence, a sharp decline is noticed in the usage of a celebrant's compound for celebrations such as: naming ceremonies; weddings; birthdays; and chieftaincy celebrations. While using event centres is perceived by some as the most convenient thing to do in the midst of various issues competing for the celebrant's time, others see it as trendy and the most fashionable. In terms of convenience, it is often difficult to find family members who would be available to do post-event packing and cleaning. Meanwhile, this concern is now effectively addressed by the use of event centres. A respondent lends credence to this:

I think people use event centres because of convenience, it is far more convenient to use a hall than the surroundings of your house, you don't have to do any packing or clearing after the ceremony is over. (IDI/ Male/Manager/14 June)

Apart from being convenient for the celebrants, some see the use of event centres as the fashionable thing to do. Hence, beyond convenience, patronage of an event centre becomes a conspicuous consumption of social spaces with imbued meanings. A respondent puts it this way:

Yes I could have done my wedding ceremony in my wife's family house but you see, things are changing, people don't do that anymore, that was in the past and we didn't want to be old school<sup>1</sup>, we wanted to move with the trend. But the most important thing is that it's very convenient. You just pay and on that day you

come in for your ceremony and when you are done, you don't bother what happens next with regards the cleaning of the place. (IDI/Male/Couple/16 June)

The narrative above lends credence to the embrace of a stylised consumption pattern with an embedded class statement. This ultimately confers on the consumer (the couple) of the event centre a ranking relative to others. Rather than seeing themselves as snobs or 'old school', the couple construct themselves as 'followers' and modern. This agrees with the study of Desphande (2003: 130) in India where people do not want to decline membership of the stylised consumption patterns of the middle class, while those outside it wish to be included. This indicates that consumers may be followers or snobs. Amaldoss and Jain (2005) demonstrate how the decision to consume a product may be influenced by the desire for conformity or exclusivity. Furthermore, studies (see Bagwell and Bernheim, 1996; Jones, 1984; Leibenstein, 1950) have shown that followers consume the same product like the use of event centre for pecuniary emulation and status seeking.

Weather can also influence the use of event centres for weddings. Strategically, the use of open spaces may frustrate wedding ceremonies. Although weddings are a year round social event, most celebrants choose the last quarter of the year. Whichever time is chosen, the weather of the season which oscillates between rainy and dry seasons has implications for the spaces used. The unpredictable nature of having a downpour during the event may in part account for the adoption of event centres for weddings. A respondent puts it this way:

We used a hall for our wedding ceremony because it was during raining season. You know the kind of rain these days that are accompanied by the storm. It can spoil your occasion and again the hall we used was very close to our church so it was easier for our guests to move from the church to the reception ground. (IDI/Female/Couple/14 June)

Other issues that accounted for high patronage of event centres in Ibadan are factors like proximity which relates to the distance between the abode of the celebrant, the church and the reception venue. This is often considered to ease movement of guests from one venue to another. Also considered important is the accessibility of the event centre and its conspicuousness. With people craving for consumption of event centres, it follows that the proliferation of event centres in Ibadan is a response to meet the emerging social needs and the huge economic potentials event centres have for entrepreneurs. Users choose event centres that suit their budget, not minding the conditions attached to them, in as much as they get good services for themselves and their guests.

Hall design and rules and regulation are other factors that may influence utilisation of event centres. With regard to the former, participants were particular about the aesthetics. They look out for galleries, modified staircases and may also consider halls with a swimming pool. Rules and regulations set by management of event centres may serve as pull or push factors in their patronage. Some event centres want to be in total control of events staged within their edifice. Some of their rules are unsatisfactory for some potential users. A married woman explained further about rules as barriers to utilisation of event centres:

They set rules like you cannot bring your decorators and only have to work with theirs. This of course will be unacceptable to most people because of the cost implication. Some will say the serving of food and drinks, entertainment of guests outside the hall is prohibited. Also cooking, frying and doing 'small chops' are prohibited in most halls. All these factors determine the choice of event centres to use. Most people prefer a space where maximum spatial inter-relationship would be allowed. (Newly-wed Woman/18 September)

These points indicate that wedding ceremonies have transformed in terms of the social spaces used in conducting the event. For a city like Ibadan where social events take place every week, social disorganisation and urbanisation have constrained the available family compound spaces hitherto used for such ceremonies. Although the event centre patronage is seasonal, the business still enjoys reasonable patronage throughout the year. In particular, social events like weddings peak in August through to December. Some also get patronage almost on a weekly basis, especially event centres that are located near churches where solemnisation is conducted and there is availability of guest houses where the guests may lodge in the same vicinity. Thus, with increased patronage, owning an event centre is tied to profit that accrues to the owner. A manager emphasises this point:

We have good patronage almost on a weekly basis, you know it is the in-thing now but the business is seasonal, it is better in the dry season. (IDI/Female/Event Planner/14 November)

Another respondent said:

We don't get patronage every week; it is a seasonal thing. As from August down to December and at times January to February we get customers but as from April to July patronage is low. (IDI/Male/Manager/ 5 December)

Modernisation, changing taste of the consumers and benefits associated with event centres are some of the reasons for their expansion within the Ibadan metropolis. Some of the marketing strategies and factors responsible for extensive patronage of event centres are: accessibility; enough parking spaces; security; customer service; closeness to a good guest house where patrons lodge their guests; and sometimes the availability of a swimming pool. Through testimonial advertising, event centres have more customers and pay less for commercial advertising. This is based on the service quality rendered to previous users which now become reference points for potential users. Through this, an event centre enjoys greater patronage which makes more money available to the owners. Due to the competition over space, people may have to pay ahead of their events, usually months before the event:

When we first started we were doing television and radio adverts, but now, we don't really bother because a good thing sells itself. If you use our hall you would definitely get the desired satisfaction and I am sure you will go on and tell others about it. You need to book our hall over three months in advance else the hall may not be available. (IDI/Female/Manager/28 June)

Another factor promoting the growth of event centres in the Ibadan metropolis is the aggressive marketing by the owners. A respondent said that:

We send marketers out to get customers, we offer our customers good services that make them feel at home away from home. (IDI/Female/Manager/14 June)

Another manager commented on the lucrative nature of the ownership of an event centre:

The business is very lucrative, you know we are in a civilized world, things are changing, it is a profitable venture because everybody in this present time wants to use an event centre (IDI/Male/Manager/28 June)

### *Event Centres as Class Symbol*

The social world is a social space constructed on the basis of principles of differentiation. Agents and groups of agents are thus defined by their relative positions within that space (Bourdieu, 1985:

196). The basis of such construction is the different kinds of capital, for instance material possessions may define class relations, power and taste. Ncube et al. (2011) added to this, when they said that the African middle class is characterised first by income, and second (if at all) by a set of assumed universal middle class traits including choices and behaviours in relation to nuclear families, education, entrepreneurship, politics and consumption patterns that include bigger houses and cars, refrigerators, computers and mobile telephones. In essence people are perceived and recognised relative to economic capital, cultural capital and social capital, as well as symbolic capital such as prestige, reputation and renown which they possess. Bourdieu argues further that 'to speak of social space means that one cannot group just anyone with anyone while ignoring the fundamental difference, particularly economic and cultural ones' (Bourdieu, 1985: 199). This differentiation may be deciphered on the basis of the social space chosen for a wedding by celebrants. In most cases, venues, as a social space, reflect a coterie which is distinctive in terms of what they possess and how such spaces symbolically nurture their distinction.

Event centres as spaces of sociability are class-structured and needs-constructed. This is because the facilities enjoyed by those who hire big venues are totally different from those who, despite having a mammoth crowd attending the event, are limited by finances and therefore may have to settle for small spaces which cause discomfort to guests. We observed that an open field in a public school may be used for a wedding. Usually, this costs around N20,000 (\$133.3) to N50,000 (\$333.3) depending on the size of the field. A lot is therefore put into budgeting for venues. However, while intending couples may desire using a particular event centre, they have to book ahead otherwise it may not be available due to competition over space. Although the number of expected guests may influence the choice of event centres in relation to capacity, the ability to pay may limit such ambition to small halls. Depending on the time of event, intending couples may have to contend with availability of event centres if their event falls within the peak social months of October, November and December when most event centres may have been fully booked. Since intending users must show commitment to usage by paying in advance, it becomes difficult for those who come late. When event centres are fully booked, couples may be forced instead to use available open fields in public schools where they hire canopies and chairs. However, hiring chairs, tables and canopies are included in the service packages of some event centres. In relation to price, those who conduct their weddings on open fields are lowly rated in terms of their economic and social status. Hence, the size, cost, location and the aesthetics of an event centre have symbolic social meaning for both the economic and social status of the celebrant. This is true, as Bourdieu (1989: 20) notes that through the distribution of properties, the social world presents itself, objectively, as a symbolic system which is organised according to the logic of difference. He avers that 'social space tends to function as a symbolic space, a space of lifestyles and status within groups characterized by different lifestyles'. This lifestyle is now being craved by intending couples as nobody wants to be left out; even those who cannot afford expensive halls choose halls that may not suit their pockets. As they strive to be included, James (2014) shows how the consumption of highly valued things, hitherto considered as the preserve of the middle class and rich, puts borrowers in post-apartheid South Africa into deeper problems of debt repayment.

Event centres may be categorised into three main types, a classification mostly influenced by the price and the facilities offered. We categorised halls with a cost range of less than a hundred thousand to about a hundred and fifty thousand naira (\$666-\$1,000) as small; those within the range of two hundred thousand to three hundred and fifty thousand naira (\$1,333-\$2,333) are categorised as medium halls; while the big halls range between four hundred to six hundred thousand naira (\$2,666-\$4,000). Usage of a particular event centre says much about the social class of the celebrants. This explains why some members of the upper class, the rich, the 'powerful' individuals, the executive class and the elite patronise expensive event centres for various events just to

make a statement and show their affluence. Event centre managers of the big halls reported that taste for luxury, mostly present in the seemingly expensive halls, is mostly embraced by the high calibre individuals in the society (religious organisations, and government officials as well as corporate organisations) who patronise them. Event centres owned by churches, which are often in the same vicinity with the church, are cheaper and mainly patronised by members of the church. Patronising a church facility is rational as members are given waivers or a price concession:

We have corporate bodies that use our halls and some individuals not minding whether they are members of the church or not have more weddings here we have not been doing any form of marketing but people are using our hall. The reason I think is because people that have used the hall often introduce it to others and we have good security here too. (IDI/Male/Manager /18 July)

Irrespective of the number of anticipated guests to grace a wedding, cost of the venue is central. This hinges on affordability. The cost of the hall to a large extent determines the category of people that will choose it. The most expensive hall in Ibadan metropolis goes for one million naira only (\$5,076) and it is mostly patronised by people of distinction and class. A highly placed individual in the society with influential friends and relatives would want an event centre that befits his/her social status and as such will choose an expensive hall and also hire a high profile event planner for the occasion. Associates of political leadership may build gigantic halls to attract patronage from government. This social capital-network is also used to secure spaces within the shortest period of time for use as an event hall:

Individuals and government officials patronise us, what I know is that people want to use this facility for their occasion and if they can afford it, why not? The place is beautiful; we have enough parking space and good customer service. (IDI/Male/Manager/14 June)

Another respondent opined:

Different people patronise us, but you know there are several halls in town, for you to come to use our hall you must be someone that has good taste as such would not mind the cost. It's just three hundred and fifty thousand naira N350, 000 (\$2,500). (IDI/Male/Event Centre Manager/4 October)

Big halls are for 'big people' who have taste for luxury and spaces which equate their social standing within the system of economic and social stratification. They have carved social and economic niches for themselves, and therefore must continue to distinguish themselves from the rest and show what makes them like their coterie. Their action concerns a system of individual class perception, production of practices and appreciation which Bourdieu (1989: 19) calls 'Habitus'. Habitus expresses the social position in which it was elaborated. Consequently, it generates practices and representations which are available for classification, which are objectively differentiated; however, they are immediately perceived as such only by those agents who possess the code, the classificatory schemes necessary to understand their social meaning. Habitus thus implies a 'sense of one's place' but also a 'sense of the place of others'. In like manner, celebrants carry with them a sense of distinction of their place within the social world and on the basis of objective perception, identify and nurture the practices that distinctively portray such a group by their conspicuous consumption.

First, it presupposes that taste (or habitus) as a system of schemes of classification, is objectively referred, via the social conditionings that produced it, to a social condition; agents classify themselves, expose themselves to classification, by choosing, in conformity with their taste, different attributes (clothes, types of food, drinks, sports and friends) that go well together and that go well with them or, more exactly, suit their position. To be more precise, they choose, in the space of

available goods and services, goods that occupy a position in this space homologous to the position they themselves occupy in social space. It is therefore not by sheer coincidence that the conspicuous consumption of event centres reflects status. Wheatcroft (1985) explains that whether rich or poor, many had bought into an idealised lifestyle that surrendered unreservedly to the world of *things* such as wealth, purchase of luxury goods and conspicuous display. For instance, the patronage of a particular type of hall is structured along objective class construction and the subjective expectations of what should be when a class of people in the society are celebrating the weddings of their sons and daughters. Hence, the big halls are more patronised by the upper and middle classes. As a symbolic space of class reflections, big halls have high quality facilities like a large and beautiful stage, assorted lightening, exquisite seats which are probably imported, a large and beautiful edifice and are fully air-conditioned, while a few of them were observed to have good parking spaces and security. The medium halls tend to be smaller and as such take a lesser number of guests; usually these halls have giant fans in place of air conditioners, enough parking spaces and security to control traffic. The smaller halls mostly have plastic seats, small fans and most times no security. It is pertinent to state here that most of these small halls are owned and managed by churches. Small halls may also be built by cooperative societies as an investment to generate revenue for the welfare of their members. Their entrances are small or choky with limited exit points.

Bourdieu (1989: 17) argues that agents are distributed in the social space according to the overall volume of capital they possess and in line with the structure of their capital. That is, the relative weight of the different species of capital, economic and cultural, in the total volume of their assets. A social space is so constructed that agents who occupy similar or neighbouring positions are placed in similar conditions and subjected to similar conditionings, and therefore have every chance of having similar dispositions and interests, and thus of producing practices that are themselves similar. The dispositions acquired in the position occupied imply an adjustment to this position, what Goffman (1959) calls the 'sense of one's place'. It is this sense of one's place which, in interactions, leads people to keep to their common place, and the others to 'keep their distance', to 'maintain their rank', and to 'not get familiar'. This sense of one's place, and the affinities of habitus experienced as sympathy or antipathy, are at the basis of all forms of cooptation, friendships, love affairs, marriages, associations, and so on.

## Conclusion

This study examined the emerging culture of event centres consumption in Ibadan. Traditionally, major events such as burials, naming ceremonies, birthdays, chieftaincy celebrations and weddings are usually conducted within the compound of the celebrants or within the families' compound, but modernisation and the changing taste and needs of customers have made such traditional means of event celebrations archaic. This growing trend of event centre culture is fast becoming a norm among the rich and upper middle classes. Again, most weddings and other social celebrations are increasingly making use of event centres because of the associated benefits including convenience and symbolic status of space construction. While modernity, and high patronage accounted for the growth of event centre business in Ibadan, its consumption is laced with social meanings.

Event centre consumption for wedding celebrations does more than guarantee the conveniences of both the celebrants and the guests; it also boosts their social status and meets their self-actualisation and esteem needs. This is because consumption of event centres does not only satisfy the material needs but also social needs like prestige of the consumer. Consumption may be driven by self-expression (Belk, 1988), although consumers have two competing social needs of being distinct and similar. Bagwell and Bernhein (1996) aver that consumers may engage in conspicuous consumption to signal their wealth. This may be true as evident in the high prices paid by users for

event centres with accompanying services; the urge to be unique causes 'snobs' to pursue their uniqueness in paying more for a common product. Nagel and Holden (2002) argue that exclusivity adds to the objective value of a product. However, as Bernheim (1994) contends, when status is important relative to intrinsic utility, individuals conform to a single standard of behaviour, despite heterogeneous underlying preferences.

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### Note

1. Old school connotes hitherto popular cultural traits that are contemporaneously deemed as values of the past. Hence, within the context of this study, conducting wedding ceremonies within the confines of the family compound is deemed 'old school', while event centres reflect the modern construct; depicting prestige and class of the couple and their families.

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# Cuba's Defence of Angola against Pretoria and Washington: Big Successes and Great Costs

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## Abstract

Cuba's long military commitment to Angola resulted in two great victories that saved the country from catastrophic defeat and in the end initiated profound regional change. But **long warfare** also helped to entrench a heavy, elitist authoritarianism which served as a **platform** for deep presidentialist corruption. An 'oligarchy' enjoys great wealth while simultaneously ignoring the basic needs of the people.

## Keywords

Presidentialism, kleptocracy, corruption, Carlotta, Cuito Cuanavale

Cuba's initial intervention into Angola was triggered by the success of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal, a highly popular uprising by the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) against a fascist system which had endured for 50 years: the name came from the flowers with which the people of Lisbon greeted their liberators. One of the immediate aims of the soldiers on 25 April 1974 was colonial liberation, for they knew from direct experience that Portugal's wars in Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and Angola were unwinnable, immoral and wasteful. They, and a newly energised people, believed that colonial independence and democratisation at home were integrated.<sup>1</sup> Precipitous, sometimes ill-considered political change followed. On 10 May 1975 the last Portuguese governor fled Angola – at night on a darkened warship from Luanda – and the country became independent the next day under the MPLA, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola, unready for power. Hundreds of thousands of white Angolans were then fleeing the country, taking a large part of the semi-educated population with them (George, 2005: 91 and Birmingham, 2006).<sup>2</sup>

The new government's physical control was precarious and on 14 October, South African forces invaded from Namibia (then South West Africa). Challenged also by rival nationalist movements, the most significant of which was UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) led by Jonas Savimbi. South Africa was actually encouraged to invade by the United States, with both countries sharing exaggerated fears of Soviet expansionism: George (2005: 68–69) refers to regular meetings between the CIA and Pretoria's state security (BOSS). The Secretary of State,

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Henry Kissinger, had overseen the overthrow of the elected Marxist government of Salvador Allende in Chile in September 1973, and in late 1975, as Pawson (2014: 165) says, he was 'determined to destroy the MPLA'. The rapid northwards advance of South African forces threatened Luanda, where the MPLA's presence was both tenuous and vital to its legitimacy.

### **'Black Carlotta'**

On 3 November MPLA's politburo met in emergency session and unanimously approved the proposal by Agostinho Neto, party leader and unelected state president, to request immediate and massive reinforcements from Havana. Cuba's response, says George (2005), came within hours, with President Fidel Castro agreeing after consultations with his most trusted colleagues including his brother, Defence Minister Raul Castro. Operation Carlotta was created in commemoration of 'Black Carlotta', the leader of a slave rebellion that began in November 1843. The symbolism was potent as Cuban multi-racial troops challenged the apartheid forces (George, 2005: 77).<sup>3</sup>

Tremendous efforts were required to create and establish forces to defend Luanda and repel the enemy. Some 30,000 troops, with heavy artillery and tanks, would be sent, including one of Cuba's newest weapons, the BM-21 missile launcher, capable of firing salvoes of 122 mm missiles over 8 miles. Havana also despatched a battalion of MININT (Ministry of the Interior) Special Forces: an elite unit of highly educated, loyal, professional and entirely volunteer troops. The distance to be travelled was some 6000 miles and Cuban air transport was limited, testing the country's improvisation capacities to the limit.

Near midnight on 8 November, two Bristol Britannias arrived in Luanda with the first MININT troops, and the first BM-21 batteries arrived on the night of 9 to 10 November, both great morale boosters for the MPLA. Until then the capital was defended by the lightly armed 9th Brigade Motorised Infantry of FAPLA (Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola), the MPLA's army. Heavy equipment like T-34/54 tanks was sent directly from the Soviet Union to avoid transshipment delays. Cuban personnel then instructed Angolans in their use. Soviet involvement in the launching of Carlotta, George (2005: 79) believes, was limited. The operation was under Castro's direct, personal control. He reportedly spent 14 hours a day in the operations room under Havana's Plaza de la Revolution, and senior veterans subsequently attested to his detailed knowledge of the battlefield. He wielded 'a commanding influence over the Cuban operation at every stage' (George, 2005: 79, 98).

The impact of Cuba's experienced and committed forces was immediate. The Battle of Ebo 300 km south of the capital on 23 November was for Pawson (2014) a 'turning point' in the war for Angola, in its first, vital, defensive stage – final victory had to wait until 1988 to 1989 at Cuito Cuanavale. When the last South African invading forces withdrew 'defeated and humiliated' in late March 1976, a big victory was achieved: the apartheid army, supported by the United States (and its African proxies like Joseph Mobutu in Zaire), were defeated by a 'small socialist island and an African liberation movement'. Soon after, Soweto erupted. Castro called Carlotta 'that glorious page in our revolutionary history' (Pawson, 2014: 240).

Glejeses (2013) offers additional detail. In July 1975, Washington and Pretoria both began covert action in Angola, supplying weapons and instruction to MPLA's rivals. Kissinger believed that success here would provide a boost for Washington's prestige in the wake of its collapse in Vietnam a few months earlier. The United States 'urged Pretoria to intervene'. MPLA resistance crumbled, and South Africa would have seized the capital had not Castro decided on 4 November to respond to Neto's appeal. 'The evidence is clear...the South Africans invaded first, and the Cubans responded.'<sup>4</sup> The Cuban forces, despite their initial inferiority in numbers and weapons, 'halted the South African onslaught'. All Cuban soldiers then and later were volunteers, and

service in the internationalist cause was popular. Their intervention was a unilateral operation designed in great haste. It took two months for Moscow to begin to assist the Cuban airlift. Castro sent troops because of his commitment to 'the most beautiful cause', the struggle against apartheid (Gleijeses, 2013: 28–31).<sup>5</sup>

## Cuba's quagmire

Cuba's two great military victories in Angola, Carlotta outside Luanda and Cuito Cuanavale in the south, each came like bookends at the beginning and at the end of its sixteen years' engagement in the country. In the build-up to the latter battle in 1987 to 1988, Cuba experienced setbacks and frustrations. Some of these were due to the inadequacies of Soviet military planning and the weaknesses of FAPLA. In August 1985, the Soviets and FAPLA launched Operation Second Congress in the south from Cuito Cuanavale towards Mavinga. Some 6000 troops in four heavily armed brigades were accompanied by 60 Soviet advisers. Their advance was stopped near the Lomba river under the impact of heavy South African artillery and air power – notably, among other aircraft, eight Canberra bombers and ten Mirage fighters. About 1500 troops were killed, 1300 were wounded, and great quantities of materiel were lost. For Cuba, the immediate question was not whether 'the wrongheaded offensive should resume', but whether the remaining brigades could be rescued (Gleijeses, 2013: 354–359).

There is a first-hand account by a Soviet adviser-interpreter of the severity of battle at this time and place. Igor Zhdarkin's diaries (2008) are not always reliable – they are marred by racist comment – but they are evocative of the intensity of the fighting: 'We did not see it even in Afghanistan'. Many Soviet specialists serving here in combat brigades had fought earlier in Afghanistan. One said: 'When the South African artillery began to fire I felt particularly terrified. Then came the air force and we had very little room on the ground. But the most horrible was when the Angolans turned to flight and began to throw away their equipment.' During the crossing of the Lomba River, the 47th brigade reportedly lost 18 tanks, 20 armoured troop carriers, 4 Osa-AK mobile anti-aircraft rocket launchers and one P-49 radar station. 'There was terrible panic and confusion all around' (Zhdarkin, 2008: 260–261).

Then in July 1987, FAPLA, supported by the Soviets, launched Operation Salute to October: as Cuban strategists critically noted, it was 'a carbon copy' of the failed Second Congress, now with 114,000 soldiers. Further heavy fighting and the loss of men and materiel followed at Lomba. By the end of October 1987, the first phases of the South African Defence Force's (SADF) Operation Moduler, involving the destruction of the FAPLA forces as they retreated towards Cuito Cuanavale, were well underway. South African commanders felt that Cuito Cuanavale might fall easily. Moduler was 'the biggest single operation' by SADF ground and air forces since World War Two, and its generals were cock-a-hoop (Gleijeses, 2013: 393–402).

For Mikhail Gorbachev in Moscow, Angola was then of relatively low importance. He was fixated on good relations with Washington, withdrawal from Afghanistan and managing change within Soviet communism at home and in Central Europe. Cuba was well aware that it was essentially alone and highly vulnerable. Ronald Reagan retained his visceral hostility towards Havana, and his landslide presidential victory in November 1984 deepened their anxieties about an assault. The Cuban leadership was well aware that the United States might attack the island with ease and impunity, utilising its immense naval air power (Gleijeses, 2013: 314–316, 523).

Another big factor prompting change in Cuba's Angolan strategy was the patent failure of what Gleijeses (2013) calls its 'dream of a socialist Angola'. By around 1986, the government of President Eduardo dos Santos was mired in corruption and failing to meet the basic needs of its own people (discussed below). Angola was then a quagmire for Cuba. Some adjustments had been

made: in 1979 Cuba had stopped participating in the fighting against UNITA, and around the same time it had agreed with dos Santos to reduce the numbers of its aid workers in the country, which fell from some 7000 to about 4000. But the broad outcomes of these cuts were probably negative, since senior Cuban advisers ‘had provided a bulwark against corruption’ (Gleijeses, 2013: 109–110). Militarily it was in a bind, manning a defensive line that it and the Soviet Union had created some 300 km north of the Namibian border, running 700 km from the port of Nambeto to the town of Minogue in the east. The South African air force was then stronger than Cuba’s, and it operated from adjacent modern airports in Namibia. The line barred Pretoria’s northwards advance but failed to prevent Pretoria’s incursions into southern Angola (Gleijeses, 2013: 110, 377).

## **Cuito Cuanavale**

In late 1987 and early 1988, Cuba’s air capacity in the south was reinforced and extended. According to George (2005), ‘mixed Cuban and Angolan construction teams worked around the clock’ to get two new airstrips operational. The first asphalt runway at Cahama, over a mile and a half long, was completed by early June 1988 then extended further. A radar network covering the whole of southern Angola was installed, linking together 150 SAM-8 missile batteries and ‘effectively bringing South Africa’s air superiority to an end’. Over a 14-month period, the Soviet Union had also supplied FAPLA with MiG-23 fighters, Mi-24 assault helicopters and T-62 tanks (George, 2005: 183, 237).

On 15 November 1987, Fidel Castro, his brother Raul and seven other top generals considered the possibility that Cuito Cuanavale might fall, and that the forces that had retreated there could be lost. Key decisions were reached and in great secrecy, Operation ‘the 31st Anniversary of the Landing of the Granma’ began. The first step, according to the Cuban military, was ‘the dispatch of our most experienced combat pilots’, who immediately began to support FAPLA in Cuito Cuanavale. The first troops left Havana by air on 23 November and a substantial build-up soon followed. Two ships ‘loaded with tanks and anti-aircraft weapons’ reached the port of Lobito on 11 and 12 December. In November 1987 there were around 38,000 Cuban troops in Angola, but 55,000 by August 1988. Above all, it was the decision to send more and better arms that eventually won the day at Cuito Cuanavale (Gleijeses, 2013: 407–410, 421).

It seems clear that the Soviet Union supplied Angola with the bulk of its weaponry: Gleijeses (2013) says that they sold weapons totalling around \$6b to the country between 1976 and 1988, and George (2005:281) adds that Soviet military aid to the MPLA totalled \$15b by 1988. But Carlotta and Cuito were largely Cuban initiatives. For Gleijeses, Castro defied Leonid Brezhnev in 1975 in launching Carlotta, and he defied Gorbachev when he reinforced Cuito Cuanavale in November 1987 (Gleijeses, 2013: 13–15). These reinforcements were considerable. In a ninety-day period from November, Cuban planes and ships ferried 218 tanks, 122 armoured cars, 112 artillery pieces, along with other heavy equipment, and 7500 soldiers. As George (2005: 420) puts it: ‘the Soviets accepted the facts: it was a Cuban campaign, the Cubans alone would direct it’.

Fidel Castro wrote to dos Santos: ‘the majority of our troops are in the south, we are responsible for these men, and we will not allow anyone to dictate a strategy that is wrong or foolhardy’. This caution was apparently directed at the Soviet Union and its costly failures in operations Second Congress and Salute to October. He later told Joe Slovo, general secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP), a man known for his pro-Soviet thinking, ‘We and the Angolans were in agreement [on the defence of Cuito Cuanavale], and the Soviets had nothing to do with it – nothing, not even to offer an opinion’ (Gleijeses, 2013: 410).

The fighting which started east of Cuito Cuanavale in November 1987 evolved over five months into ‘the second largest military confrontation in African history’ after El-Alamein in 1942. Cuban

pilots were at the forefront of the fighting, and George (2005) offers a glimpse of what it was like when a dozen Cuban MiG-23s, on 27 June, were approaching the Ruacana-Calueque hydroelectric dam:

skimming the tops of trees at over 600 miles per hour...The first wave flew in over the dam, one pair... providing cover for a second which dropped six parachute-retarded bombs, severely damaging the bridge and nearby sluice-gates. A second pair bombed the power plant and engine rooms, while a seventh MiG... dropped eight bombs on the fresh-water pipeline to Ovamboland and SADF bases in northern Namibia, blowing it to pieces...the last bomb killed eleven South African conscripts who had gathered to watch the attack. With the hydroelectric installations engulfed in flames, the Cuban MiGs flew back over Calueque—one pilot rolling his aircraft and flying inverted over the dam.' One aircraft was hit by South African guns and subsequently crashed. (George, 2005: 245)

When Cuba acquired air superiority over the battlefield around the end of 1987, it neutralised South Africa's prized long-range artillery: it meant that 'every shot fired by a G-5 offered the Cubans an opportunity to locate the G-5 guns so that the MiGs could destroy them' (Gleijeses, 2013: 423–424). At the end of June, the SADF's attack on Cuito Cuanavale, in the words of 32 Battalion's Col. Jan Breytenbach, was 'brought to a grinding and definite halt' (Kasrils, 2008).

A de facto cessation of hostilities ensued and the peace process, initiated much earlier by Chester Crocker, entered its final phases. Cuba was now a full participant in the negotiations on the implementation of Resolution 435 on independence for Namibia. Having gained the upper hand in battle, the Cubans, says Gleijeses (2013: 479), 'imposed their will at the negotiating table'. The complete withdrawal of South African forces from Angola would be completed not later than 1 September 1988. For its part, Cuba agreed to halt the advance of its troops towards the Namibian border.<sup>6</sup> Cuba was prepared to be magnanimous, the leader of its delegation declaring that 'nothing could be more honourable for Cuba than a withdrawal "of our own free will in the context of Resolution 435"' (George, 2005: 246–247). Namibia held free elections and became independent in March 1990. On 25 May 1991 the last Cuban troops boarded their aircraft for home.

Nelson Mandela recognised the depth and breadth of Cuba's commitment. Speaking in Havana in 1991, not long after his release from prison, he said that "without the defeat of Cuito Cuanavale our organisations would not have been legalised. The defeat of the racist army...made it possible for me to be with you today. Cuito Cuanavale marks the divide in the struggle for the liberation of southern Africa" (cited by Doherty, 2013).<sup>7</sup>

3800 Cuban's died in Angola, while about 10,000 were wounded, incapacitated or missing in action. It is estimated that nearly 5% of the Cuban population were involved in Angola in civil or military capacities between 1975 and 1991 (Gleijeses, 2013: 268, 282). In a speech to returning internationalists on 27 May 1991, Raul Castro declared that a total of 377,000 Cuban troops had served in Angola, as had another 50,000 civilians. Birmingham (2006: 324) feels that 'one would be hard pressed to find a single Cuban whose relative or friend had not served in Angola'.

## The entrenchment of an authoritarian ruling elite

Cuba's great military victories came at immense, ongoing cost to the Angolan people. Pawson (2014: 95) suggests plausibly, through one of her informants, that the MPLA 'was not ready' for independence in 1975. It was 'the success of the liberation movements in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, not Angola', that prompted the Carnation Revolution in Lisbon (Hodges, 2001: 9). The MPLA was formed in Luanda in 1956, but later 'was almost wiped out in the capital'. Most of its leaders were either detained by the Portuguese or went abroad. Guerrilla incursions from across the

country's borders began in the early 1960s (Hodges, 2004: 7), but the movement was divided by ethnicity, class and the gulf between the guerrillas fighting in the interior and the exiles in Congo-Brazzaville and elsewhere. A bigger barrier existed for the MPLA: 'The class and cultural gulf between its leaders and the mass of the Angolan people' (Pawson, 2014: 33), the former educated and 'assimilated', and the latter poor, uneducated and black. At the time of independence, 85% of Angolans were illiterate.

Agostinho Neto led the MPLA from 1962, and he typified these divisions. The son of a Methodist pastor, he was educated in a Methodist mission school, at high school in Luanda and at university in Portugal. At or soon after independence, Neto acquired predominance as the head of state, the party, the military, the Council of the Revolution: the so-called 'uncontested leader' (Pawson, 2014: 105). Although he had never faced a popular election, he was not to be challenged by anyone. In 1977 he vividly demonstrated his intolerance of dissent within the party.

Pawson's (2014) subject is 'Angola's forgotten massacre', eradicated from the national record and ignored or distorted by most foreign scholars. This eradication of the purges and killings that began in May 1977 and continued for around two years, means that key events and dates remain unclear. Known simply as *vinte e sete* (the 27th), precipitating events occurred earlier. On 21 May 1977, President Neto addressed thousands of party militants assembled in the Citadela in Luanda. He had come from a meeting of the Central Committee, he said, which had decided to expel Nito Alves and Jose Van Dunem (both former guerrillas). He was in uncompromising mood. 'There cannot be any factions inside the MPLA. Either you are of the MPLA or you are not. Whoever is not in agreement with us, get out' (Pawson, 2014: 175). Then on television on 27 May, he effectively initiated a purge and accompanying bloodbath of dissenting party members. There would be no time for trials or due process. "We are not going to rely on normal procedures; we will do what we want in the name of the People".<sup>8</sup>

Nito Alves had grown up in a rural village with no running water or electricity and spent eight years as a guerrilla. He had been a government minister and a member of the Central Committee since September 1974, but he was outside the ruling elite's social hierarchy. He was known as 'down to earth', and his speeches had focussed on poverty, inequalities and racism. Students, artists and musicians who had earlier supported MPLA and FAPLA tended to support Alves. In a confused series of events in late May focussed on Sambizanga, a shanty town prominent in the liberation war, on FAPLA's heroic 9th Brigade (which declared for Alves), and on Cuban assistance for Neto, an uncoordinated and ineffective uprising occurred by associates of Alves. Cuba had an established policy of protecting the ruling elite in its African allies from internal overthrow (George, 2005: 270) – not unlike Britain's policy towards Jomo Kenyatta in Kenya around independence (Good, 1968) – and Raul Castro instructed General Rafael Moracen, a distinguished commander of African descent, to ensure Neto's safety. Mayhem prevailed: the radio station and a prison were briefly seized, loyalist troops rampaged in Sambizanga, and six MPLA members were killed around 27 May. Cuban tanks supposedly destroyed some 100 houses in Sambizanga next day. Nito Alves' fate is not known, but it is believed that he was killed around this time. According to one of Pawson's informants, Agostinho Neto had already 'made up his mind to destroy those [in the MPLA who had fought] in the interior... It was he who wanted to destroy the so-called Nitistas, not the other way round' (Pawson, 2014: 67).<sup>9</sup>

Events support such a view. The Directorate for Information and Security (DISA) immediately swung into action after Neto's televised address. One informant said that 'entire families were wiped out', in total 'at least 80,000... you need to count the 9th Brigade, the women's brigade, the youth movement and a whole lot more' (Pawson, 2014: 168).

The purge and killings notably affected the MPLA. Membership fell from some 110,000 to 31,000 around 1980, and the Central Committee was reduced by a third.

A prominent informant and participant said that the Nitistas ‘were the first to kill’ in Sambizanga on the evening of 26 May. But ‘the reaction of the state was undeniably disproportionate’ (Pawson, 2014: 219). The impact of the long *vinte e sete* was greatest of all on the people. From 1977, ‘an intolerant dictatorship would rule, without compromises, from top to bottom’ (Pawson, 2014: 205).

## The power and wealth of the ruling ‘oilgarchy’

When Agostinho Neto died of cancer in Moscow on 17 September 1979, power passed directly to Jose Eduardo dos Santos by unanimous agreement in the Central Committee, again without benefit of a popular election. When elections occurred thirteen years later in September 1992, the process was distorted and the results stillborn. The two major parties competed under the apocryphal slogan: ‘MPLA Steals, UNITA Kills’;<sup>10</sup> Savimbi’s implicit message to voters was ‘vote for me or I’ll kill you’ – one also delivered by Renamo in Mozambique. MPLA won 54% of votes in the National Assembly, while 34% went to UNITA. In the presidential vote, dos Santos got 49.6% of votes, and Savimbi 40.1%. A second round was thus constitutionally required, but fighting resumed instead. A strong tendency, existent since the 1970s, towards the centralisation of power in the presidency was supplemented in the late 1980s by its personalisation in dos Santos, ensconced in Funtungo de Belas, his presidential compound outside Luanda (Hodges, 2004: 52–54).

Angola had formally abandoned Marxism-Leninism in 1990 to 1991. This had been the basis of the country’s ideology since 1976, and as Hodges (2004: 45–46) notes, no change in the top political leadership accompanied this shift. Rejection of Marxism, he suggests, led to a ‘moral void’ in government and society, where ‘there [wa]s no longer any sense of social obligation or solidarity’. But the void had earlier been embraced with the *vinte e sete*.

Enduring civil war well suited the ruling elite. It diverted attention from dictatorship, corruption and poverty, and offered a ready explanation for widespread failures and mismanagement.

A detailed study by Global Witness (2009) clarifies the inter-relationships. Corruption in Angola reveals state looting rivalling the worst in Africa. The process was ‘intimately tied’ to the conduct of the civil war, and ‘perpetrated by the highest-level elites for personal and political gain’. The people have had to pay ‘a terrible price’, including more than 500,000 killed between 1992 to 1998 alone, some 480 children dying each day of preventable causes, and three million entirely dependent on emergency food aid (denied to them by the Angolan government).

The development of Angola’s oil industry included the opening up and sale of valuable offshore blocks. This process involved the so-called awarding of signature bonuses, and the value of these ‘increased dramatically for the attribution of ultra-deep blocks’. The key decisions here were taken ‘at the highest level, and licence awards [we]re skewed more towards a political rather than a technical basis’. The average of bonus payments with respect to just two blocks (17 and 21) in January 1999 was \$17.6m. The oil companies involved appeared to have ‘massively under-estimated the up-front demands of the Presidency’. Global Witness (2009) reported that around \$400–500m in signature bonus payments for three other blocks (31 to 33), ‘disappeared into the Presidency for clandestine arms purchases’.

This and related transactions amounted to the robbery of almost a third of all state revenues in 2001. Some \$1.4 billion was missing. The rulers ‘contempt for the desperate plight of the ordinary people’ was manifest when the UN ‘had to scrape together’ \$200 million in vital emergency food aid: Global Witness (2009) noted that 3.2 million people then required food aid. Angolans were being dispossessed in four decades of civil war. The conflict was ‘deliberately exploited’ through ‘highly organised economic abuses’ involving the laundering of state assets through parallel budgets, over-priced arms deals and deliberate indebtedness through the mortgaging of future oil production. This was sustained by ‘blaming the war for the resultant failures of the state’. Almost

every item that was consumed in the war against UNITA ‘serve[d] to enrich Angola’s ruling elite’ and their network of bankers, brokers, facilitators and bagmen. Civil conflict was ‘deliberately exploited to enrich the ruling elite’, and rising oil revenues were diverted straight into parallel budgets of the shadow state.’

After the demise of the Soviet Union, dos Santos turned to France as an arms supplier, to meet UNITA’s renewed challenge after the failed elections. The government borrowed over \$3.55b by mortgaging future oil revenues at high interest rates in one year, 2000 to 2001, alone. This was provided by various banks without procedures existing to ensure that funds were correctly spent. Global Witness (2002) believed that at least \$1.4b was diverted by the ruling elite (Global Witness, 2002: 3–5, 10–12, 34–36, 50, 59).

A later report by the same body offers additional points on the political economy of oil. Government in Angola ‘broke down completely’ during the long civil war, and after 2002 ‘remained highly secretive.’ Global Witness (2009) nonetheless states that mismanagement and corruption in the country’s public finances ‘are well documented’. Analyses by them and by the IMF indicated that between 1997 and 2001, an annual average of about \$1.7b was unaccounted for.

The economy revolves around oil. It accounted for over 80% of government income and in April 2008, Angola overtook Nigeria as Africa’s largest producer. For this advocacy group Global Witness 2009, ‘the fundamental problem with transparency over Angola’s oil revenues centre[d] around the multiple roles of Sonangol’, the state oil company. Sonangol was a tax-paying oil company and ‘a concessionaire for the government’, handing oil revenues. This role constituted a significant conflict of interest. For Ricardo de Oliveira of Oxford University, Sonangol constituted ‘the centrepiece in the management of [what he called] Angola’s successful failed state’. This role highlighted the fact that a nominally failed state can survive and indeed thrive amidst widespread disruption and human destitution. ‘Sonangol’s success had primarily been at the service of the presidency and its rentier ambitions’, according to de Oliveira.

Sonangol was used by the authorities ‘as an off-budget system’ which ‘allowed billions of dollars of national oil wealth to simply disappear from the state’s opaque finances’. Loans accruing to Sonangol were also used to pay off some of the bilateral debt run up by the state. Russia, heir to the Soviet Union, was apparently unlucky. Of an oil-backed loan that was supposed to be used to meet a debt to Russia of \$1.5b, only \$162m reached the Russian finance ministry.

The people’s destitution accompanied the rising oil wealth and the elite kleptocracy. Into the 21st century, Angola had the highest rate of child mortality relative to national wealth in the world. The average Angolan could expect to live to 41.7 years, one of the lowest rates in the world, and 70% of people still lived on less than two dollars a day. Angola still ranked 160 out of around 171 on the United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Index, unchanged for a decade despite billions of dollars of oil revenue (Global Witness, 2009: 91–102).

In power for some 35 years, having never faced a free and open election, the constitution was changed in 2010 to provide for the indirect election of the president – the leader of the majority party would automatically become president – and to enable President dos Santos to remain in office for a further two 5-year terms, effectively another 13 years.<sup>11</sup>

Legislative elections in August 2012 showed weakening support for the ruling party and its leader. Turnout was 62.77%, the MPLA got 71.84% of votes, representing a fall of 9.7% over its 1992 vote. UNITA gained 18.66%, a rise of some 8%. But the abstention rate was 37.2%, a trebling of the earlier level of 12.5%. Dos Santos was thus re-elected president, with Manuel Vicente as his Vice President (Human Rights Watch, 2010; Wikipedia, 2014).

Research by Rafael Marques (2010) reveals some outstanding features of Angola’s ‘shadow’ or personal-presidential state. He points to the existence of a ‘triumvirate’ at the top of the political economy. Its members act in the president’s name and they function, he says, as ‘the epicentre of

corruption' in the country. One is the Minister of State and head of the Military Bureau in the presidency, General Manuel Helder Vieira Dias Junior, also known as Kopelipa. He is 'responsible for co-ordinating the defence and security sectors of the state'. Another is General Leopolddino 'Dino' Fragoso do Nascimento, the president's head of communications. The third is Manuel Vincente, once chief executive of Sonangol, then a Minister of State for economic coordination. Vincente was 'the link that connects the considerable powers accumulated by the generals to Sonangol' and to his own position as one of the most powerful members of the MPLA's Political Bureau, with the sensitive task of 'overseeing the private business dealings of the ruling party'. Marques (2010) summarises Sonangol's position as the country's biggest company, the state's major source of revenue, and the 'main source of illegal self-enrichment for the top state officials'.

The triumvirate indicates how dos Santos has 'systematically weakened the state and its institutions to concentrate more power around himself'. The President only gives real power to figures of his choosing, regardless of the post. Vincente, for example, is an electronics engineer by training, a friend of the President, and as *The Economist* (1 September 2012) noted, the one who turned Sonangol into an energy giant with an annual turnover of \$14b. Dos Santos' cult of personality 'overwhelms the functionality of state institutions'. Among the excessive powers conferred on Kopelipa was the right to represent the President of the Republic, although constitutionally such rights adhere to the Vice President and the president of the National Assembly. Kopelipa has been the chief negotiator for oil-backed loans from China and contracts with its companies, estimated to value around ten billion dollars. China was then Angola's biggest investor and main trading partner.

Rafael Marques (2010) is inclined to see the levels of corruption in the presidency as now 'unsustainable', and the heavy involvement of the presidential security apparatus both explains this existential problem and serves as a bulwark for dos Santos. He emphasises that the dealings of Generals Kopelipa and Dino and Manuel Vincente can only thrive in a society where 'the public are fighting for basic survival, thus paying little or no attention to [what he calls] the functionality of the state.'

Nepotism is another conspicuous feature of dos Santos' kleptocratic presidency. Isobel dos Santos was revealed in 2014 to be Africa's second richest woman, with personal wealth of around \$3.5b. She was the first-born child of the president, and aged then around 40. Louise Redvers said that she possessed 'a vast portfolio of investments' in Angola, Portugal, Mozambique and Cape Verde, and owned banks, media and telecoms companies, and other assets. When she married a well-connected Congolese art collector in 2003, there were reports that the celebrations cost an estimated \$4m. She was perhaps the leading example of the financial success of those with connections to the *Futungo*, as the president's coterie is known (Redvers, 2012; Smith, 2013).

Another prominent legatee is Jose Filomeno dos Santos, the eldest son of the president, chair of Angola's sovereign wealth fund, the Fundo Soberano de Angola (FSDEA). It was founded in late 2012, with capital of some \$5b. Observers noted the 'blurred lines' and 'confusion' about FSDEA and its declared core aims: in one breath it is about financial assets, but in the next it seems to be about investment in hotels to attract business to the country. For Elias Isaac, local programme manager for the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, FSDEA had nothing to do with savings for the future, it was 'pure business to serve the interests of the president and his family' (Redvers, 2014).

## **Protest without popular organisation**

Even symbolic protest was hazardous in Angola. One could literally die for a song. A young singer was killed by the presidential guard in what Marques (December 2013) called 'a ritual

of violence', in December 2003. Arsenio Sebastiao, aka Cherokee, was a car washer in Mussulo's Quay, a few hundred metres from Futungo de Belas, and as he waited for work, he sang some lines from a critical rap by the Angolan group MCK: 'Brothers what freedom have they given us if political arrogance does not cease? Who speaks the truth ends up in a coffin. What sort of democracy is this? After colonialism ended they gave us almost half a century of misrule'. A group of presidential guards (identified by armbands with the distinctive UGP (Presidential Guard Unit) manhandled Cherokee and started to kick and slap him all over the body. As people reportedly tried to stop the beating, one of the guards called for reinforcements and 45 UGP jumped out of a military truck. A sergeant ordered that the youth be taken to the nearby beach. First-hand witness accounts appeared in the weekly paper *A Capital*. Cherokee was dragged to the water, where the soldiers stabbed him and tied his hands with bootlaces. His friend, Eduardo Semedo, said that the soldiers repeatedly pushed his head into the water. Only when they were certain that the youth was dead did they desist. 'The wolf's guards killed my son', his mother, Ines Sebastiao, kept screaming. MCK said that this tragedy 'will mark my career forever...It could only happen in a country like Angola'. A cartoon accompanying the report in *A Capital* carried the caption: 'Don't you know that the presidential guard is also the president?' (Marques, 2003).

The near absence of popular political organisation leaves the people defenceless in the face of a dominant, intolerant presidency and unable to press their case. But wide protest still took place in 2012. Since January, the authorities had cracked down on five anti-government rallies and arrested at least 46 protesters in the attempt to 'curb an incipient protest movement promoted by youth groups and others'. Protests and clashes occurred in Luanda and Benguela in January, February and March, and in Cabinda in early February 'police violently attacked striking health workers'. Some were directly political. On 10 March, youth groups and unnamed opposition parties in Luanda and Benguela called for protests over the appointment of Suzana Ingles as chairperson of the National Electoral Commission: she was said to lack the legal requirements for the position, and as a member of the MPLA's women's league, also lacked impartiality. A few days earlier, unknown individuals in Luanda intimidated and beat several protest leaders, injuring three of them. In early March in or near Luanda's city-centre, unknown people – possibly including armed police in civilian clothes – attacked and seriously injured Filomeno Vieira Lopes, described as a senior leader of the opposition party Bloco Democratico, and Ermelinda Freitas, 'the party's municipal secretary'. A second assault on Freitas, by 'seven people, one of them masked', took place on 23 March in her own home. Assaults were sometimes large scale. On 3 February, public order and rapid intervention police armed with assault rifles dispersed a crowd of around 50 youth and local residents who were protesting against harsh treatment meted out to people in Cacuaco district demanding 'water and electricity' (Human Rights Watch, 2012).

'Discontent [wa]s rising' through the year. 'Hundreds' of young people had 'protested against dos Santos's lengthy tenure'. In recent months, war veterans, normally loyal to the MPLA, had taken to the streets over the non-payment of their pensions. The government responded with promises along with force. Days before the August poll, it said it would spend billions of dollars to improve electricity supply in the face of almost daily blackouts. Where protests were identified with opposition groups, the government had responded with 'lethal force, arbitrary arrests and unfair trials' (*The Economist*, 2012).

Defamation laws were in the service of the state and top military men. General Kopelipa and 'six other generals and senior officials, all shareholders of the private security company Teleservice and the diamond company Sociedade Mineira do Cuango', filed in January 2012 a defamation law suit against the anti-corruption and human rights campaigner Rafael Marques. He has been 'regularly threatened' for his careful documentation (Human Rights Watch, 2013).

Dos Santos had to hand strong military capacity, in and outside his triumvirate. Angola reputedly had one of the best trained and equipped armed forces in Africa. After Algeria, it had the largest military budget, estimated at \$6.1b in 2013. Trained by Russia, Cuba and Israel, its forces were, for instance, able to ‘airlift troops and materiel quickly’ (Roque, 2014). One of the functions of the triumvirate, consistent with *vinte e sete*, was defence of the presidency. But popular discontent was rising, the failures and self-interests of the rulers were long and glaring, and Paula Roque believed that the people’s forty-year-old ‘fear barrier’ had been ‘broken’ (cited in *The Economist*, 2012).

## Conclusion: Cuba and Angola

Cuba, a small island in the Caribbean, defeated an existential threat from Pretoria backed by Washington. Cuba was not a democracy and itself faced almost constant threat from American military power. Castro was not interested in democracy in Angola.

Neto was the leader of the external wing of the MPLA and a leading ‘assimilado’. He was disturbed by the strength of the movement’s internal wing, represented Around 1977 by the Nitistas, and he moved to crush them. They, not Neto, could Lay claim to majority black support. There was no popular election at independence and none before 1992. The claims of Angola’s elitist nationalists were based on a mythologised liberation struggle backed by military force. There were strong similarities here with Zimbabwe, Namibia and the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa based in Angola ca. 1960s-1990s. This article has not addressed the ANC leadership’s suppression of the rank and file of Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) in Angola beginning in the 1970s when Carlotta was underway and the ANC-SACP sought to stifle MK’s democratic aspirations, fuelled by the Soweto uprisings. Oliver Tambo informed Castro around late 1976 that the ANC had ‘a problem’: the thousands of new recruits demanded military training and a quick Return to fight apartheid. The ANC lacked such capacities, and the youths would in be left in the camps, to ‘protest vehemently’ against the ANC’s leadership (Gleijeses, 2013: 337). MK’s impact on Pretoria was negligible, the ANC was excluded from the negotiations on Namibia’s independence, and MK ended its days marooned in Uganda. The ANC-SACP elite pursued an illusionary but bloody Goal of People’s War into the early 1990s (Good, 2014: 79-100). Given their wealth and power, the dos Santos rulers created an atomised Angolan people forced to concentrate on physical survival. Nonetheless inchoate protests have widened since 2010. This may represent the breaking of ‘the fear barrier’ of the *vinte e sete*, not dissimilar perhaps to the start of the Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt where egregious brutality against weak individuals provoked a previously quiescent people (Good, 2014: 163-165). Angola’s dictatorship and corruption is the responsibility of Angolan Nationalist elites, not Castro or Gorbachev. Carlotta and Cuito Cuanavale were outstanding Cuban-Angolan achievements.

Oil wealth and the investments of foreign corporations created the economic foundations of the ruling ‘oligarchy’. The corporations and the MPLA wanted stability.

Wide and deep corruption was promoted by Sonangol, and a personalised presidentialism arose through the 1980s. The ruling elite’s self-enrichment was accompanied by their glaring contempt for the people’s needs.

The ruling ‘oiligarchy’ created an atomised people forced to concentrate on physical survival. Nonetheless inchoate protests have widened since circa 2010. This may represent the breaking of ‘the fear barrier’ of the *vinte e sete*. Some parallels may exist with the early ‘Arab Spring’ in Tunisia and Egypt, when egregious brutality against a weak individual provoked uprisings by a previously quiescent people (Good, 2014: 163–165). But the power of the presidency and the triumvirate remains strong, and it embraces the leading generals of the Armed Forces of Angola.

Angola's dictatorship and corruption was the responsibility of Angolan nationalist elites, not Castro or Gorbachev. Carlotta and Cuito Cuanavale were outstanding world-changing Cuban-Angolan victories.

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### Notes

1. The Carnation Revolution, MFA and the energies of the people are discussed in Good, 2014: 149–158.
2. Angola, unlike Mozambique, welcomed unskilled immigrants, and the country's education facilities were inadequate. At independence, 90 per cent of the Portuguese abruptly left, taking their property in crates and destroying what remained (Birmingham, 2006: 84–85, 95).
3. Birmingham offers some official demographics that suggest that Cuba's population around the 1950s was 51 per cent 'mulatto', 37 per cent white and 11 per cent black. He says that since 1959, the population, particularly in Havana, 'had grown markedly darker', with the flight of whites to Miami (2006, 325). These figures appear highly uncertain.
4. Despite the clear evidence, 'many scholars continue to distort [the interrelationship]' (Gleijeses, 2013).
5. Gleijeses (2013: 30) quotes Kissinger saying later that Castro 'was probably the most genuine revolutionary leader then in power'.
6. Cuba believed that Pretoria possessed nuclear weapons but that it would not use them as long as their land forces, advancing southwards since early March, did not enter Namibia. Perhaps to limit Cuba's capacities, Gorbachev had not delivered the range-extending fuel tanks that Havana had requested for its MiGs (Gleijeses, 2013: 428). He had also withheld the advanced MiG-29s, but they arrived in Havana in mid-1990, thanks to Castro's good relations with the Soviet military (George, 2005: 269).
7. But his weak understanding was exposed four years later when he described Jonas Savimbi, visiting Cape Town, as a 'key to peace' in Angola, who must be included in government in Luanda (Star, 18 May 1995). Savimbi's long destructiveness only ended when he was killed in an ambush in Moxico on 22 February 2002 (Hodges, 2004: 17; Gleijeses, 2013: 273).
8. Quotation of Luiza Silva Mendes, an academic informant of Pawson in London.
9. When Neto returned to Luanda for the first time in years in February 1975, he was 'horrified' to see how well-organised the interior forces were (Pawson, 2014: 67).
10. The public interpretation of the elections was not unreasonable: dos Santos' enrichment was beginning to rival Mobutu's and Nigeria's Sani Abacha, while Savimbi's savagery included incidents of 'entire families of UNITA dissidents, including children, being burned alive on bonfires' (Hodges, 2004: 51).
11. *The Economist* (2012) thought the amendment was designed to shield dos Santos from electoral embarrassment: a Gallup poll in 2011 had found that only 16% of Angolans approved of President dos Santos.

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# Hunger Amidst Plenty: Locating Vulnerability in a Resource-Rich Region in India

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## Abstract

This paper illustrates how politics on resource entitlement have historically shaped the vulnerable condition of people in Nuapada district (formerly Nawapara sub-division of Kalahandi district) of Orissa, India. It finds that the underutilisation of existing resources in the district, backed by loopholes in district administration, has widened the vulnerability conditions of local people. The collapse of the state command economy during post-economic reform and the subsequent withdrawal of welfare state from welfare activities, which opens space for elite groups and middlemen to exploit both resources and local people, have caused serious disruption in the development of the district as evident from the declining livelihood options and increasing distress migration. Thus there is a need to bring reform in equitable distribution of resources at the state level.

## Keywords

Hunger, India, Kalahandi/Nuapada, political economy, power, resource, vulnerability

## Introduction

Resource, either endowed by nature or human action, plays crucial roles in the livelihood of people. It is categorised as renewable, non-renewable, conventional or non-conventional, encompassing phenomena such as land, water, forest, public transports, education, infrastructure, hospitals, etc. The present development paradigm uses resources basically in terms of human resources, capital resources, natural resources, and institutional or community resources. The use of such resources in development framework shows that each resource influences the other. For example, human resources including population, skills, knowledge, and education influence the production capacity. Capital resources consist of the resources used in the production process and accumulation of assets such as investment, reserves, technology, and livestock. The natural resources such as land, forest, water, and other common property resources have a larger impact on rural livelihood and contribute direct employment to around 0.82 billion rural poor over the world. For many living in

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rural areas, natural resources are only assets available for their survival, often as a household coping strategy (Shah, 2009; Streeten, 1994; Sugden, 1993; WRC, 2002). The poor in India also earn 20–25% of their income directly from the natural resources (Parikh, 1998) and about 10 million workers are directly or indirectly engaged in forest-related activities only (Sarap, 2004). Various state-induced institutional resources and community-initiated resources are also evident in many developing countries meant for enhancing the rural livelihood. In India such institutional resources are found in terms of food-based safety net programmes, income generation schemes, social security schemes, etc.

But availability of resources does not guarantee entitlement rather governed by various socio-political factors. The theoretical polemics of vulnerability show that the failure to entitlement largely implicates the vulnerable condition often intertwined with various livelihood gamut including the asset endowment (investment, store, claims) or what Sen (1981) calls ‘commodity bundle’ acquired either through procurement or exchange. Given the high incidence of hunger and poverty in developing countries with rich resources, there have been long-standing discourses on resource entitlement both at public policy level and academic forum. Such discourse basically brings the process and practice of resource allocations and distribution within a household or group of households to understand the entitlement level. In fact, resource forms a buffer for livelihood and helps in livelihood coping strategies but its entitlement is largely determined by factors like institutional structure, political process, ecological system, and traditional social institutions such as caste and kinship. Thus there are both state-determined entitlements and community-determined entitlements. In the latter, customary laws do have a larger influence on land and common property resources in particular (Auty, 2001; Azam 2001; Huang, 2007; Mazrui, 1995; Wimmer, 1997). Moreover, when state becomes the authority in resources distribution, the idea of power hegemony leads to conflicts on right over resource as evident from the devastating livelihood of rural poor owing to decline in livelihood-based resources. The exploitation of, say land, forest, and mineral resources by the multinational corporations invited by the state, have been affecting the traditional livelihood in many countries. It is also noticed that the skewed distribution and elite capture of land resources always trigger vulnerability in farming communities by directly controlling their production functions (De Waal, 1989; Deo, 2009, 2012; Devereux, 1996; Guyer, 1995; Keen, 1994; Maxwell and Wiebe, 1999); thereby their resource potentiality becomes limited, as a result the grim of marginalised groups- Scheduled Tribes (ST), Scheduled Castes (SC), landless, marginal farmers and destitutes becomes double than usual largely in terms of, to quote Chambers (1989) ‘physically weaker, economically impoverished, socially dependent, humiliated and psychologically harmed’.

Entitlement over resources is difficult to measure because of their temporal and seasonal dimension, but poverty is always accepted as a proxy in it. Literature shows that entitlement over livelihood resources is affected by the conflict over the resources (Dietz, 2006; Huang, 2007; Menon, 2012; Padel, 2012; Shah, 2009; Turner, 1999, 2004) for which the existing resources remain unutilised or over-utilised. For example, the conflict over national parks and wildlife conservation in India has been depriving the forest-dependent communities from collecting the forest produces, thereby affecting their forest-based livelihood (Fernandes, 1990; Nadkarni, 2000). Similarly, the conflict over Cauvery water distribution in South India has affected the agricultural production of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Many times fights between the local communities due to the scarcity of resources are also evident. Bogale and Korf’s (2009) study on resource entitlement among the pastoralists of Ethiopia reveals how the sharing of resources in a resource-scarce situation like drought shapes their entitlement to resources. Thus conflict over the resources- both in resource-scarce and resource-abundant situations- always denies entitlement to resources. Under such situations, it is alleged that instability in the government and lack of subsequent policies on resource

use prevent the proper realisation of the resource value for regional development (Haddad and O'Shaug, 1999; Johnson and Forsyth, 2002; Maxwell and Smith, 1992). For example, the sub-Saharan Africa is anguished with many natural resources and Congo is blessed with gold and copper, but millions of people in these countries live with poverty and hunger only because of the underutilisation of such resources. The African Development Bank (2012) analysed the food security situation in six North African countries, i.e. Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, and Tunisia. The first two countries are rich in mineral resources, whereas the other countries are poor with the same resource. It is found that rising food prices are a major cause of food insecurity and a higher prevalence of stunt growth children. However, the Global Hunger Index (GHI) of each country is found to be increasing from previous GHI (IFPRI, 2011). Similarly, Nigeria is rich in oil resources and the third largest economy in Africa, but is placed in a lower position, i.e. 160th out of 177 countries in the Human Development Index. With high market trade of oil resources, the country is unable to feed its population, as seen from the 60.9% of hungry people (<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17015873>), which is largely attributed to the corruption and incompetency of the rural economy and poorly managed safety net programme (World Bank, 1996).

While using Chambers' definition of vulnerability, that is, vulnerability as 'not lack or want, but defencelessness, insecurity and expose to risks, shocks and stresses' (Chambers, 1989: 1), Watts and Bohle (1993) also find internal and external factors of resource vulnerability and notice that poor health, unskilled knowledge, lack of access to resources and information and disturbance in ecological system (land degradation, earthquake, flood, drought, storms, deforestation, etc.), exacerbates the condition of vulnerability. The political economy approach to vulnerability is largely discoursed via Sen's entitlement failure model. Given the high prevalence of hunger, malnutrition, and starvation death, this approach in Indian context argues that there is an abundance of food resources but they are not reaching the people due to the politics at policy level on one hand and lack of accountability and transference in the system on the other (Currie, 2000; Jena, 2008; Leach and Davies, 1991; Mooij, 2007; Salih, 1995; Sen, 1981; Senauer and Sur, 2001). India too claims increasing agricultural production, but the absence of storage has led to the rotting of food grains rather than distributing among the poor (Chand, 2007; Patnaik, 2005). That is, despite availability of foodgrains, the lack of access to foodgrains due to various reasons continues to remain the base of household food vulnerability in India (Mooij, 2001; Ray, 2004; Sen, 1981).

Further, the adaptation of new economic reform in India has made it possible to transform the economy, culture and livelihood of the people as evident from increasing agricultural growth, but has resulted in the withdrawal of state command economy and welfare activities and thereby giving direct authorities to the elite and funding agencies. The concept of free market has enabled middlemen to exploit the available resources in rural areas, where the state often mediates as noticed from invitation to mining companies to extract the resources. The new economic reform, being market driven, affected the local market by directly allowing the traders to enter into the market which aggravated the existing poverty and deprivation of the landless and marginal labourers in particular, as evident from declining food consumption and the increasing absolute poverty level ( $\leq \$1.25$  per day in 2005 Purchasing Power Parity) (Ahluwalia, 2000; Jha, 2009; Deaton and Dreze, 2009; Gillespie and Kadilaya, 2011; Patnaik, 1997; Rao, 2000). In this process, the rural poor were only forced to participate as subsidiary parts in an economically disadvantaged position rather than as primary shareholders, which has made the people more vulnerable and crisis ridden (Chand, 2008; Patnaik, 2003; Radhakrishnan and Ravi, 1992; Swaminathan, 2009).

Given the aforesaid understanding, this paper examines the interface between resource availability and vulnerability in the Nuapada (formerly Nawapara sub-division of Kalahandi district) of Orissa, one of the resource-rich regions in India. It seeks to understand how the political economy of resource entitlement in the district has historically shaped the vulnerable conditions of

the people in the district. Despite affluent resources, the district is always plagued with poverty, hunger, malnutrition, and starvation deaths and is considered one of the hundred identified backward districts in the country. Such situations have been widened after the adaptation of new economic reforms in the states as evident from the distress migration and subsequent allegations of starvation deaths. Following these, a long-term action plan has been enacted by the central government for the development of this region under the name of KBK (Kalahandi–Bolangir–Koraput) besides other welfare supports. Still the grim of the district remain the same. Thus the present paper, while understanding the drama of vulnerability process in the district, seeks to understand the externality of vulnerability of local people under broad political economy approach with a theoretical assumption that ‘resource-rich region does not necessarily backward’ rather backwardness is due to improper utilisation or underutilisation of existing resources.

## Methodology

This is a reflective study conducted in the Nuapada district of Orissa over a long period of time. As the present day Nuapada district was earlier part of present Kalahandi district till 1993, this study uses Kalahandi referring to both the districts. However, most of the data presented are in relation to present day Nuapada district. The broad objective of this study was to understand the interface between the resource availability and vulnerability. Does denial to resource entitlement lead to vulnerability in this region? In doing so it captures the factors responsible for denial of resource holding of the local people via a narrative approach of data collection. However, historical methods could also translate the reality of livelihood among people. Thus qualitative information was mostly gathered through ethnographic methods. This uses both the political economy approach and structural model to vulnerability developed by Sen (1981) and Watts and Bohle (1993) respectively, to understand the process of vulnerability in the district, emphasising the collapse of traditional food institutions consequent to adaptation of new economic reform. The Context-Input-Process-Product, popularly known as the CIPP model, a qualitative tool adapted by Elliot (1989) was used to collect information on the occurrence of vulnerability in the area. The ‘*context*’ here is resource abundance, ‘*input*’ is the entitlement, ‘*process*’ is the political power hegemony, and ‘*product*’ is the food insecurity and vulnerability. All such qualitative information was collected through informally interviewing few people over a prolonged stay in the district through unstructured questionnaires with open-ended questions. Data pertaining to the functioning of the various food-based safety net programmes were collected over a long period through informally interviewing the local people, government officials in charge of various food safety programmes and gram panchayat officials at the lower strata of administration to measure the reliability and validity of the study. However, being from the same district, data on the local economy and functioning of different food-based institutions were collected as a mere participant observer over a long period of stay in the district. The secondary information, on the other hand, basically the statistical data, were collected from various publications of government office in the district and then de-coded to give a meaning to it through the narrations collected from the identified vulnerable people. Vulnerable households in this study were used, referring to marginal agricultural workers and landless families with frequent migration.

The district, surrounded by hills and mountains, consists of five community development blocks largely concentrated by ST/SC. The data on different resources were collected from the concerned offices located in the district. For example, data on agricultural pattern and production were collected from the district agricultural office located in Nuapada. The data on livestock resource were gathered from the Chief District Veterinary Office, Nuapada. Data on educational resources, employment both in organised and unorganised sectors were collected from the District Education Office and District Employment Exchange Office based at Nuapada. The District Industrial Centre

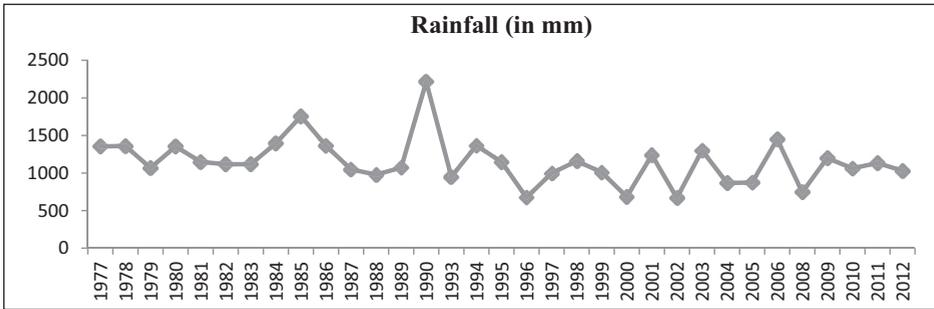
gave the data on the industrial potentiality of the district. The data on migration, an important socio-economic issue in the district, were collected from the District Labour Office. The data on rainfall and drought conditions in the district were collected from the District Meteorological Department, Nuapada. The Economy Survey of Orissa of various years were major sources of data pertaining to the economic achievement and status of resources in the district apart from other relevant data.

### 'The Nuapada/Kalahandi': *Godown of Resources vs. Starvation Capital*

Ever since the first child-selling case during mid-eighties, Kalahandi district of Orissa does not need much introduction because of its continuous allegations of hunger, malnutrition, starvation deaths, distress migration, etc. The district is located in western part of Orissa between 19°.3' North to 21°.3' North latitude and 82°.20' East to 83.47 East longitude, bordering newly formed Chhattisgarh state in India. The first child selling case which actually occurred in the present day Nuapada district in 1985 not only influenced media and bureaucrats but became nationally important and spurred the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to visit the alleged family. Gradually, the rest of India soon began hearing of Kalahandi on a daily basis as national media interest increased manifold. Thereafter, the district became the frontline of each media report following the subsequent occurrence of famine and drought grasped the district in 1965, 1972, and 1985 (Purohit et al., 1985). Following this, Keshan Pattanayak filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court of India and the Orissa High Court against the state government (*Kishan Pattanayak and others vs. the State of Orissa*) about the occurrence of poverty and hunger in the district highlighting

These people are beyond the pale of juristic justice and what we are trying to present as a case is only one aspect of the unlawful and oppressive system that has replace the legitimate functioning of the state. (quoted in Banik, 2004: 17)

The frequent drought conditions in the district continued to force rural poor to migrate to other cities like Andhara Pradesh, Gujarat, and Raipur in search of employment depending on rainfall and crop production. Migration is now a regular phenomenon in this region that usually begins immediately after harvesting of crops. Households belonging to ST/SC generally opt migration as a livelihood strategy. Following it the Government has been pushing different livelihood-based programmes to the district in order to enhance people's livelihood. Still the story of famine and hunger deaths in this district continue to appear in daily newspapers due to non-implementation, non-accountability and non-transfery of existing schemes/programmes. As Nagbhusan Patnaik (*Indian People's Front vs. State of Orissa*) in 1989 repeats the reoccurrence of drought in Kalahandi and Koraput districts of Orissa saying, '...being victims of "chill penury", the people of Kalahandi are sometimes forced to sell their children. The starvation deaths of the inhabitants of the districts of Koraput and Kalahandi are due to [the] utter negligence and callousness of the administration and the Government of Orissa'. In 2007 the Paharia community of the Nuapada district was alleged eating stone in the absence of food to eat unlike eating of mango kernels in the Koraput district. However, it was later disproved by the district administration. In 1996 following the death of Dombudha Majhi of the Mahulkot village in the Khariar block, the Government was compelled to declare Kalahandi as one of 41 districts in India 'prone to starvation' and extended various supports and implemented Relief Code for the loss of crops. A long-term action plan (LTAP) was amended in 1992 under the umbrella of KBK (Kalahandi-Bolangir-Koraput) to extend livelihood support to the local people irrespective of class. Despite such attempts the socio-economic situations of the district remain same due to various political economy factors.



**Figure 1.** Rainfall pattern in the Nuapada district.

Source: Compiled from the rainfall data of different years.

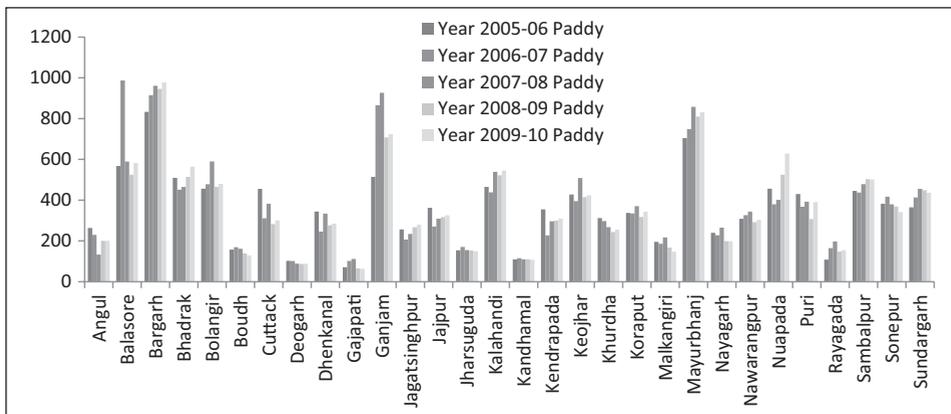
The resource potentiality in the district, which the present study measures in term of human, capital, natural and institutional resources, shows that land and forest resources are abundantly recorded and constantly supporting the livelihood of local people. The district is primarily an agricultural district with 73% of people depending on agriculture as against 74.07% of the state (2001 Census). Land resource is an important source of production. The land utilisation pattern in the district reveals predominance of forest area (41.19%) compared to 35.93% of the state. The net sown area of the district is 163 thousand acres that accounts for 48.70% of the geographical area as compared to 40.41% of the state. The economic performance of the district reveals that the real per capita Net District Domestic Product (NDDP) is 78. The district shows an increasing Gross District Domestic Product (GDDP) that accounts for 82921 lakhs in 2004–05 to 150659 lakhs in 2008–09 (Government of Orissa, 2010). In term of economic growth, the district is ranked 14th in the state (Government of Orissa, 2012).

The District Meteorological Department estimates increasing rainfall in the district with an average rainfall of 1286.4 mm (Figure 1); however, its erratic nature and lack of storage facility has affected the irrigation potential, leading to drought conditions in some years. The irrigation level of the district is estimated very low compared to 198,326 hectares of cultivable area and 189,170 hectares net cultivable area. It is estimated at 31.36% (‘000 hectares) compared to 30.65% in 1996–97 and 39.65% in 1988–89 (Government of Orissa, 2005–06). The dug-well and bore-well is hardly feasible in the district, and shallow tube wells and filler points are seldom found in the Khariar block. The intervention of NABARD in the district has been able to increase the irrigation coverage of the district, i.e., 33919 hectares in 1998 to 35,533 hectares in 2003. Of the total cultivable area, i.e. 198326 hectares, 38734 hectares are under irrigation as on 2005. Data shows that a total of 208 bore wells have been sunk under RIDF scheme out of which 195 are functioning so far. There is only one major irrigation project namely Lower Indra Irrigation Project, Tikhali, three medium Irrigation Projects and 33 minor irrigation projects in the district. Most of the minor irrigation projects are defunct due to lack of storage potentiality. Despite these, the agricultural production, particularly paddy and rice, is reportedly increased from 2004–05 to 2011–12 (Table 1) and trends of production, especially of paddy is higher than few other districts in the state (Figure 2). The per capita net food production in the district, particularly rice and cereals, shows average production, but milk, pulses, egg, and fish are found to be very low (Table 2). The data on foodgrain production in Nuapada also shows that the paddy production in the district has gone up from 152,126 quintal in 2005–06 to 209,071 and 244,528 quintals in 2006–07 and 2007–08, respectively (Figure 3). In 1989–90, the per capita food grain production was Rs.384 compared to Rs.256 for the state. The crop pattern of the district reflects low importance of rice (37.66%) in the total

**Table 1.** Production of paddy and rice in Nuapada district (Figure in Metric Tonne (MT)).

Years	Paddy	Rice
2004–05	141.49	96.21
2005–06	156.14	106.18
2006–07	179.69	120.39
2007–08	301.51	205.03
2008–09	225.03	153.02
2009–10	228.64	155.48
Average	218.2	148.48

Source: Economic survey of Orissa of various years.

**Figure 2.** District-wise paddy production in Orissa, 2005-06 to 2009-10 (Figure in MT).

Source: Compiled from data collected from different reports of Government of Orissa.

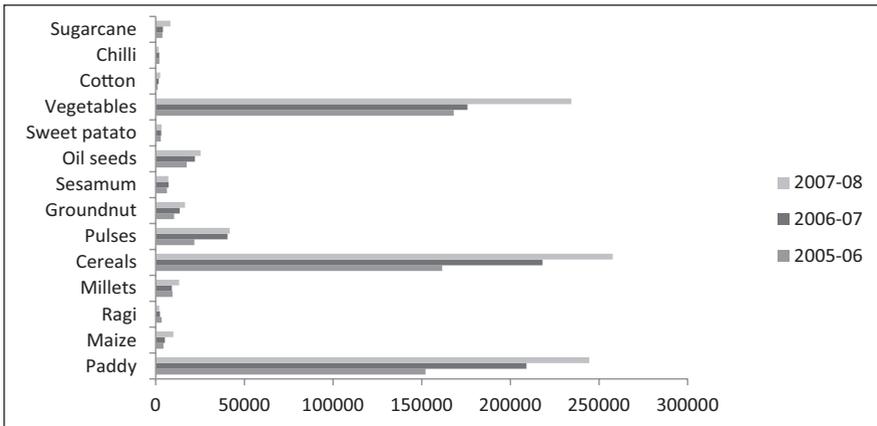
cropped area, but relatively higher food production (78.45%) compared to 48.01% and 76.88% for the state (Jenamani, 2005). The productivity of rice is much lower for the district (7.01 quintals per hectare) compared to 12.37 quintal per hectare of the state. However, the crop intensity of the district is reported to have increased from 133 in 1997–98 to 154 and 160 in 2001–02 and 2005–06, respectively (Government of Orissa, 2007-08).

The natural resource potentialities in the district are also noticed from its 1849.69 sq.kms forest covers out of total geographical area of 3852 sq.kms. The data provided by Forest Department, Nuapada shows that reserved forest in the district constitutes 983.749 sq.kms whereas demarcated protected forest, unclassified forest, forest under revenue department and village forest cover an estimated area of 24.33 sq.kms, 0.54 sq.kms, 345.25 sq.kms and 1.698 sq.kms respectively. The Sunabeda Wildlife sanctuary, which now got tiger project status by central government, is another attraction which harbours various floras and faunas. Its core zone spreads over 600 sq.kms. The water bodies in the district also constitute important natural resources which covers an estimated areas of 2881.1 hectares of land as per the data provided by District Rural Development Agency, Nuapada. Mohanty (1992), Mishra and Rao (1992), Nayak (2009) and Mishra (2010) observe that Kalahandi district has plenty of natural resources, but at the same time its high proportion of poor typifies the whole state. The Enquiry Committee's Report on Orissa States (1939) notes that

**Table 2.** Per capita net food production per day in Nuapada district.

Food items	Per capita net food production in gram/day	
	Orissa	Nuapada
Rice	173.76	225.5
Cereals	389.27	628.0
Tuber	28.20	5.34
Pulses	21.21	9.84
Sugar	5.33	10.5
Edible oil	4.55	13.17
Milk	48.0	—
Egg	5.78	—
Fish	20.47	8.0

Source: Panda, 2008.



**Figure 3.** Production of food grains in the Nuapada district (in Tonne).

Source: Compiled from agricultural production of different years published in Agricultural directories, Orissa.

Kalahandi, one of the few big states of Orissa... majority of the people are aborigines...state most undeveloped with extensive jungles... ruler all in all...the virtual serfdom of the people has kept them absolutely timid and backward. We are led to believe that economic exploitation of the people are probably the worst. (cited in EPW, April 30, 1988, p. 886).

Human resource plays prominent roles in the production of livelihood resources such as food production, employment and simultaneously make the food resources available at household level. The estimated data show that there are 53,744 marginal workers, 151,694 main workers and 386,330 non-workers in the district altogether sharing primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors (Census 2011). A large proportion of the population are engaged in agricultural labour work. The data on educational achievement in the district portrays that people hardly attain higher education and dropout rate is extremely high due to poverty and lack of higher educational institutes. Data provided by Office of the District Employment Exchange, Nuapada shows that during 2005-06 only 7015 person were engaged in organised sectors which declined to 6800 in 2007-08. So there

**Table 3.** Livestock production and per capita availability in Nuapada.

Livestock Product	Production			Per capita availability (in kg)		
	India	Orissa	Nuapada	India	Orissa	Nuapada
Milk	68.6 million tonne	0.685 million tonne	10.20 million tonne	73.3	18.25	19.22
Egg	28,162 million	639.3 million	5.528 million	30 nos.	17 nos.	10.42 nos.
Meat	16.45 (000 MT)	29,488.2 MT	0.47 (000 MT)	1.7 kg	1.087 kg	0.886 kg

Source: District Statistical Handbook and CDVO, Nuapada 2005.

are high prevalence of unemployment largely among the youth and owing to lack of technical skills engagement in service sectors is very low.

The livestock resources continue to provide gainful employment to the local people in the district. These become important assets for people that are usually sold during financial crisis. However, the declining areas of grazing land in some parts of the district have led to the distress sale of the livestock. Now the district has an estimated population of 176,706 cattle and 42,267 buffalo and produces 10.20 metric tonne of milk with an average production of 100.23 kg/year (CDVO, 2005) (Table 3). The per capita milk availability in the district is 21 grams as against 94 grams in the state. There is a unique variety of cattle in the district, popularly known as Khariar-breed cow, which are said to give more milk. Similarly, poultry is also an economic source for poor people in the district. The local poultry (desi) has high demand in the region but gradually being replaced by the improved variety of poultry. It is estimated that there were 216,831 desi poultry, producing 5.528 metric tonne of eggs (CDVO, 2005). The fishery sector also contributes a little to the district economy. Over the year the district has been able to produce 2676.83 metric tonnes of fish in 2005–06, which went up 2688.39 MT and 3113.80 MT in the year 2006–07 and 2007–08, respectively, and estimates 10.70, 10.75, and 14.1 Crore rupees, respectively (Department of Fishery, 2009).

The resource potentialities of the district are also evident in the form of both institutionalised pro-poor delivery services and the community-initiated programmes. The former include subsidised food-based programmes (public distribution system (PDS), supplementary nutritious schemes (Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS), Mid-day Meal Scheme (MDM)), income-generating schemes (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), Sampurna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)), and social security schemes (old aged pension, disability pension and widow pension) which aim at enhancing people's capability to purchase food commodity. The flow of funds to the district (Table 4) too constitutes important capital resources.

Besides, the district receives a special grant from central government under Kalahandi–Bolangir–Koraput (KBK) plan where both BPL and ALP households are entitled to obtain food rations at a subsidised price. Under the revised long-term action plan (RLTAP) of the KBK scheme, an integrated approach to development, i.e. Biju KBK Plan, named after the then Chief Minister of the state, has also been functioning in the district. The Plan basically sought to fill the gap between the efforts made to the development of the region and the availability of the resources, the proper utilisation of which can enhance not only the infrastructure of the region but also the quality of life of people. Despite such measures, the level of economic development in the district is slow and always remains much below the state development index. Large-scale distress migration, malnutrition and hunger deaths are still reported in many villages and thus it cannot be wrong to call undivided Kalahandi the 'starvation capital'.

**Table 4.** Sector-wise allocation of funds in the district (Figure in Rs. Lakh).

Name of the schemes	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
SGSY	NA	NA	391.84	598.05	706.98
IAY	760.89	533.96	567.66	772.62	1103.71
PMGY(GA)	14.77	NA	NA	NA	NA
Mo-KUDIA	NA	NA	NA	NA	233.45
NFFW	1390.57	1548.26	NA	NA	NA
NREGA	NA	1548.25	10825.29	2750.00	5559.57
BRGF	NA	NA	NA	1698.00	1129.00
Biju KBK	NA	NA	300.00	1695.44	931.65
RLTAP	48.75	8125	NA	NA	NA
SGRY	1525.56	1796.69	NA	NA	NA
Sub-total	3740.54	5508.40	12084.79	7514.10	9664.35

Source: District Human Development Report, 2012.

## Political Economy of Resource Entitlement and Vulnerability in Nuapada

Availability of resources, as said earlier, does not guarantee entitlement rather depends on various factors. This section sheds light on the factors governing resource entitlement of people in Nuapada district. The following three factors are broadly found for the resource vulnerability and hunger situation in Nuapada district.

1. Colonial legacy
2. Liberalisation, new economic reforms and denial to resources
3. Political trigger to 'Sardar-Raj'

### Colonial Legacy

The social history of the Nuapada district shows that it was administered by colonial government under Central Province. Its post-transferred phase portrays that colonial rulers, after replacing military order of Bonsala Raja, brought many changes in this region largely in agrarian and revenue arrangements. After conquering this district they realised the dominant position of the local Raja, recognising them as Zamindar and placed them in revenue generation under the 'thekadari system' introduced in 1968 (Deo, 2009), which became 'thekadar' under the revised system. However, few tribal communities had predominance over the land resources. The adivasi leaders were gradually replaced by the non-adviasi peasant and artisan groups purposefully invited by the Zamindar. The non-adviasi headmen, who were loyal to Zamindar, retained their position and the invited non-adviasi from the economically advanced groups took the fruits of the system and were later given the post of 'Goantia' – the village headmen – who enjoyed moufi (rent-free village) and waste and fallow land. Gradually the horse traders (muslim from north India), wine vendors (Sundhi from Chhattisgarh), the Kultha (expert cultivator from Sambalpur), and the Brahmins who were settled there took the advantage of this system, maybe due to their prior experience of state structure, and monetised economy. The adivasi headman with their low level of agricultural technology and having little experience of a monetised economy, complex social setting, and state structure, could not

compete with economically more powerful groups and were gradually replaced by non-*adivasi* (Deo, 2009). Gradually the entry of Marwaris, Punjabis, Sindhis, Biharis into the tribal hinterland again accelerated the marginalisation of the *adivasi* as they captured the *adivasi*'s land in various means including keeping *adivasi* as bonded labour at their home. In the later part of the colonial regime, the coastal elite who migrated to this district also started exploiting the *adivasi* of this district. As *Report of the Orissa State Enquiry Committee* (1939) headed by Harekrishna Mahatab describes:

The original inhabitant – the *adivasi* – of this district basically used to practice shifting cultivation as to some extent now. The zamindars during that period too encouraged them to settle down for permanent cultivation in order to increase the revenue of the Zamindari which perhaps resulted to bring non-*adivasi* peasants and artisan from outside. These incomers were allotted wasteland and area left fallow by the *adivasi* in the course of their shifting cultivation. To the fact, the ability to pay the revenue by the *adivasi* many times basically in between 1870 to 1901 led to the mortgage of their land and the non-*adivasi* traders including liquor vendors, Kulthas and Brahmins could only afforded to purchase that land.

It is said that this is not confined only to this estate but is widespread in western Orissa and tribal-dominated regions in the present-day Chhattisgarh. Further, the process accelerated due to famine after which price of food grains is reported to have increased; for example, rice was 70–80 seers per kg in 1862–63, in 1900 it was down to 6 seers (Dewar, 1906) further adding to the miseries of the people.

The *adivasi* headmen, in the pre-colonial era, occasionally used to pay *bheti* (gifts) to the Raja depending on their status and influence. But the communal ownership of land and the widespread shifting cultivation often made the revenue collection hard, resulting in the low *bheti*. It led to the land transfer as Imperial Gazetteers of India (1906) notes, 'between 1863 and 1888, one fifth of the village lands had changed hands, half of the transfer being to the money lending as opposed to the cultivators classes'. The irregularities in the revenue collection led to the neglect of the inhabitant on the part of colonial rulers. It was only after the implementation of Revenue Settlement of 1891, some tribal goantia who could prove long possession and improvement of villages were given protected status against arbitrary eviction by the Zamindars. Out of the 18 protected goantias or thekadar of villages, 17 were *adivadi* (Deo, 1984). In spite of the protected status given to the tribal goantias, ownership of one-third of the total land passed from the *adivasi*s to moneylenders and businessmen between 1891 and 1910. The unprotected tribal goantias in general and in some cases even the protected goantias lost their land only due to the arbitrary nature of the non-tribal who always wanted to exploit the *adivasi*s. Given this, Central Province Land Alienation Act was passed in 1917 to reduce the land transfer particularly from the *adivasi*. However, proper implementation of the Act remains a dream due to its inherent political nature.

Further, apart from agriculture, the marginalised sections in this district, largely ST/SC, used to depend on the forest resources for their socio-economic livelihood. But the non-tribal immigrant to this region gradually exploited the forest resources and agricultural land by various means. The *adivasi* peasants with less knowledge on the monetised economy simply could not compete with the non-tribal and continued to depend on them during crisis, which many times forced them to mortgage their cultivable land, even in many cases converted the landowning tenants into tenants-at-will and bonded servants. Similarly colonial rules opened up forest resources for commercial exploitation that led to denudation not only of minor forest produces but also valuable timber species like Sal (*Shorea robusta*) and teak (*Tectona grandis*) for which the Khariar Zamindari or the present day Nuapada district was known for.

### *Liberalisation, New Economic Reforms and Denial to Resources*

The development of the Orissa in general and undivided Kalahandi in particular can be understood through transition of social and economic conditions. The economic history of Orissa reveals that especially in the pre-colonial period, it had a feudal system without many statistical facts and figures about the economy. It was only the new economic reforms that helped the state economy to integrate with the larger economic set up of the country. However, the Indian financial feudal structure gradually neglected the state owing to its low economic contribution. Under the feudal structure, the higher caste people engaged in developed agricultural activities helped to generate necessary surplus for the rise of regional kingdoms of ancient Orissa. The developed agriculture after the adaptation of new economic reform only contributed to the marketable surplus in the villages and led to the formation of rural market institutions which were the meeting ground for economic exchanges between peasants, craftsmen, and merchants (Sahu, 1993). But its market-driven orientation has minimised the state action and new trajectory to other resources. The nature of the free market under this system de-structured the agricultural landholding by directly controlling over the agricultural production; thereby the deprived sections particularly Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe became more vulnerable.

Land and the land relation system is an important phenomenon that defines the backwardness of a region (Behera and Nath, 2004; Fernandes, 1997; Tripathy and Nath, 2008). Land relation is basically understood in term of 'right over land'. In this context, talking about land relation in the Nuapada district, the lopsided distribution of land resources and exploitative nature is clearly visible as many of the people are landless and marginal farmers having an average landholding of 2.5 acres (Jenamani, 2005). Land is an important asset for livelihood among the people of this district but the fertile and irrigated land are largely occupied by the elite and politically dominated families especially the Brahmins, although agriculture is not the primary source of their livelihood. It has in turn marginalised and made the poor more vulnerable. However, few tribal households have captured the land in Komna tahsil. Thus as agriculture among the elite political groups is not the major interest they do not show any interest in developing an irrigation system in the district. Although some of them are told fought favouring Ichhapur dam and Tikhali dam in the district, this was basically to mobilise the votes, but the lack of storage never benefitted the local farmers as expected. Despite the lack of irrigation, the district produces more food grains, particularly paddy, compared to other districts of the state and has become the net exporter of the paddy, which is attributed to the high rainfall of the district. Despite this, the vast number of people in the district have been reeling under the acute poverty which is said due to on proper utilisation of the existing resources including that of traditional irrigation system, cottage industries (husking, oil extraction) and forest resources.

The land utilisation pattern in erstwhile Kalahandi reveals that there is high inequality in land distribution and thus a high degree of marginal farmer categories are found in the district. The agricultural labour in the district is also reported to have increased from 33.14% in 1971 to 35.39% in 1981. The relatively low level of agricultural labour household in the district is due to the allotment of ceiling land but converted many farmers into marginal farmers due to limited land distribution. As a result there is a high degree of encroachment of land leading to the deforestation and decline of a forest-based livelihood. The context for the landless and marginal farmers to fall back on dependence on forest resources is found to be gradually reduced over time. As of 2002, out of the total forest areas of 58,135.47sq.kms, 45.32% are under Forest Department. The Reserved Forest and Protected Forest constituted 71.99% of the total forest areas in the state while it is found to be 85.59% in the Kalahandi district. During 1982–2002 there has been officially approved transfer under 252 projects involving an area of 27,563.18 hectares of forest land for non-forest use (Government of Orissa 2003–04).

Further, the local people in this district continue depending on the forest resources and forest land for their livelihood, but the inherent forest laws has affected the whole population by restricting them in access to forest resources. The construction of Tikhali dam, for example, in the district has displaced 54,000 people from 98 villages in the recent past. The construction of the Hirakud dam in Sambalpur district, however, benefitted the local farmers in terms of increase in the yield; however, it somehow ruined the economic condition of the farmers in rain-fed and non-irrigated areas like Kalahandi and Nuapada and stood as an instrument for high economic inequality. The Kalahandi region, which is less influenced by the modern agriculture, was affected due to the agricultural change in the new economic era to the sense that the supply of food grain relief from outside under this reform continued to discourage growth of local food production. As a result there was alarming decline for demand of the local food produce and thus purchasing power of the people. For example, in 1982–83 the support price for paddy was Rs. 122, which was not adequate at all. During the period 1982–92 the loss of production has gone up by four to five times and hence in 1992 the support price of paddy should at least have been 450 per quintal. But the government had fixed it as 280. Moreover, during 1991–92 in Kalahandi the actual price of paddy was between 180 and 220 per quintal. This has been pauperising the farmer and leading the entire population into the grip of poverty (Pradhan, 1993).

### *Political Trigger to Sardar Raj*

Despite the affluence of resources, why is the Kalahandi-Nuapada region still poor? Is it natural? This question has been answered here through the historical analysis of functioning public policy programmes and political stigmatisation in the district. It discusses how the democratic failure and fight for the political seats have led to the food insecurity situation in the district. It is seen that given the lack of voice from the poor, the elite classes and the middlemen, basically non-tribal who have been exposed to and experienced the monetised economy, have benefitted under this state ideology. This section discusses such political and exploitative gamut in the district largely under Kothari's ideology of *State against Democracy* (1989) through sketching the political history of the state and functioning pro-poor delivery services.

The political history of Orissa in post-independence reveals that the state had a strong presence of the rule of Ganatantra Parishad until the 1962 Lok Sabha election that was replaced by the Swatantra Party in 1967 and 1971 elections much contested with the Congress Party. However, the Congress Party ruled India throughout, and the emergence of the Congress as a dominant political force in Orissa was late by the standards of most Indian states. It was only in 1980 that the Congress began to take charge. Though it suffered a setback during the 1989 Lok Sabha election, which was won by Janata Dal, Congress in the state remained a major political force in the state. The 1998 and 1999 Lok Sabha elections were black years for Congress, losing the power in the state that was taken over by the BJP (Biju Janata Dal) leading to a coalition government at the Centre. Even today Congress fights against BJD, which is in alliance with BJP. Looking at the state-level power domination through the election, Vidhan Sabha, Congress became the ruler only after the 1980s election held concurrently with the Parliamentary election marked the emergence of Congress as an importance political force in the state that was, unlike the Lok Sabha election, taken over by the Janata Dal in the 1990s election (Kumar, 2004).

The democratic set up in Orissa remains puzzling, with the fight for the power after 1980 forgetting about development of the state. The political economy of development of the Kalahandi district, in this line, can be comprehended through the power domination in terms of geographical space and time. It is here of paramount importance to think about the development of this region through the emergence of political parties in the state in general and the development imperatives

for the Kalahandi district in particular. However, no allegation of hunger was found during the rule preceding Congress domination in 1980, which may be due to the well-functioning food safety net and responsible government. J. B. Patnaik's Congress (I) government was voted out of office in 1989 in the face of allegations of child selling. The subsequent government formed by Biju Patnaik (Janata Dal) blamed the previous Congress government over the failure of subsequent allegation of hunger and starvation deaths in the district. Despite the conformation of Orissa High Court in 1992 about the occurrence of starvation death in Kalahandi, Biju Patnaik's government simply ignored the High Court's recommendations as Currie (1998) aptly remarks 'this judgement was used more as a tool to discredit its political opponents, rather than as a set of guidelines for improving governance in programme administration'... This government was subsequently voted out of office amidst public concern of corruption and administrative bungling and replaced by the previous government (Currie, 1998). To the current grim spread throughout the western Orissa (referred to as Koshal) in which Nuapada-Kalahandi was a part, even though the regular election process has continued to serve to topple government, no policy changes are observed impacting on the livelihood of the people of the Kalahandi region in terms of relief measures and food policy that remain away from the accountability and transference of such good governance. Therefore, despite Kalahandi issues are always taken up in Parliamentary debate by opposition parties over government's failure to provide livelihood and use of available relief funds, the persistent hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity erases the democratic nature of the Indian Constitution.

Land is an important asset which determines both production and availability of food at individual households necessary for food security. But the historical records of land settlement in the district show that the land settlements, which were meant only to add land revenue during the long colonial period have alienated the local population from their landholding due to some inherece political factors and/or negligence of ruling government. The historical possession of land by the people in the district shows the domination of unfertile and inland land that itself affects the production of crops. The district, however, is claimed to have increase in agricultural production and net exporter of paddy, the factual question arises who generally produce more? It is only the landholding groups, generally Brahmins and non-advasi, who can acquire benefit by producing more. The practice of bonded labour is still found in many rural villages (Harichandan, 2010; Mishra, 2010). Mishra and Rao (1992) rightly observe that the colonisation of Kalahandi by outsiders meant to increase agricultural production not only reduced the local population to the status of agricultural labourers and *now to the youth migration to other states* but also damaged the then existing other factors like community water management through wells, tanks, and other techniques (p. 1245 *emphasis added*).

The historical analysis of hunger in the district reveals that the historical neglect of the region's development, absence of relief measures and largely the lack of public action are primarily responsible for the underdevelopment of the district. The political threshold in the district reveals that the fight for the power among the elite group with different political ideologies does not allow them to think over the development of the district rather than the political seat. Although politicians from the Kalahandi region occupy some position in the assembly, they fear bringing the Kalahandi issues in the fear of losing their power in consecutive terms. The democratic system in India, as Sen (1981) observes, has been able to prevent poverty and hunger in the post-independence period due to its free press and democratic political structure. However, the incidence of malnutrition and allegation of hunger and starvation deaths in different parts of the country including KBK districts in Orissa still challenges the so-called democratic nature of the country where food stocks are reported to be even higher than the buffer stock (Banik, 2007; Currie, 2000; Patnaik, 2003). Nowadays, although a colonial form of exploitation is less observed in this region compared to the 1980s, the corruption at district level and labour contractor (Sardar) as a new form of exploitation

in this region has affected the livelihood of the people. It is observed that although people grow a few selected varieties of vegetables during peak season, they are unable to sell these directly in the market and operate through middlemen, which directly impacts on their income. The net analysis of those who died in starvation confirms that they were landless, and some had no ration cards to access food from the PDS store. The lack of assets, particularly land, has impacted on the purchasing power of the people of this district within and outside the PDS provision. When they are unable to afford money to purchase from the PDS under the quota during the distribution, they are compelled to buy food from the open market at a high rate, resulting in them either to mortgage their ration card or any other household assets that remain a process among the marginalised groups, i.e. ST/SC. Despite the ranges of income generation works available under MGNREGA and KBK scheme, the district administration is unable to create the work in accordance with the need of the poor, which is nothing but deliberate attempts by district authority towards livelihood vulnerability of local people.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

The experience with erstwhile Kalahandi regions affirms that there are abundant resources (human, natural, and community) in the district. We cannot conceptualise hunger, and food insecurity in the Kalahandi region is due to lack of food resources rather than lack of access to resources. It was found that the paradox of underdevelopment of the district has a historical origin to colonial laws, forceful de-structuring of traditional food based institutions, and the exploitation of middlemen. The non-tribals invited to the district long back still dominate the politico-economic sphere in the district keeping aside the original inhabitants, mostly the tribals. The other perpetuating factors found are the absence of market structure, underutilisation of existing resources, and human dignity. Since the last two decades, however, educated youths of many villages in the district have been observed migrating to metro cities for temporary employment and to contribute income to their household; food security and the asset endowment level of the concerned households remain the same. Once they stop going to cities for work, they become workless. This is because they do not want to do either as manual or casual work, which they perceive will lose them their dignity being return from big cities like Mumbai or Surat as usually they migrate temporarily in search of employment, which was earlier an option for many poor households. Such ideology perhaps has escalated the problem of development in that area and has been re-entering again into the national mainstream of poverty debate.

The resource potentialities in the district show that there are affluent resources both traditionally owned by the kinship or individual and induced by the state. The entitlement of such resources is governed by some sets of rules, the absence of which may deprive an individual of his/her entitlement. The land resources traditionally play an important role in the livelihood of the local people, but the advent of liberalisation has caused serious disruption of both local people and the land resources that are largely seen from the construction of dams and mining sectors. However, large-scale human displacement is never reported yet because of limited and small development projects. But it is sure that it has submerged agricultural land particularly of the ST/SC households. The rehabilitation of the project affected people in the district is discouraging whose voices were largely suppressed by the elite groups. Thus the state purposefully does not protest the interest of the poor, rather devoid the human sensibilities, where the bureaucrats and elite groups are found to get benefits out of the project. Thus the laws and orders meant for the poor are not implemented properly in this region and the poor are deliberately pushed to the poverty and the interest of the dominant classes are entrenched in the new structure of policies and laws in hidden forms. Further the adaptation of new economic reform has, however, had an impact on socio-cultural transformation of

certain sections of the population; the penetration of mainstream market into the district has rooted the rural value and culture out. It is observed that the entry of the monetary economy to the district not only ruined the traditional economy but also de-structured the traditional food institutions by encouraging the capitalist system in the region. It is further noticed that, although the district produces more food grains, the lack of market infrastructure means that many farmers sell their products through the middlemen at a lower price, which broadens the marginalisation of the people.

The irrigation potentiality influences the agricultural production of a region. But the land holding pattern in the district portrays that the fertilised land is largely occupied by the non-agricultural groups because of which they do not attempt to enhance the irrigation of the district. Despite this, the district has been able to produce more, basically paddy, than the other districts of the state. Besides, the district frequently experiences drought conditions not due to the lack of rainfall but owing to the erratic nature of the rainfall. The district receives high rainfall compared to other districts, as shown in Figure 3. Similarly, the livestock resource in the district is reported to have declined because the traditional variety of cows are gradually declining and being replaced by the hybrid variety. The latter are only possessed by the high caste people and the poorer section cannot afford to purchase this variety due to lack of money. However, some women self-help groups in the district are supported by the local NGOs to purchase the hybrid cows. However, the lack of support regarding the absence of money to buy the fodder, has caused them to sell the cows again at a lower price and the concerned households are yet to repay the loan amount.

There are growing numbers of NGOs (national and international) working in the district, but these have not been able to change the fate of poor neither in economic terms nor at social level rather busy harnessing the available resources in the district. They are busy building big offices, training, and conference rooms not only to assemble the target population but also to expense the received grants to avoid penalty from the audit. The flow of funds to the district has drawn thousands of outsiders, largely coastal elite, to this region, who usually settle in the district to grab the capital resources or funds via self-initiated NGOs. The KBK project has also produced no results. The absence of grass-root politics, unawareness about political rights, and lack of skilled education in this region has perpetuated the situation as the majority of posts in all office districts are occupied by the coastal elites. Even at bureaucrat level, posting or transfer to western and southern Orissa including the Nuapada district is always perceived as punishment and they try their utmost to transfer back to the lowland districts. The political representatives from the constituency are less vocal and those who are more vocal about the vulnerability situation of the region are suppressed by the other dominant politicians. So the political economy of development of this region is observed from the 'lukewarm' position of the local politician and bureaucrats. They only take poverty and hunger as a 'trump card' to create a political base and do not look for a permanent solution to the problems as Sainath (1996) rightly remarks '*everybody loves a good drought*'. In this context, a poem by Nirmal Prakash Purohit (in oriya) (2007) must be remembered which expresses the political economy of the development in the district that translates that 'there are abundance resources in the district, received both from government and international bodies, but elite group only get benefit there'. It goes on saying 'without any aid, Kalahandi region can survive and can sing the song of self-esteem. But these political leaders, government officials, NGO workers and journalists will die without any aid; they will be bankrupt and die in poverty in search of money, money and money'.

It is interesting to observe that when media published the starvation death in Kuliadungri village of the district in November 2011, the village was crowded with political leaders and district bureaucrats. The political leaders who are said to hardly visit the village were in the village for quite a long time. Those who visited the village viewed the death of Laxman Jagat differently, but nobody promised to provide the BPL cards immediately to others living in the same conditions, but rather were

busy mobilising people to vote as was scheduled in February 2012, including the Congress party which has been spontaneously supported by the Kalahandi people since the 1980s. The Supreme Court teams visited the village in December 2011 to study the case but the ruling party and district bureaucrats refuted the allegation of deaths claiming the well functioning of PDS in the district and said that Laxman Jagat died in illness. Many starvation deaths are reported before Laxman Jagat, but were denied by the administration often counter-defending the petitioners through their own newspaper leaving the cases stopped without investigating. Unlike the Laxman Jagat's case, such vulnerability is perpetuated in many ways in other regions but is unreported by the state. As Banik (2011) observes politicians holding and editing many influential and local newspapers often enable governments to dismiss critical reports as politically biased (p. 101). He further goes on writing '...allegations of starvation deaths are routinely used by opposition parties to exemplify the incompetence and callousness of the sitting government.... Moreover, as soon as any of these opposition parties came to power in Orissa, they were just as quick as their rivals had been a few months earlier to deny the occurrence of starvation deaths. The Kalahandi case shows that despite regular shifts in government, the party in power in an Indian state largely inherits and adopts the development policies of its predecessor. The general tendency is to react only when the situation crosses a high threshold and even then the reaction may simply be to refuse to accept the magnitude of the problem or to blame the policies of the previous state government *instead of initiating radical changes* or the stinginess of the central government for its failure to provide adequate and timely calamity relief' (p. 101, *emphasis added*). In this context, remembering the starvation case in the Khariar block of the Kalahandi district in 1996, Manoranjan Mohanty (1998: 206) writes,

So Orissa has another wave of elections. The time with new avatars carrying Jagannath Jyoti and more of Indira style eloquence, complete with hi-tech audio-visuals. But for 15 year old Tularam, whose mother got Rs 5,000 as relief after the news of his father's starvation death got publicized last year this election has very little that is new.

And, borrowing from Parenti's *Democracy for the few* (1983)

*'Elections come and go, and the life of poverty goes on pretty much as before'* (p. 217).

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# The New Surfacing Image of the Teaching Profession

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## Abstract

Current discourses in education circles are on the professional status of the teaching profession due to teachers' continued involvement in labour protests. This paper discusses whether teachers may still be considered as professionals or workers. There is an assumption that if formulated policies reflect on alleviating the plight and actual conditions in which teachers work, strikes can be halted resulting in quality teaching and learning in schools. A literature review was conducted to seek solutions to this impasse. It is expected that with insight into the actual teachers' working conditions by policymakers, barriers that lead to endless labour protests may be alleviated to restore professionalism in teaching.

## Keywords

Labour Relations Act, professionalism, South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU), The National Professional Teachers' Organization of South Africa (NAPTOSA), unionism, teaching profession

## Introduction and background

Various researchers including Bascia and Osmond (2012, 2013), Diko and Letseka (2009), Fleisch (2010), Govender (2004), MacBeath (2012), and Taylor (2011) have debated whether teachers should be regarded as professionals or workers. Such debates arise due to teachers' conditions of employment, the school working environment and the never-ending engagements in labour protests and strikes. These debates lead to the question of whether teachers should be allowed to join unions or simply regard themselves as professionals by denouncing any form of protest action. This question resurfaces behind views by Bascia and Rottmann (2011) that the primary role of unions is to act as the vehicles by which teachers' concerns about their conditions of teaching and learning reach the attention of policymakers. Bascia and Osmond (2013) also contend that there should be relations of cooperation between unions and governments without compromising on teachers' protection of their integrity. Msila (2013) postulates that when teachers go on strike, the future of learners is compromised in the process. Teachers' protest actions always coincide with teaching time in an effort to force the employer to engage in discussions about their working conditions. It is for this reason that Bascia and Osmond (2013) in their address to Education

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International, the global mother body of teacher unions, have openly declared that in countries where there is cooperation between governments and unions there has been remarkable progress in the education system. Bascia and Osmond (2013) further assert that the most powerful unions are those that are able to partner with governments without forgetting the realities under which teachers work in order to submit genuine concerns to policymakers. Teacher unions, according to Compton (2008) and by their very nature, must be responsive to their members' concerns about working conditions. The author is therefore of the view that if unions fail to maintain a balance between the needs of teachers and those of learners during collaborations with governments, then they cease to become unions.

The above argument leads to further debates by Coppersmith (2013) and Msila (2013) on the teachers' right to strike and the significance of industrial action on the future of learners. This includes the question of whether teaching may be regarded as an essential service or not. Examples of essential services are the army and the police who are not allowed to engage in strike action in terms of the South African Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 (LRA) (Republic of South Africa, 1995). Buhlungu and Psoullis (1999), cited in Cherry (2002), acknowledge that the South African LRA is recognised as one of the most friendly and liberal dispensations in the world. They also add that the LRA covers the rights of teachers extensively (Buhlungu and Psoullis, 1999). The LRA in South Africa was established with the intention to ensure that all employees have a say in all matters related to their employment through unions in terms of the Collective Agreement No. 2 of 2005.

Another aim of the LRA, according to Heystek and Lethoko (2006), has been to create an establishment whereby the salaries of employees can be negotiated to prevent possible industrial and labour action that could jeopardise teaching and learning in South African schools. Westa and Mykerezib (2011) also add that among these is the formulation of partnerships and conditions in the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) that are conducive to the promotion of organised and cooperative bargaining by stakeholders (Westa and Mykerezib, 2011). In terms of Section 3.2.1(d) of Collective Agreement No. 2 of 2005, the ELRC is the body that has been in existence to ensure that teachers work in an environment where their rights and responsibilities are taken care of during policy formulation for effective teaching and learning to occur.

In terms of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (SASA) (Republic of South Africa, 1996), teacher unions have to nominate and second teacher representatives to serve on the ELRC for extended periods. It is for this reason the author contends that the teacher representatives at the ELRC are more likely to lose touch with the realities at school level and may end up misrepresenting the concerns of teachers they supposedly represent if they remain there for extended periods. This is likely to happen because teacher representatives serve on the ELRC for indefinite periods of time, ranging from three to five years according to the ELRC regulations as documented in the Employment of Educators' Act 84 of 1998 (EEA) (Republic of South Africa, 1998).

This article articulates on the nature of teaching as a profession in South Africa and how several researchers and critics on teacher unionism regard teaching as a career. The author argues whether policies that are formulated by unions together with the employer at the ELRC level reflect on the plight and actual conditions in which teachers work. A question is also raised on whether the employer's perception and expectation of teachers to act as professionals by sticking to the code of professional ethics is misplaced or rightly placed. Through in-depth literature reviews the author seeks to investigate if policy formulators at the ELRC are knowledgeable about the nature of policies that could lead to enhanced teacher performance. It is expected that when there is insight into the actual conditions under which teachers work, formulated policies may help address the barriers that lead to endless labour unrests and strike actions as policies are reviewed accordingly, as Bascia and Osmond (2013) support this notion on the expected role of powerful unions. A description of

the origins and nature of teacher unionism in South Africa opens this discussion. Thereafter, teacher unionism in the South African context is deliberated on. The status of teaching in the eyes of various researchers comes under review followed by debates on the concept of teacher unionism. This article is concluded with recommendations that focus on bringing back the integrity of the teaching profession.

## **The origins and nature of teacher unionism in South Africa**

To begin this section, it is important to provide a description of a union by engaging with the views and opinions of various researchers on teacher unionism. According to the *ELRC Policy Handbook for Educators* (2003), a union is an organised group of workers who collectively use their strength to have a voice in the workplace. Mothata et al. (2001) describe a union as a structure that is formed in order to secure the interests, salaries and all other employees' conditions of employment. Bascia and Rottmann (2011) explain that the primary function of teacher unions is to act as vehicles by which teachers' concerns about the conditions of teaching and learning reach the attention of policymakers.

To provide the reader with background information on the origins and justification for the need for teacher unionism in South Africa, it is important to briefly explain the circumstances prevailing during the apartheid epoch to be able to confirm if teacher unionism still serves its purpose. Bascia and Osmond (2012) and Govender (2004) state that during the apartheid regime in South Africa, non-white teachers had no significant representation within the then Department of Bantu Education. Govender (2004) adds that only white teachers were represented by the Teachers Federal Council (TFC) which negotiated on their behalf in all labour-related matters that included salaries which were significantly higher than those of other racial groups. Non-white teachers had to be subservient and accept all conditions of service that were negotiated between the State and the TFC on their behalf (Govender, 2004) and without their mandate. In 1976, according to Behr (1984), the Joint Council of Teacher Association (JOCOTAN) came into existence in the then Natal province and its membership covered teachers from all racial groups. The JOCOTAN's aim was to promote professional networks and associations among teachers at grassroots level (Behr, 1984). In Behr's (1984: 106) words, 'JOCOTAN was loosely structured, which could be ascribed to the fact that it was an association, not a union'. Policies were not negotiated with stakeholders and teachers were, as a result, expected to conform to all policies and implement them without question, or be expelled from the profession (Behr, 1984). Jansen (2001: 243) concurs that '...the teacher was conceived as a state functionary with limited autonomy, an obedient servant that executed well defined instructional tasks according to the official syllabus'.

Teacher unionism in South Africa therefore emerged as a result of continued harassment of non-white teachers by the then government officials. Zengele (2011) agrees with Behr (1984) that an association of teachers that is discussed in this section does not really fit the description of a union but an association. The word 'association' is, however, used interchangeably with 'unionism' in South Africa and in this article.

According to Bascia and Osmond's (2013) report, in the 1980s there was an attempt to unify the teaching profession by forming the National Teachers' Unity Forum (NTUF) which failed dismally. Teacher unions which consisted of all racial groups in South Africa emerged as part of the struggle against the oppressive apartheid regime as already enunciated. One of these became the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) which currently has the largest membership of teachers in South Africa (Zengele, 2011). The National Professional Teachers' Organization of South Africa (NAPTOSA) was established post-1994 from a number of previously segregated unions according to (Balt, 2008). Zengele (2011) clarifies that SADTU is an affiliate of a large

labour federation, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which is in a tripartite alliance with the African National Congress (ANC), the ruling party in South Africa together with the South African Communist Party (SACP).

Bascia and Osmond (2013) state that since the formation of a democratically elected government and non-racist Department of Education, which is currently known as the Department of Basic Education (DBE), South Africa has been immersed in the restructuring process of a new education system. The DBE comes with new policies and structures intended to counter old inequities and past imbalances as a result of apartheid. Govender (2004) posits that in 1996 the National Educational Policy Act 27 prescribed that the education department should consult with all education stakeholders when formulating policies. The LRA ensured that all employees, including teachers, had the right to collective bargaining and to embark on strike action as long as the strike was protected and legal. According to Govender (2004), SADTU, as a union mainly consisting of the younger generation of teachers who had endured the unjust apartheid policies including the Soweto 1976 uprisings, saw a huge increase in membership because of their radical approach. Fleisch and Christie (2010) further postulate that the emergence of the mass-based and militant SADTU in the early 1990s was a direct by-product of the political transition and revolution. This new teachers' union grew rapidly as the voice of a large section of newly qualified and younger teachers. The leadership cadre of the union, who were teachers and had started becoming active in the various student organisations, had begun their careers in authoritarian institutions under the apartheid era around the mid-1980s (Fleisch and Christie, 2010). Many of the older generation of principals and inspectors who were either unaffiliated or mainly belonged to NAPTOSA felt threatened by the young teachers who chased them out of schools during the mid to late 1980s according to Fleisch and Christie (2010) and Govender (2004). These young and militant teachers had comparatively good university and college qualifications and were committed to democratic values and social change in education delivery since some of them were either from political exile or were former political prisoners (Fleisch and Christie, 2010).

NAPTOSA suffered a severe blow when Afrikaans teachers withdrew their membership and formed the Suid Afrikaanse Onderwysers Unie (SAOU) (in English, South African Teachers' Union) when they realised that the Afrikaans language was facing extinction in schools through the new collaborative and non-racial policies (Govender, 2004; Zengele, 2011). This further made SADTU the largest union with membership figures reaching about 200,000 in South Africa (Zengele, 2011). That represented about 80% of organised labour in the teaching profession (Govender, 2004). Govender (2004) posits that SADTU and NAPTOSA were both built on non-racist policies and principles although their approaches towards government policies remained different. The SAOU still represents the Afrikaans-speaking teachers in South Africa (Govender 2004).

Govender (2004) alludes to the fact that teacher unions are expected to defend members' interests but also are encouraged to work in partnership with government in developing policies and to uphold standards of professionalism in teaching. This view is in line with Bascia and Osmond's (2013) assertion that unions have to ensure that professionalism in teaching is upheld within the teaching profession while the rights of teachers are also protected.

Levin (2010) asserts that fundamentally all top-performing countries with subscriptions to International Educational, the world mother body of teacher unions, have both strong unions and governments. Bascia and Osmond (2013) also contend that unions that are able to form associations with governments while at the same time safeguarding the needs and concerns of their members are actually strong unions. According to Bascia and Osmond (2013), South Africa is one of the few countries in the world where there has been strong collaboration between government and unions despite the collaboration challenges that will be discussed later in this article.

From the earlier descriptions of unions by various authors, it becomes evident that unions are entities that participate in policy-making decisions within the ELRC in South Africa. The LRA has entrenched the position of teachers through their unions in the ELRC as key stakeholders for the development and formulation of policies. This is a move that has been unheard of in the past pertaining to South Africa politics. Mahlangu and Pitsoe (2013) articulate that teacher unions have grown in stature within the DBE bureaucratic structures through the formulation and establishment of the ELRC. According to the ELRC *Policy Handbook for Educators* (2003), the ELRC is a body that was constituted to bargain for the basic working conditions of teachers in South Africa after the end of apartheid in 1994. Its main purpose was to constitute a body that would look after teachers while they were engaged in effective teaching and learning activities thus redeeming their professional status, according to Zengele (2011).

The main purpose of a union in terms of the EEA and the LRA is to safeguard the interests of its members, who in this case are the teachers as earlier stated in this article. In terms of SASA and the LRC, teacher unions have to be accepted as key and official stakeholders by the employer in all matters relating to the negotiation of improved working conditions as occurs in countries where there is collaboration (Bascia and Osmond, 2013). This seldom happens in South Africa since the employer is often regarded, by the employees, as not sympathetic towards the plight of teachers, hence the labour protests by teachers that have compromised on the quality of education delivery and the status of teaching in South Africa (Bloch, 2009; Fleisch, 2010). The rift is also formed when unions regularly adopt an uncompromising stance when the employer does not accede to its demands and forces a stand-off that threatens effective delivery of effective teaching and learning in schools, as Govender (2004) states.

Apple (2013) adopts a different opinion in that there are incessant attacks on unions from all directions by the private sector and conventional groups in governments in most parts of the world. This could be another indication that not everyone regards teacher unionism in a positive light. The status of the teaching profession is discussed in the following section.

## **The status of the teaching profession**

A number of researchers such as Fernandez (2011), Kingdon and Muzammil (2013) and Mahlangu and Pitsoe (2011, 2013) including media detractors have posed debates on whether teacher unionism promotes professionalism or not. The research conducted by Kingdon and Muzammil (2013) has shown that in terms of the performance of unionised and non-unionised teachers, learners taught by non-unionised teachers seemed to perform much better than those taught by unionised teachers. Contrary to these findings, Bascia and Osmond (2013) report that in countries where teachers are unionised and there is collaboration between government and unions, there is prosperity. These are countries such as Canada, Sweden and the United States of America (USA) to mention a few. In South Africa, research findings by Kingdon and Muzammil (2013) as stated above seem relevant to the South African current chaotic conditions especially in township schools which form the majority. These researchers (Kingdon and Muzammil, 2013) argue that unions have a capacity for massive disruptive behaviour and large mobilisation capability to finance demonstrations and sustain strikes because of teachers' voting power during the election for a new government. It is for this reason that Kingdon and Muzammil (2013) surmise that teacher unions can be both an attractive political ally and powerful enemy in the face of adversity. Kingdon and Muzammil (2013) say such contrasting views indeed generate further discussions on teachers' rights to participate in labour-related disputes which in South Africa remains the teachers' right to go on strike as long as it is a protected and legal strike. When discussions on the possibility of declaring teaching an essential service emerged around government circles in South Africa in 2013, there was a threat

of revolt by SADTU and they even called for the resignation of the Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga (Chuenyane, 2009: 1). The reader must be alerted that the current Minister of Basic Education is one of the founder members of SADTU. The proposed plan by government to declare teaching an essential service was apparently abandoned since it was raised around the period of the general elections and teachers affiliated to SADTU hold a significant voting capacity (Mohamed, 2013).

### *The impact of school governing bodies on the status of the teaching profession*

Heystek (2011) contends that the question of whether teachers are professionals or workers also has to do with the schools and teachers' control by ordinary parents in the majority of schools who constitute the majority seats in School Governing Bodies (SGB). Mncube (2009) posits that it is common knowledge that in township and rural schools, which are generally in poor communities, parents are mostly illiterate or semi-literate. This tends to limit their meaningful participation within the SGBs (Mncube, 2009). When addressing issues that are pertinent to the working conditions of teachers such parents may not have the capacity to deliberate effectively on policies that directly affect teachers (Mncube, 2009). For this reason, Heystek (2011) argues there is a likelihood that most of the parent members serving on the SGB, even with the assumed minimal SGB training, do not have the necessary literacy level to read legislation, draft policies and manage budgets. The author further contends that the ability to read legislation precedes the ability to analyse and interpret policies which sometimes could be a challenge even to some teachers as higher order skills are needed in this regard. The parental literacy levels, their limited experience in management and governance as well as their time and availability to attend meetings are some of the challenges which may limit their active participation and contribution to discussions at governing body meetings (Heystek, 2011; Mncube, 2009). If democracy implies participative democracy for engagement according to Heystek (2011), it is doubtful whether the governance of schools reflects true democracy that would enhance professionalism among teachers.

Mokoena's study (2011) also shows that SGBs mostly in township and rural schools consist of illiterate or semi-literate parents. In addition, Mthiyane et al. (2014) contend that such SGBs are usually not well conversant with school policies and legislation pertaining to school governance. Since SGBs have a stronger say in the recommendations of successful candidates when teaching posts are advertised in terms of the EEA, they may easily and incorrectly operate under the illusion that they are the ones who appoint teachers and thus have to supervise them. Heystek (2011) therefore concludes that the parent SGB component responsibilities could be more accurately defined as administrative functions rather than democratic and educational power tools to enhance quality education and a degree of professionalism among teachers. Meanwhile, teachers are of the opinion that parents should not have a say in their employment including promotions because of their generally lower educational levels and lack of experience within the teaching profession (Heystek, 2011).

### *The salaries of teachers*

Kingdon and Muzammil (2013) and Rivkin et al. (2005) posit that there is increasing evidence that the quality of life of a teacher plays a significant role in learner achievement. This could imply that the nature of the salary of teachers could attract more professionalism in teaching. On the other hand, the research by Diko and Letseka (2009) shows that teachers are more likely to remain within the profession if the processes of filling promotional positions were just and transparent rather than a mere salary raise. While Bennell (2004) says that the immiserated image of

the teaching profession is most apparent in Malawi and Uganda where the average earnings of teachers are less than skilled workers in the private sector, Barry (2014) still maintains that the salaries of teachers in South Africa are limited so as to be less than workers that consider themselves professionals in other sectors.

Armstrong (2014) argues that teachers are underpaid, especially the high-performing ones, which results in their poor performance in the classroom due to the fact that they are paid the same salaries as poorly performing teachers. However, Armstrong (2014) says that there must be means to incentivise teachers in terms of experience and performance to prevent the current attrition rates as espoused by Van der Berg et al. (2011). When it comes to teachers' incentives, Van der Berg et al. (2011) suggest that the time that teachers spend in the classroom should be compared to the private sector employees. In the same breath, the author argues that while teachers have to spend an average of eight hours per day in the classroom, they still have to spend additional hours preparing for the next day's lessons while at the school after hours. In summary, Armstrong's study (2014) has found that the salaries of teachers in South Africa remain unattractive within the civil service and not comparable to the salaries of professionals in other fields. The author views the teachers' flat salary structure which is based on their qualifications as problematic in the sense that even the low-performing teachers are paid the same salary within the DBE. The reader is reminded about an intention by the DBE five years ago to introduce the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) in order to remunerate teachers based on their performance which was rejected by unions (Khanyi, 2013). Unions such as SADTU have rejected such quality assurance mechanisms by the DBE on grounds that schools in South Africa have been operating on an uneven playing field since 1994 and those who are supposed to evaluate teachers are incompetent themselves (Khanyi, 2013).

Letseka et al. (2013) differ from the above point of view on grounds that SADTU routinely organises strikes and protest marches to 'demand' salary increases and related benefits that are often above market value. This happens despite the South African National Treasury's stand that salaries within the public sector and civil service amount to 32% of the country's annual budget, which stood at R850 billion during the SADTU-organised disruptive strike in 2009 (Letseka et al., 2013).

NAPTOSA's former president maintains that teachers are paid meagre salaries and argues that it is time their working conditions were improved in order to bring back the integrity of the profession (Balt, 2008). Balt could be implying that teachers stand little opportunity to be considered as professionals by the public unless their working conditions are improved since most schools are situated in rural or township communities. The author argues that this view by the former NAPTOSA president is contradictory based on the premise on which this union was formed, considering it mainly consists of the formerly privileged population group in South Africa, with affluent backgrounds. While NAPTOSA membership mainly consists of formerly privileged teachers, it also has many black teachers who are older, more experienced and more tolerant of the status quo from the apartheid era.

### *The concept of professionalism in context*

The concept 'professional' is therefore broadly perceived and very fluid in nature while bordering on some degree of subjectivity for the reasons stated in the previous section. Gamble (2010) posits that Etzioni's (1969) influential American study in 1969 grouped teachers, nurses and social workers among the 'semi-professions'. Gamble (2010) goes on to say their teaching has been plagued by its association with women and children, as both groups are accordingly assigned low social status. Beck (2008: 122) concurs that one of the main reasons for the semi-professional positioning

of teaching was that school 'teaching was and remains a strongly feminised occupation'. Whitty (2008) explains that the nature of teachers' professional mandate has become a key policy issue and determinant for governments in many countries. This is the reason behind Bascia and Osmond's (2013) assertion that in countries where collaborations between governments and unions exist, it is true that there is a chance that teachers may begin to regard themselves as professionals. Gamble (2010) uses the trait theory, professionalisation theory and occupational control theory in order to gauge careers on their degrees of professionalism. The result is that, based on the theories presented, teaching is not a profession but a semi-profession (Gamble, 2010). MacBeath (2012) explains teaching as a career path that is characterised by minimal entry requirements for training, low pay and benefits, and has a location at the bottom rung of the ladder of society, in what is cynically referred to as women's work. Ingersoll (2003) further says teachers suffer from lack of autonomy and flexibility. In South Africa, teachers lack flexibility in terms of what to teach in class as they are confined by the syllabus that is set by the DBE and its nine provincial education departments. Autonomy is said to be non-existent due to the fact that district officials, departmental heads and principals have to monitor teachers' work even when they have limited proficiency in those learning areas or subjects (Khanyi, 2013).

Former SADTU president Thobile Ntola (2008), in one of his public speeches, reiterated that SADTU was fully committed towards the creation of a union that only consisted of professionals. Ntola proclaimed that SADTU was going to drive the union towards the attainment of professional ethics by getting rid of all members that exhibited unprofessional and unethical behaviour according to Ntola (2008), had to be seen as the face and image of the profession and not be regarded as a trade union. In contrast to Ntola's words, the then ousted SADTU president, Willie Madisha, said that SADTU was only regarded as a union of workers and not professionals. It is such opposing views by the two past SADTU presidents that have been the source of confusion as to whether teaching should be regarded as a profession or not, thus confusing its membership in terms of orientation and values.

Hartshorne (1992: 323) contends that it has been the under-privileged teachers in South Africa who have identified themselves with the proletariat because of the injustices meted out on them by the apartheid government before 1994 in the form of Bantu Education. The author therefore suggests it could still be improbable and premature for the majority of teachers to have conducted themselves as professionals considering the prevailing inhumane treatment and working conditions before 1994. The behaviour of teachers is, however, questionable when there is currently lawlessness and violence by SADTU members themselves against teachers who do not participate in strike actions and protests during the post-apartheid era of democratic rule in South Africa (Fleisch (2009) and Zengele (2011)). This has led to some authors describing the state of education in South Africa as in a form of collapse because of the loss of the aspect of professionalism among teachers (Bloch, 2009).

Accordingly, Moe (2001) posits that the aim of teacher unions is to enhance the quality of education. Various training workshops in South Africa, for example Outcomes Based Education (OBE) sessions, Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS) and the Annual National Assessments (ANA), were also conducted by SADTU and NAPTOSA for their members (Govender, 2004). The continued involvement of unions alongside the employer bodies during the development of policies in the ELRC is meant to highlight the interests and drive by unions to have better-quality employment conditions for teachers. Dave Balt (2008) stated that it is for this reason that teachers need to be protected from the employers' sometimes unjust policies by the unions since they perform a crucial function in bringing about a strong culture of teaching and learning in schools. Balt (2008) further asserts that as teachers continue to be undermined by society and paid less than other professions, it is time to ensure that the conditions under which they have to work are greatly

improved to enhance the image of the profession. NAPTOSA, however, still maintains that if teachers and their unions aspire to be treated with respect as professionals, they have to maintain the same professionalism when negotiating for higher salaries and improved working conditions (Heystek and Lethoko, 2006)

In terms of NAPTOSA, professionalism means that learners' rights have to be accorded a priority before those of teachers. Govender (2004) says it is however ironic that NAPTOSA and its members which mainly consists of advantaged teachers, embarked on industrial action in August 1999 and again in 2007, which was organized by SADTU for the adjustment of teachers' salaries and other conditions of service. During the strike, learners were abandoned in classrooms despite NAPTOSA's insistence on putting the rights of the child first (Govender, 2004; Zengele, 2013). In conclusion to this section, one is drawn to consider the extent to which professionalism is held in high esteem by NAPTOSA when resorting to strike action alongside SADTU that they supposedly detest for its militant and radical tactics.

One might question if unions have now become aware of how the employer takes the concerns of teachers seriously when there is a danger of militancy and havoc by its members. The question that arises is from the argument about appointments of some of the top officials of the DBE through 'cadre deployment' as enunciated by Pattillo's (2012) study on 'Quiet corruption in South Africa'. The status of the teaching profession and its integrity lies in the nature of appointments and promotions of such officials especially when such stakeholders are involved in decision-making structures at the ELRC and within the hierarchy of the DBE. It has, therefore, become doubtful whether the aspirations of teachers who are at grass roots level are well articulated by their representatives since these officials are deployed to the ELRC for extended periods of time, as earlier argued. The author also questions the academic and professional integrity of such politically connected individuals to hold high office and make important decisions.

One may also question who, between the DBE and teacher unions, is responsible for taking advantage of learners' rights and thus compromising their right to be taught? SADTU is quoted by Heystek and Lethoko (2006: 227) as saying that 'as soon as all the working conditions of teachers have been addressed, professionalism could then be a possibility'. Similarly, Zengele (2011) argues that SADTU has also contradicted itself by saying '...the day militancy stops so will SADTU existence stop'. SADTU continues to defend the militant and unprofessional standpoint of its members in the face of adversity and controversy. There could still be some justification for this militant attitude on grounds that the formerly privileged population in South Africa has not quite been subjected to similar inhumane conditions that black teachers have been exposed to. Such an argument may provide the supposition that NAPTOSA, which mainly consists of the previously advantaged communities in SA, seems to have acquired a more professional approach. Based on all the deliberations above, it becomes probable to begin engaging in debates around teacher unionism as appearing in the following section.

## **Debates on teacher unionism**

Perhaps it is noteworthy to begin this section by reminding the reader that debates on teacher unionism are not new – they are as old as the profession itself. For the purposes of the historical aspect of this article this section therefore looks into debates from 1992 to 2015. Secondly, some of the debates relate to teacher unionism in South Africa which has been alluded to be almost similar to the USA situation as argued by Govender (2004) and Zengele (2011). Similarities include the nature of teacher unionism in both countries in the form of the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) which could be likened to NAPTOSA and SADTU respectively because of their membership and approach by their members.

Van der Westhuizen (1994) argues that relations between the employer and employees have a clear history of tension and animosity. There is further acknowledgement of conflict, suspicion and mistrust during all negotiations for improved working conditions with each party maintaining an uncompromising position (Van der Westhuizen, 1994). Govender (2004: 279) articulates it is a well-known fact that unions like SADTU have had to embark on industrial action on several occasions in order not to be seen 'as a handmaiden of the state' while risking the profile of its members as professionals. The engagement of SADTU in industrial action has been cited in several subsequent events to date since on several occasions it has also been characterised by violence and intimidation as reported by Fleisch (2009) and Zengele (2011). Vadi (1993: 87) also states that 'this negative attitude by the DBE towards challenges faced by teachers has resulted in their harassment by the employer and scorn by the public'. Teacher unions are perpetually criticised for allowing their members to engage in strike action and abandon learners in the classroom (Bloch, 2009; Chuenyane, 2009: 1; Diko and Letseka, 2009; Pattillo, 2012; Taylor, 2011).

Hartshorne (1992: 297) observes that SADTU has emerged with new encounters that seem to threaten the supremacy of the DBE as the employer because of their immense power of inciting teachers to engage in labour action thus bringing teaching and learning to a standstill. Govender (2004) asserts that SADTU derives this power from the fact that the current ANC government has remained in power from 1994 to date through the power of the vote that has been cast by SADTU teachers among others as an alliance partner through COSATU, a labour federation. Fleisch (2009), Govender (2004) and Zengele (2013) further accentuate that SADTU has succeeded in disrupting schooling by maintaining an uncompromising stance during negotiations when the employer proposes deals that are unfavourable to the concerns of teachers. The apparent lack of commitment by the DBE to resolve petty and avoidable disputes and the time lost while teachers are on strike can be measured by their adamant standpoint as well during labour-related negotiations. It is a usual occurrence that agreements are reached after considerable damage has been caused by the strike action. This, in addition, brings more disrepute to the teaching profession, after it was earlier reported to be in tatters by Bloch (2009) among other writers. Ntshangase (2001: 53) argues that most journalists and conservative writers have struggled to identify the link between teacher union militancy and the actual conditions under which black teachers have to work. Siphso Masondo (2015) has also repeatedly reported on the sale of promotional posts in schools and collaboration in corrupt activities by DBE officials with SADTU officials over the sale of senior managerial positions. In a similar report, when the DBE Minister Angie Motshekga was questioned about proposed corrective action by the DBE there was a promise to conduct an investigation in 2014 which was reported in 2015 (Chuenyane, 2015: 1).

SADTU has a long history of fighting for equal rights and a democratic education system that does not discriminate against its citizens on grounds of race, gender and religion according to their magazine (Ntola, 2008). Under such circumstances, one may analyse such criticism concerning the lack of professionalism with extreme caution as the General Secretary of SADTU in Kwazulu-Natal, Dolly Caluza, and other SADTU officials have repeatedly denied any involvement by the union in acts of violence (Bauer, 2013: 1). Masondo (2015: 6) and Saunders (2011) have also reported that teacher unions '...consist of false leadership which resorts to strike at the drop of a hat to the detriment of the education system'. One has to ponder SADTU's role during the fight against apartheid which led to the introduction of the DBE.

Bascia and Osmond (2013) postulate that teacher unions have to know the concerns of teachers while at the same time ensuring that there is quality teaching and learning in schools. Peterson (2006) also argues that the unions should also ensure that both the rights of teachers and those of learners are safeguarded. Despite the type of teacher unionism in South Africa including the views and opinions by various writers and scholars, the origins of education provisioning in South Africa

have to reflect the origins of militancy to give an objective view of teaching as a career and its terrain.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the question that needs to be posed is who will take care of the rights of learners while the fight for teachers' rights continues? There is a need for learners to be taught and accorded the respect they deserve by the DBE, policymakers and unions to ascertain that the stumbling blocks that are stalling the wheels of transformation in education are removed. This equally goes for the removal of members of the teaching profession that are ill-disciplined and go to class ill-prepared thus compromising the integrity of the already compromised profession. This could be a challenge for stakeholders such as unions because their existence depends on problems affecting teachers. Their survival and existence also depends on teachers' monthly subscriptions. To guarantee that this happens, communities are urged to provide support for the teachers who are entrusted with the responsibility of implementing policy programmes in the classroom. Teachers deserve to be accorded working conditions that are favourable towards effective teaching and learning. This could be accomplished by scrutinising the responsibilities and the composition of SGBs since they form the majority and are key members. At the same time, the public is urged to ensure that teachers indeed teach when they are supposed to teach, with diligence and complete commitment to the values of the teaching profession. The general perception that teachers are professionals and the perception by teachers that they are workers poses a challenge as to whether the real issues they face can be resolved, how and when. The resolution of current educational challenges requires all stakeholders to take the responsibility to review the past before placing judgement on the present and the future of teaching as a career. Only when consensus exists on the clarity about the past will the present status of teachers be ascertained. This includes the academic discourses on whether teachers are professionals or workers for the pedagogical good of all.

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Thulani Zengele is the Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management at the University of South Africa. He has a doctorate in Educational Management. His interests include educational policy, management and teacher unionism. Thulani has been in education for the past 35 years as a Teacher, Departmental Head, School Principal, Lecturer, Senior Lecturer and Academic Coordinator for the Department of Educational Leadership and Management at Unisa.

# Media Health Images of Africa and the Politics of Representation: A South African AIDS Choir Counter-Narrative

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## Abstract

This paper is an ethnomusicological and media studies collaborative study that discusses the politics of representation on media health images, especially HIV/AIDS in Africa, and how a South African AIDS support group and choral ensemble offers a counter-narrative to the images that are seen in the Western media. Using ethnographic data on the group's organization, music events, and interviews with choir members, we argue that Siphithemba Choir's story is a narrative of self-representation that subverts the appropriation of their story by the scientific community, and counters the helpless image of HIV-infected individuals that often comprise the face of HIV/AIDS in Africa in the mainstream media.

## Keywords

HIV/AIDS, images, Africa, media politics, music, representation

## Introduction

At the start of the writing of this paper, there was a media-driven ebola panic across the United States. In the reporting on the outbreak of the virus on several cable networks, motion pictures of sick Africans and the interment of black bodies in West African countries by health workers in hazmat suits were juxtaposed on the screen with the still and healthy image of a white American doctor in New York. The doctor and two other missionaries before him had contracted the disease while on a humanitarian mission to Liberia. The media-driven panic made well for political rhetoric and campaign, complicating and vitiating thus the badly needed education on the public health situation at the time in the US. Ebola does not constitute an epidemic in the US compared with enterovirus D68 that hit up to 48 states in the US with over 1,100 cases by November 2014.

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Kimberly Leonard, a health reporter with the *US News and World Report* warned “enterovirus, not ebola, is the disease worth worrying about [for Americans]” (2 October 2014). Searching for reporting on enterovirus D68, one finds the image of a black boy in a Denver, Colorado hospital taken on 8 September 2014, reused by both the *New York Times* (25 September 2014) (Saint Louis, 2014) and the *US News and World Report* (2 October 2014) (Leonard, 2014) to depict the impact of the virus.<sup>1</sup> The question then is: why is Africa and the black body often equated with global disease epidemics?

The media images referenced above are not unprecedented. Rather it has been a centuries-long practice, even in instances where diseases have been introduced into the African continent from Europe: for instance, smallpox (Theal, 1899), and the Spanish influenza of 1918 (Philips, 1990; Ranger, 1988). Mainstream media accounts tend to present reductionist views whereby African bodies become equated with disease and helplessness. A similar reductionist approach to reporting would characterize African images of HIV/AIDS in Western media especially since the early 1990s, when suddenly the attention shifted from North America, where initially HIV/AIDS was associated with white homosexuals, to Africa as the epicenter of the global AIDS pandemic. The representations are characterized by what health sociologist Paula Treichler described as “Eurocentric, biased, doomsday Western AIDS coverage” (1999: 209). In this media coverage, Africans at large are cast in the light as passive recipients of external aid; too ignorant, too poor and so unsophisticated to understand how to deal with the HIV/AIDS and other epidemics. They echo thus “The White Man’s Burden” theme of Rudyard Kipling’s 1899 poem, which has been widely interpreted as depicting Africans and other non-Europeans as lacking in intellectual capacity, who therefore need the enlightened Europeans to lift them out of their social and cultural sorry states. The implication is that Westerners maintain a *National Geographic* image of their African counterparts and which in turn shape public policies and Western response to disease epidemic in Africa (Schraeder and Endless, 1998: 29).

While this style of media coverage of Africa has received broad scholarly criticism, what has been missing in the discourse is Africans’ ways of engaging in the conversations on global health. Using the case study of the Siphithemba Choir, a HIV/AIDS support and choir group at the McCord Hospital in Durban, South Africa, we suggest that the choir provides a counter-narrative that dispels the doomsday, coffin-bound health representations of Africa in Western media. We examine the group’s operation of income-generating projects, their use of music and dance, and the nature of the choir’s interaction with the Western biomedical scientists in on-going research on AIDS treatment. Drawing equally from interviews with choir members, we argue that Siphithemba Choir’s story is a narrative of self-representation, aimed at first subverting the appropriation of their story by the scientific community who showcase them as their (medical scientists) accomplishment, and second, countering the helpless image of them that is often misrepresented in mainstream media using the platform of music and performances. Furthermore, a brief examination of the contextual encounters of the choir with American audiences also suggests that the members have a consciousness of themselves as engaging in the campaign of counter-narrative to the often one-directional HIV/AIDS discourse.

## **Towards Media Politics and African News Reportage**

Several inter-related paradigms provided theoretical guidance for this work. We employed the agenda setting theory and framing, as well as the concepts of representation and stereotype as the bedrock for this paper. We equally highlighted the global news ownership, production, and dissemination as forces that shape international news. This is vital because the political economy of contemporary news production may be construed as having become an oligopolistic venture,

dominated by three global news agencies (Reuters, Associated Press, and Agence France Presse) also known as “The Big Three” who produce the majority of international news consumed in the entire world (McPhail, 2006). Located in the global core countries and megacities – New York, London, and Paris – the corporate structure, nature of services, and location of these news agencies have dominated the international news flow discourse since the 1960s including the New World Information and Communication Order (NWICO) debate. To date, peripheral nations are not able to withstand the competition posed by these core-based news agencies nor have the news agencies changed their style of reportage on the peripheral or developing nations. Therefore, international news production is grossly influenced by underlying cultural and historical factors that stem from the electronic colonialism ideology. McPhail (2006) noted the global news agencies’ reportage of African (and Latin American) news stories is often negative and has a one-way slant that does not equalize the East–West and North–South balance. Even Roberto Savio’s Inter Press Service (IPS) agency attempts to mitigate the negative news about developing countries by encouraging liaisons between civil societies, non-governmental agencies, and policy makers in developing countries in recognizing the poor and oppressed has proven insignificant in the face of fierce competition from The Big Three. The ownership of news agencies therefore reflects the interest of newsmakers. Since Africa does not partake in major news production, news about Africa is often presented from a Western perspective, albeit in a predigested and romanticized fashion.

Equally as important as the political economy of news ownership and production, is how news stories are selected and presented. Whereas media are successful in informing the general public on matters of importance, they are capable of influencing how those “important” facts are viewed, digested, and acted upon. The agenda setting theory provides a clear framework for examining what news producers choose to present as newsworthy and how those events are framed. The standard agenda setting (McCombs and Shaw, 1973) description has always been – news media may not be successful at telling us what to think but stunningly successful in telling us what to think about. This has been furthered to entail how to think about it and, perhaps, what to do about it (McCombs, 1997). In essence, and considering that citizens of the West view the broadcast networks and newspapers as their sole sources of information, the selected African news stories form the basis upon which they construct their meaning of Africa (Pew Research Center, 2013). In line with our argument, the function of the press media in this manner then serves as a dysfunction of displayed negative imagery of Africa.

Akin to agenda setting is the framing technique and subsequent priming effect. Framing is a technique that allows press media producers to focus on particular issues while situating them within a field of their own meaning – a meaning that they consider dominant. James Tankard (1999), as cited in Sparks (2010), defined framing as the “central organizing idea for news content that supplies a context and suggests what the issue is through the use of selection, emphasis, exclusion, and elaboration” (2010: 182). Framing serves a hegemonic purpose of influencing news audience’s reception of the story, i.e. it influences a particular interpretation that can be attributed to a story – in this case, a negative interpretation of news about Africa. The accompanying priming effect then facilitates and reinforces the impact by creating an association of those stories and any other stories or thoughts about Africa. Sadly, news media have been incorporating this technique for decades in their presentation of African news. The idea of organizing stories about Africa as different and deviant draws a dichotomy of “us” versus “them”. Ibelema considers this practice as eliciting realities for Africa that are “inconsistent with modernity or at variance with standard contemporary practices” (2014: 164) because “Western identity is, in effect, the definition of modernity. Deviation from it, therefore, constituted otherness” (2014: 165). In this case, therefore, reportage such as relates to health and HIV/AIDS in particular, the standard contemporary practice or reality for infected patients in the US presents a healthy and successful person(s) with a name, a

face and other qualifications, while the polarity for Africa is a nameless, disheveled, poor woman or child lacking agency.

The political economy of news production and the process of agenda setting and framing in turn shapes the dynamics of representation, and in the case of developing countries generates stereotypical modes of representation in the mainstream media. The concept of representation as an ideology for interpreting meaning was furthered by Stuart Hall. For Hall (2003), representation allows for the production and dissemination of meaning through the use of language, signs, and images. He deconstructs the vulnerability that continuous (mis)representation might induce on people in their quest of making meaning with the signs and symbols (language) that media present. Hall's view draws inference from the semiotic and discursive ideas of the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1960) and the language/power of French philosopher Michel Foucault (1980), respectively. De Saussure posits that language is a system of signs; we merge the idea or concept in our head with a particular form or text. He described this as having two elements: one being a signifier and the other, the signified. For example, the first element could be an image, the second, a concept as in a shape of a heart being an image and the concept will be love (de Saussure, 1916). Unlike de Saussure, Foucault emphasizes discourse as a system of representation. Similar to de Saussure's signs, Foucault explains that a group of statements can equally produce meaning through language. Hall (2003) explains that for Foucault, the discursive events may not necessarily happen at the same point in time. Rather, over time certain discourse could form a powerful meaning just as signs are equally capable of evoking meaning. Applying this to our current study, Africa and its stories have been attributed a negative concept by mainstream media through signs, photographs, and discursive news endeavors, etc. The problem though, as de Saussure and Hall assert, is that meaning should not be fixed; meaning should float and change. Unfortunately, the mainstream media still renders the signifier and the signified as a fixed concept with an immutable meaning as concerns Africa, thus perpetuating anachronistic interpretations of Africa when, in essence, other variant interpretations have emerged.

### *Africa in Western Media*

The African continent, especially, the sub-Saharan region has been continuously framed in a negative light since the inception of the news media. Ibelema (2014) traced this history to the *Traveler's Tale* whose main purpose is to entertain and present an imagery that represents the Other, the Strange, the Unknown, sometimes with conscious effort to paint a picture that is directly contrary to the Known. David Spurr (1993: 3) succinctly asks: "how does the Western writer construct a coherent representation out of a strange and (to the writer) often incomprehensible reality confronted in the non-Western world?" While traveler's tales may be centuries old, their impact still persist and powerfully so that they still remain the frame of reference and ultimately have constituted the template by which news and stories from Africa are reported. Evidence of this abounds especially in news reports on public health, and we discuss this under five categories.

*Commodification of African News Stories.* The commoditization of news in a digitized world has ensured that news is increasingly no longer a mere presentation of current events but has equally incorporated the notion of entertainment. "If it bleeds, it leads" has become the dominant guiding principle for the selection and presentation of news and this is particularly evident in the coverage of African news. Therefore, in their quest for ratings and increased readership and viewership, news editors and reporters strive to present their audience with deviant stories that entertain as



**Figure 1.** “The perils of pregnancy: one woman’s tale of dying to give birth.” Source: *Time* magazine Monday, 14 June 2010.

much as, if not more than, they inform (Ibelema, 2014; Okigbo, 1995). This argument has continuously dominated the international news flow discourse that it sometimes is disregarded and likened to a broken record. Mody (2010) observed that the “news frames of media of different countries reflected not just their national interests but also what they deemed to be expectations of their particular audiences” (2014: 171). Such expectations include negative developments and events including crisis, disease, disaster, corruption, among others (Mellese and Muller, 2012).

**Objectification/Reductionist Approach.** Some scholars however assert that Africa is no longer represented in negative light in mainstream media (see de Beer, 2010) despite blatant headlines like the May 13, 2000 cover story of *The Economist*: “The hopeless continent,” and Charlayne Hunter-Gault’s description of Africa with four D’s, namely “death, disaster, disease, and despair” (2006: 107). The counter-argument maintains that such representation is no longer the case. But our findings of specific examples from the same year (2010) when de Beer published his study shows otherwise. African news stories still lack the extensive coverage that encompasses some history and life of individuals in the news other than the zeroed-in event. Equally and often, Africans infected with HIV/AIDS are presented in the news with little or no human dignity. They are nameless, have no life except their life with AIDS or other ailments as depicted in the story – basically reduced to mere objects. For example, *Time* magazine’s 14 June 2010 coverage of a woman dying in child birth in Sierra Leone was accompanied by a naked picture of the woman with both breasts clearly exposed – a picture that would seem obscene for an American woman but nevertheless, acceptable for an African woman.

Another example is the CNN’s 10 September 2010 report on Kenya by Kevin McKenzie, which focused on child labor with the caption “Boy earns 1 cent a goat in slaughter trade.” (<http://www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/africa/09/15/kenya.child.labor/index.html?iref=allsearch>).

This story was accompanied by a three-minute video that isolated eight-year-old and six-year-old boys transporting goats to a market square. Whilst these examples may be construed as laudable investigative journalism that unearths child labor and a lack of basic needs for pregnant mothers, they are typical of the brand of stories that are covered for Africa. It is in light of this type of reportage that *Columbia Journalism Review* writer Karen Rothmyer (2011) reported a study that reviewed African news coverage by the 10 most read US newspapers and magazines between May

and September 2010. Results show that of the 250 stories about Africa that were portrayed in the selected newspapers and magazines, 245 of the stories were about poverty in Africa while only five stories covered the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth in Africa which is one of the most current news events on the continent.

*Binary Oppositional Views.* Historically, the coverage of HIV/AIDS by the Western, especially US media, always assumes binary oppositional views. Early in the 1980s, the news then was framed in what Gilman (1988) referred to as the “healthy us and the diseased other” (1988: 4). Similarly, Albert (1986) noted that readers of newspapers and magazines in the 1980s were fascinated by AIDS stories not because of the disease but because of the deviant character of the victims. Initially, the binary oppositions are depicted by the labels of homosexuals versus heterosexuals, then the black community versus the white community, and people with low socio-economic status and those with high socio-economic status. Later that label is transferred to Africa and other developing regions of the world versus the developed countries of the world. Bardhan’s (2009) study reviewed AIDS stories coverage by the three major news agencies, the Associated Press, Reuter, and Agence France Presse. Results show that HIV/AIDS was framed as “a problem of the lesser-developed world” (2009: 300). In other words, AIDS in the United States is different from the “African AIDS.” An example of this rhetoric of Otherness is the stark difference between the faces of AIDS for the US and the African countries. The faces of AIDS in the USA include sports celebrities, rock stars and entertainers who are successful in their various fields. According to the list collated by Brian Krans of Healthline (2013), famous faces or poster personalities of HIV/AIDS in the US over several decades include: NBA champion Earvin “Magic” Johnson; actor Rock Hudson; summer Olympics gold medalist (diver) Greg Louganis; rock musician Freddie Mercury; visual artist Keith Haring; Robert Reed of The Brady Bunch; winner of the Triple Grand Slam tennis titles Arthur Ashe, among many others. They serve as spokespersons, writers of bestselling books and philanthropists. In contrast, the faces of AIDS in Africa are nameless and are often represented by women and children who lack agency. Descriptively, they are poor, live in very rural communities with no basic sanitary amenities. They are often extremely thin, and exude the imagery of severe suffering and abject poverty as evidenced in the February 2003 TED video by a US journalist Kristen Ashburn ([https://www.ted.com/talks/kristen\\_ashburn\\_s\\_heart\\_rending\\_pictures\\_of\\_aids](https://www.ted.com/talks/kristen_ashburn_s_heart_rending_pictures_of_aids)).

With no intents to trivialize the impact of AIDS in Africa or to negate that some AIDS infected people in Africa bore the likeness of the depiction provided by mainstream media and independent journalists, we contend that such presentation is skewed, incomplete, misleading, and lacks objectivity. It therefore, falls within the oft-criticized realm of stereotype, otherness, and tribal fixation (Ibelema, 2014).

*Philanthropic View: Helpless and Lacking Agency.* Similar to the binary oppositional frame of health news about Africa is the subsequent need to help the needy and helpless of Africa. The majority of health coverage in Africa, even when the theme is not about transnational relations, will ultimately include assistance from the United States or other Western countries. Mwiinga (1993) noted that AIDS stories about Zambia in the 1990s were mostly focused on political donations. Equally, Kalyango and Onyebadi’s (2012) study show political and health issues to be prominent themes in the international news coverage about Africa and most often the health crises is presented alongside attempts from the United States to provide aid to those countries.

We did a simple search on *The New York Times* website for “AIDS in Africa” and reviewed three random stories to determine to what extent political donations and philanthropic themes surface in the story. Just a few examples: The first article, “AIDS Progress in South Africa is in Peril” which showcases a print advertising for tombstones “Buy One, Get One Free” recounts improvements

that the South African government have made in controlling the spread of AIDS. Shortly after recounting this effort, this paragraph was interjected:

Though few Americans or even South Africans realize it, the nation owes much of its success to a single United States program, the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, or PEPFAR, started in 2003 under President George W Bush. It has poured more than \$3 billion into South Africa, largely for training doctors, building clinics and laboratories, and buying drugs. (*New York Times*, 25 August 2013).

The second article, "Three Approaches to Beating the AIDS Epidemic in South Africa" introduced the story with an indication that the AIDS epidemic is at its worst in high-risk subgroups such as gay men, prostitutes, truckers, prisoners, miners, etc. The very next paragraph adds: "To have any hope of beating the epidemic, it must focus on such groups, experts say. Many pilot projects to do that have been started with aid from the United States government program called PEPFAR." (*New York Times*, 25 August 2013). The third article, "Where AIDS Steals Life by the Millions: 'Fire in the Blood' Spotlights AIDS in Africa" was supposed to be a review of the movie "Fire in the Blood." Also, the second paragraph expressed: "Former President Bill Clinton, the intellectual property lawyer James Love, the journalist Donald G McNeil Jr of The New York Times and others offer perspectives on this situation and also on the concern that pharmaceutical companies value profits over lives" (*New York Times*, 5 September 2013).

*Distorted Content.* African news stories are not accorded the time, space, and talent that are needed to produce a cohesive and comprehensive report. This results in diminution of information in the coverage of events. Often sound bites gathered from parachute journalism are presented. Prior to the internet, satellite and other instantaneous and less expensive communication systems, the price for supporting a single foreign correspondence for one year is about US\$300,000 (McPhail, 2006); it is understandable then if Western media were unable to maintain correspondents who will spend enough time to gather substantive information on a news story. One wonders why even today when information is easily accessible, international news coverage is still much distorted and decontextualized. This resonates with Ibelema's assertion that "making an increasingly complex world comprehensible to the American populace necessitates the situating of news within familiar reference points or stereotypes" (2014: 170). Referencing a study by Bleiker and Kay (2007), it is evident that not only are Western media incapable (or maybe refuse) to understand this "foreign" culture, they may have a preconceived lens through which stories from Africa should be viewed.

Bleiker and Kay (2007) reviewed how AIDS in Africa is represented through photography by Western photographers and Africans living within the same community with HIV/AIDS infected patients. They used two frameworks: the pluralist and the humanist perspectives of studying photography and they encompass several tenets including the difference or distance between the photographer and the photographed. As with many creative endeavors, the art of photography is subjective and could therefore be influenced by many factors including social factors. Undoubtedly, the photographer enjoys the autonomy of choosing what image to capture among many choices. Similarly, the photographer decides on the lens angle, the choice of focus and lack of focus, wide versus close-up shots, black and white versus color, and other techniques and aesthetics inherent in the art of photography – and that is how he or she tells a story and showcases the intended meaning that each photograph exhibits. As mentioned earlier, a photographer's decision is influenced by many factors: socio-economic, political, economic, race, gender, religion, etc. The distance between the photographer and the photographed therefore is determined by to what extent the above factors influence the gap – either by narrowing it or widening it – a gap that Godeau, as cited in Hayes (2015: 173), referred to as "double-distance." Bringing in the pluralist and humanist perspectives mentioned earlier, the pluralist presents a heterogeneous perspective due to the close

affinity of the photographer and the photographed. Put differently, the pluralist photographer knows more about the photographed – he or she is aware of other factors that shape the existence of his or her object or person and so could bring in other perspectives that are beyond the prism of a humanist who may confine his or her art to just the obvious. Bringing this argument to our topic, the pluralist is aware that an AIDS patient has a lot of other things happening in his or her life and so will not fixate all shots on the person and AIDS while the humanist is oblivious of other activities in and around the life of an AIDS patient; therefore, all pictures tell the story of the person and AIDS. In describing the humanist perspective, Bleiker and Kay noted, “humanist photographic engagements, well meant as they are, contain residues of colonial values. They are more likely to invoke pity, rather than compassion. They reflect how Western – and thus very often universalized—accounts of HIV/AIDS in Africa are based on very specific assumptions, even stigma, revolving around the portrayal of people affected by HIV/AIDS as passive victims, removed from the everyday realities of the Western world” (2007: 141). They contend the skewed humanistic view and endorsed pluralistic viewpoint in representing HIV/AIDS in Africa. They consider pluralist photography as capable of providing different perspectives of the object other than the established Western standpoint; thus, it “seeks to validate local photographic practices in an attempt to create multiple sites for representing and understanding the psychological, social, and political issues at stake” (2007: 141). Their preference does not necessarily exonerate pluralistic view from some stereotypical assumptions since there will always be some level of subjective insinuations inherent in every photograph especially if examined at a later time than the moment the photograph was taken. Moreover, photographs are incapable of depicting precisely the natural state of the object, which is photographed because every angle could tell a different story. Bleiker and Kay compared the iconographic photographs (humanist) of AIDS patients in Uganda with photographs of Ethiopian children affected by AIDS (pluralist). The construction of meaning through each prism of this typology provided a different perspective and thus different meaning about people infected with HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa.

Below are two photographs “Florence and Ssengabi” by Hooper and “My Favorite Things” featuring Tananesh by Eric Gottesman taken from humanist and pluralist perspectives respectively. The humanist perspective focused only on the disease, so Bleiker and Kay described the first picture in these words:

Both Florence and Ssengabi were visibly ill. Taken during the early period of Western public awareness about HIV/AIDS, the Hooper photograph provided a “face” that could symbolize the AIDS crisis in Africa. It was published widely in the international media, including Newsweek and the Washington Post... The photograph is very confronting in its direct visualization of illness, suffering, and death (2007: 147).

They also highlighted stark inequality of power between the photographer and the photographed – a trait among many Western journalists and photographers which often compromises the dignity of the person being photographed. This is a staple for many Western journalists covering health stories in Africa because “any Western photographer, no matter how well meant and sensitive his or her artistic and political engagement is, operates at a certain distance from poverty, conflict, and disaster.” (2007: 148). In contrast, a different representation through the pluralist prism provides a picture where Tananesh tells a story that does not have AIDS as the center of her narrative. Granted she is infected with HIV/AIDS, but her life does not revolve around the disease, there are other interesting events happening in her life. Bleiker and Kay described her photograph in these words:

Her pictures do not represent suffering. They place her existence in a larger personal and social context. As opposed to the Hooper photograph, these pictures do not portray a decontextualized world of darkness



**Figure 2.** “Florence and Ssengabi.” Source: Hooper. “My Favorite Things.” Source: Eric Gottesman.

and gloom. Instead, Tenanesh captures the dailyness of her life, its ups and downs, her determination to lead a relatively normal childhood... Tenanesh is not a passive victim in the way Hooper portrays Florence and Ssengabi... We are inevitably confronted with the life of a single person, rather than an abstract image of a disease (2007: 155–156).

Clearly the likes of Tananesh’s photo image and story do not form the frame of reference on health reportage on Africa. In contrast to the photo narrative on Florence and Ssengabi, Tananesh in her own personal photo narrative shows her as having agency and power, and her life means a lot more than the virus that inhabits her body. It is in light of the above, that we introduce The Siphithemba Choir and their story as a counter-narrative to Western media representation of AIDS infected persons in Africa.

### **Towards a Performative Counter-Narrative: Siphithemba Choir in the Politics of Representation**

The Siphithemba Choir (see Okigbo, 2011) came out of the HIV/AIDS support group that was founded in 1997 at the McCord Mission Hospital in Durban. Its founding was as a source of alternative care in the form of spiritual counseling, prayers, and social support network for HIV positive individuals at the time when, due to slow dissemination of antiretroviral drugs, doctors and caregivers had little medical help that they could render to patients. The support group was initiated by Mrs Nonhlanhla Mhlongo, a medical social worker, whose primary responsibility was to coordinate the medical social services and to administer pre- and post-HIV/AIDS diagnosis counseling. She was trained at the University of Zululand between 1975 and 1980, an institution that comprised one of the major centers of the South African Students’ Organization, the platform for propagating the black-consciousness movement (BCM), led by Steve Biko. Through her training as a social worker at this university, and her experience of the BCM, she followed the philosophy of self-reliance, social networking, and support system as critical forms of intervention in struggle experience, a philosophy that would shape her work at McCord Hospital, and which she inculcated into the members of the support group and choral ensemble.

As a group of individuals who live the experience of being HIV-positive, the choir members show clear understanding about the global health politics, especially the politics of HIV/AIDS, and how that highlights the North–South power disparities in the spheres of economics, culture, and politics. Their aim from the moment of their formation, therefore, has been to counter the dehumanizing images and narratives on different levels, first and foremost through healthy lifestyles realized by engaging in work and industry in order to earn a living for themselves rather than relying on donor handouts from foreign NGOs; second by using the platform of their musical performances to show physical strength and thus to dispel the wrong notion about them as people who are coffin-bound and facing imminent death; and third by seizing every opportunity to subvert the message of Western bio-medical research scientists who like to showcase the choir as evidence of the success of their work.

### *Alternative Narrative Through Work and Industry*

One of the burdens of the stigma of HIV/AIDS in South Africa, especially in Black townships in KwaZulu-Natal where this study was conducted, is that many infected people are jobless. Zinhle Thabethe, a member of the Siphithemba Choir, described how she lost her job when a fellow employee accessed her office cabinet without her permission, read her diagnosis result, and revealed her status to her employers, who immediately fired her (Hainsworth, 2005). In fact, the majority of members of the support group had never been gainfully employed, some for lack of skills. The lack of a strong financial base resulted in deficient nutritional habits making them vulnerable to opportunistic infections. For Mrs Mhlongo, however, this did not have to be. She believed that HIV-positive individuals could still be productive, and should be able to earn a living. Hence she encouraged participants in the support group to use the talents and skills they have to better their economic conditions. According to her, “We’ve got people who are HIV-positive, and who have no income... they shouldn’t go around begging” (personal interview).

Thanks to Mhlongo’s good guidance, the support group became a space of work and economic activity. These included the making of Zulu beads which were marketed locally and overseas, and from which individuals earned income as well as saved some money in a common account that was used to support the treatment of sick members. The beadwork project grew over time, drawing hundreds of new members to the support group thus prompting the hospital management to add different types of skill acquisition to the program for members including sewing and knitting, the making of mosaics, computer literacy, and even health counseling. Today most of the members of the group are gainfully employed in private businesses, as counselors in local clinics, and in the IT sector. This, in combination with their overseas performance tours, and record sales contributed to majority of them now having a standard of living that is above South Africa’s poverty index.

Much has been documented and written about the use of music to accompany work in African communities (Bebey, 1975: 11; Nketia, 1974: 28–29; Weman, 1960: 80–82), to lighten the burden of work, facilitate productivity, and “to share the burdens and pleasures of the work” as a communal experience (Biko, 2004: 46). Thus singing comprised an integral part of the work activities of the Sinikithemba Support Group, and it was in the context of the income-generating projects that the Sinikithemba Choir was born. According to a choir member, Phakamile Shabane, “We used to sing all the time, and everyone can sing any part they like. But it always sounded good” (personal interview). According to Mrs Mhlongo, “the group sang so well, and sometimes we even shed tears” (personal interview). Another member, Nomusa Mpanza, testified about times when passersby on the street would stop to listen to the sonorities of the group as its members worked at their tasks. The environment of work performed to the accompaniment of song thus created musical consciousness for members, and it was a consciousness that would permanently alter the dynamics of the group.



**Figure 3.** Beadworks and other artworks by the Siphithemba group. Photo by authors.

Nomusa said the day that changed everything was sometime in early 1998, when the group had finished its work for the day and spent several more hours singing and dancing. “It was like we all went crazy that day, and everybody was watching us. So Nonhlanhla [Mrs Mhlongo] suggested maybe we should form a choir” (personal interview). Thus, at Mrs Mhlongo’s suggestion, the support group formally became a choir, and it soon began performing at events in the hospital. The formation of the choir transformed the support group into a trifunctional entity – an HIV/AIDS support group, a microeconomic project, and a choral ensemble.

### *A Musical Counter-Narrative*

The Siphithemba Choir’s performance is usually an integration of song and dance. Its repertoire is comprised largely of gospel music, including pre-existing songs they adapted and their own compositions. In South Africa, two recognizable forms of singing are commonly called gospel music. The first is the gospel chorus (in Zulu, *amakhorasi*). *Amakhorasi* are songs of simple, repetitive refrains. The style is performed in dialogic call and response between the choir and a soloist who improvises on a few verses by simply manipulating the theme and existing texts of the song while cueing the choir and congregation into the refrain. The style of singing is generally accompanied with handclapping and dance. Based on an indigenous style of singing in its melodic and rhythmic patterns, the theme often speaks to individual and community experiences in the spheres of faith, economics, love and family. A second form of gospel music draws heavily from Black American gospel tradition fused with indigenous *amakhorasi* style. They equally articulate individual experiences within the harsh economic, social, and political history of South Africa, and performers reformulate them as characteristic experiences of their communities and the society at large. The predominance of gospel music in Siphithemba’s repertoire is partly in keeping with their



**Figure 4.** Ncamisile Yengwa demonstrates the *ngoma* dance with vigor at a concert in Durban. Photo by authors.

association with McCord, which is a mission hospital. Dr James McCord, a medical missionary of the American Congregational Church founded McCord Hospital in Durban, 1909 (see McCord and Douglass (1946) for more on the missionary history of the hospital). But the choir members also see themselves as engaged in the mission of preaching the gospel through their music which encapsulates the spirituality of hope in the presence of HIV and AIDS. Their preference for gospel music notwithstanding, the choir conductor, Phumulani Kunene and other members interviewed, revealed that they also incorporate traditional Zulu songs because of their amenability to integration with dance. The dance rationale has several implications as it pertains to the experience of Siphithemba members. First, traditional songs and dance comprise an important medium that is recognizable to their local audiences. They also provide an opportunity for the audience to actively participate, such as when they join the choir in individual soloing in the *ngoma* dance, the traditional Zulu high kick and foot stomp dance. Secondly, Phumulani and Nomusa Mpanza explained that the choir's decision to perform traditional songs was to provide more opportunities for dance as a form of exercise. Exercise is recognized as a key component of "positive living," an expression that conveys the idea of having a positive physical, emotional, and spiritual attitude toward and about the reality of HIV/AIDS (O'Loughlin, 2008). According to Phumlani, Zulu traditional songs, with their accompanying vigorous dance movements (see Figure 4) provided regular exercise for members. Dance is also the choir's way of projecting distinctive African identity in the context of performance, especially in the presence of foreign audiences. Ultimately, dance, for the choir, is a means of maintaining physical health as well as an explicit rejection of the typical depiction of the faces of AIDS in Africa as hopeless and helpless.

### *Who's Story Anyway? In Contention with Research Scientists*

Since the beginning of their collaboration with American research scientists who began using McCord Hospital as the test site for the CD4/Viral Load research project, the choir has received several invitations to perform in the USA and Europe including appearances at the annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections and a show in London with Sir Elton John. Whereas these overseas tours enabled the choir to forge closer ties with the scientific community, boosted their economic wellbeing, as well as raised their profile back home in South

Africa, the new relationship with the scientific community also revealed some degree of contention about who gets the credit for the achievements of the choir and the member's physical healthiness manifest in the exuberant music and dance performances. This contention is evidenced in some scientists demand during one of the conferences in Boston that the choir must not perform any song about God on the stage. The demand was made irrespective of the fact that the choir is part of a mission hospital, was founded first and foremost as a support group with prayer and spiritual counseling at the center of their activities, and that gospel songs predominate in their repertoires. According to the choir director Phumulani Kunene, this demand by the scientists was condescending, patronizing, and amounted to utter disregard of the fact that their music is a means of telling their own story and not the story of the scientists.

The truth is that medical research on AIDS did not give birth to the Siphithemba Choir; rather, the member's desire to support one another in their struggles with the virus, their determination to beat the odds of being HIV-positive, and their effort to bring the message of hope and educate their community in the same vein account for the formation of the ensemble. Hence, although the members have benefitted in their relationship with the medical researchers, they still desire to control the message so that their story becomes paramount in the circumstances of that relationship. It is therefore arguable that the story of the relationship of the Siphithemba Choir with the scientists is symptomatic – when viewed at least from the perspective of choir members – of the West's patronizing relationship with Africa. There is a seeming assumption – perhaps unconscious – by Westerners who embark on humanitarian and research efforts in Africa that Africans are, as previously stated, helpless and incapable of finding solutions to their problems. Hence Africa becomes the critical space for vaccine experimentations and drug testing. When these experiments fail however, Africans, who comprise the majority of the subjects, suffer. An example is the reported case of a microbicide gel manufactured by an American pharmaceutical company, a potential treatment that failed in KwaZulu–Natal in 2007 and infected many young Zulu women with HIV (Skoler-Karpoff, 2008: 1977–1987, see also Howden, 2009). When success has been recorded, however, the rules of patents and costs have made it extremely difficult for Africans to gain access to the drugs. At other times, Western scientists instigate doubts about African's ability to handle complicated drug regimens such as the ARV because of “ignorance” about the use of drugs. Choir member Zinhle Thabethe, who gave the keynote during the tenth annual Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections in Boston rebutted this argument: she offered herself as a living example of the success of antiretrovirals in an African environment, thanks to her diligence and ability to manage the complexity of the regimen. Given Zinhle's ability to use the platform of the concert stage to respond to Western scientists' patronizing attitudes, it seems the choir can still meet its objective of raising its voice and telling their own story without necessarily letting them be subsumed in that of the scientific community who want to showcase the choir as evidence of the success of their research endeavors.

### *“We Are Positive Too”: Acknowledging HIV Status by Americans*

Besides performing at AIDS-related conferences in the United States, the Siphithemba Choir also visited churches and local schools, where they addressed issues related to their individual experiences and those of their communities back home through performance. In conversation with Professor Bruce Walker of Harvard Medical School who made the initial pitch of bringing the choir to the conferences, he revealed that the choir's school visits had prompted students in some schools in the Boston area to start their own AIDS-awareness campaign projects. According to him, it is important to put a human face on a disease that has often been reduced to statistics. He related how the choir's performances are constantly received with standing ovations and deep emotions.

The emotionality of the responses in the churches could have been for different reasons. It is often easy for AIDS to be discussed in North America as an African or developing-world problem. Some people who are infected or affected by HIV and AIDS in America tend to live in denial of their individual experience of AIDS. While most of the reporting and commentaries on the choir's tours reiterate the increased awareness that the group brings about the AIDS crisis in Africa, the choir members on the other hand made observations about Americans who are HIV-positive but have difficulty disclosing their status. In a conversation with Zinhle Thabethe, a female member of the choir in 2012, she commented on how several individuals in the USA have opened up to her to discuss their HIV status on several occasions following some of her talks during different trips to the United States. Her comments are consistent with a report in the Church World Service newsletter of spring 2003, where an unnamed choir member remarked during one of their tours in the United States:

We notice that Americans who are HIV+ were very shy about telling others they had AIDS. We would be just about to leave and then someone would come forward and quickly tell us that they were HIV+. We think that perhaps we were role models for Americans living with AIDS and that maybe we helped some of them to think about being more open about their status. We hope we have given them confidence. (2003: 13).

It appears from the nature of these interactions, that some Americans who are HIV-positive are still less likely to reveal that fact than in South Africa. A few years ago, it was reported on National Public Radio that about half the Americans who ought to submit to HIV testing refuse to do so, suggesting that the actual number of Americans living with HIV and AIDS may never be known. This is further evidenced in the November 2014 supplemental report issued by the Centers for Disease Control which stated: "Over the past decade, the number of people living with HIV has increased, while the annual number of new HIV infections has remained relatively stable. Still, the pace of new infections continues at far too high a level." A similar report by John Tozzi (2015) of *Bloomberg News* published on 23 February 2015 also reiterated the fact that "patients diagnosed with the virus that causes AIDS but not getting care account for most new transmissions, estimates show." According to these reports, of the number of people living with HIV infection, one in seven are unaware of their status. This lack of awareness is compounded by the refusal of individuals to submit to testing, thanks to the stigmatization of HIV/AIDS, which is still high and strong in the United States. The reality of the stigma is captured in the testimony of an anonymous young female:

By now you'd think people would know a lot about HIV, but they don't. I would never tell someone I was not close to. Even when I do feel close enough to someone to tell them, I wonder. Are they going to say, 'Get away from me! Don't touch me!' The truth is that people really do look at you differently when they know you are HIV positive... It is hard. But I know people's ignorance is not going to go away. I still think people are going to hate me or not want to be my friend when they learn I have HIV. (DeNoon, 2009).

To some people who bear the burden of the stigma of AIDS in the United States therefore, the Siphithemba Choir offers hope and courage through its music. Such individuals recognize that they share common experiences with members of the choir, and they are moved to extend a hand of solidarity with the group. By so doing, they gain spiritual and emotional strength to confront their fears. Thus, Siphithemba's music is well received for moving their American audiences to appreciate their experience of HIV/AIDS, and to extend hands of charity toward Africans with AIDS, but equally successful in awakening a new level of consciousness about AIDS within the American society.

## Concluding Remarks

We have argued in this paper about an African counter-narrative to media health images of Africa. The Siphithemba Choir does not possess the power of the media, and thus is incapable of producing media narratives that can compete with those of the mainstream media. Their activities however, namely their work and labor productivity, physical show of strength in performance contexts, and the savvy use of the concert stage to contest the appropriation of their story by the scientific community, and to move Americans (and Westerners) to acknowledge their HIV status are powerful enough to both their local and international audiences as a narrative of health that runs contrary to the image of Africa being projected to the world. They are also an example of a proactive African response to local issues that rarely form part of mainstream media reportage on Africa.

A considerable irony is evident however in the use of music and the concert stage by the choir as a means to offer alternative narrative to the AIDS experience in (South) Africa. African bodies, arts, and expressive forms have been sources of curiosity for Europeans for centuries. The curiosity resulted in what Bernth Lindfors (1999: vii) described as “ethnological show business – that is, the displaying of foreign peoples for commercial and/or educational purposes.” Ethnological show business with African bodies reached its apogee in the nineteenth century through early twentieth century, that era of Darwin, when Africans’ singing and dancing were of interest most to zoologists and imperialist agents preoccupied with the trends of human cultural gradation as justification for conquest and domination of the “Other.” Some might argue that the choir’s multifunctional use of performance including an attempt to project an African identity has the potential to reinforce the stereotypical images of Africa that are rooted in the nineteenth century ethnological show business. We believe on the other hand that if any such exotic curiosity may have been elicited by their performances to foreign audience, they have equally been successful in letting them add their voices to the conversations on AIDS treatment as well as helped to reveal the reality of HIV/AIDS in the American society that is often not acknowledged.

Finally, although we say that the choir does not possess the power of the mainstream media, yet their appearances on the international stage has drawn the attention of the media and by extension to their message, thus allowing the context of their musical performances become a space for offering alternative narrative that challenge as well as counter the dominant health images especially of AIDS that is witnessed in the mainstream media.

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# A Grounded Theory Perspective on Leadership in Multicultural Schools

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## Abstract

The methodology of grounded theory has great potential to contribute to our understanding of leadership within particular substantive contexts. Leadership is a global phenomenon, but appears to have a variety of attributes and seems to elude clear definition. In this research we argue that such variation is contextually derived. Leadership is not only a socially influenced process but also a relation-influenced process that occurs within a social system. The focus in this paper is on the challenges facing leaders engaged in multicultural education. In general, grounded theorists seek to develop theory inductively from systematically gathered and analysed data. An integrative picture or story is developed from this process. In the present instance we explore how conducting grounded theory research according to a qualitative approach accentuates the need to understand and explain contextualised leadership. We conclude by suggesting how leaders might overcome challenges in multicultural education.

## Keywords

Community, grounded theory, leadership, multicultural education, social system, moral values

## Introduction

The recognition of and respect for diversity between citizens in South Africa is formalised by a number of parliamentary enactments, such as the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 8 of 1996 (Government of South Africa, 1996), the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 2000), the Bill of Rights (in Chapter 2 of the Constitution), the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996 and the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996 (Government of South Africa, 1996). Multicultural schools reflect a diversity or variety of cultural backgrounds in one school.

Educators do not have control over the diverse cultural backgrounds learners come from. The cultural backgrounds include different culture, racial, religious, language and ethnic groups with different customs, values and convictions. Within these groups a diversity of sexual orientations, learning preferences, socio-economic levels and physical appearances exist (Meier and Marais, 2012: 127–128).

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The media are still reporting that society and schools are characterised by cross-cultural tension, antagonism and a rising tide of racism (*Cape Times*, 2012). Schools are institutions where teachers and learners may be multilingual and multicultural. However, this still leaves a lot to be desired as stated by Mbudeshale (2014):

[m]ulticultural education is based on the fact that all cultures are attempts to discover universal truths, values and habits. Therefore, one culture should not have the monopoly in a school as it is believed that truth and values can be shared across all cultures (Mbudeshale, 2014: 7).

It is recommended in this article that requiring excellent communication skills, respecting others and having a deep knowledge of the rich characteristics of a diverse society are prerequisites for leaders in multicultural schools.

Education does not stand in isolation from society, and multicultural education is a social reality because education is an open system embedded in a complex social context. Educational leaders are repeatedly advised to determine how educational challenges and problems are manifested in a broad social context (Adams and Copeland, 2005). Cilliers and Nell (2011: 1) are of the opinion that leadership in multicultural schools is not only about changing social systems and structures but also about changing relationships and attitudes between the learners from different cultural groups.

Effective teaching and learning in multicultural schools have to be promoted through leadership. Pont (2014: 5) states that school leaders' tasks have been greatly complicated by the presence of learners from different cultural backgrounds in classrooms. This complexity clearly challenges leaders to develop effective relationships while demanding excellence (Terrell and Lindsey, 2008 cited by Madsen and Mabokela, 2014: 76). Managing multicultural schools means that school leaders need to be able to respond to clashes that may occur between learners due to fondly held but different culturally determined beliefs and values.

The increasing diversity of the global society is reflected in school systems all over the world. Educational behaviours in today's schools are unavoidably influenced by global social changes (Suleiman, 2013: 43). Multiculturalism is a global phenomenon, and culture is not referred to as secure and fixed terrestrial space with national demarcated borders – if it ever was. Remarkable growth has occurred over the past decades in continuities in different cultures moving across physical space, and national boundaries have become irrelevant in many parts of the world. Consequently, the success stories of multicultural education are a global experience and evidence of school leaders who have honoured their responsibilities (Moghaddam, 2008: 207).

Multicultural schools cannot be led unless an investigation is undertaken to determine the need, if any, for specific characteristics, and whether such need is required for the purpose of leading the school.

## **Investigating leadership in multicultural schools through grounded theory**

Against the background of school segregation, this research was motivated by the question: 'What are the challenges facing leadership in multicultural education in South African schools?' To achieve this outcome, the researchers decided on an open-minded investigation of the nature and challenges of leadership in public multicultural schools by applying the principles of grounded theory.

The methodology of grounded theory analysis seeks to produce a social theory of a particular phenomenon drawn from the relational experiences of participants within a discrete context (Fassinger, 2005). Grounded theory has great potential to contribute to our understanding of leadership within particular substantive contexts. Green et al. (2007) argued that a focus on ethnic diversity can be incorporated in studies using grounded theory methodology. Grounded theory

methodology is a systematic set of procedures used to develop theories of psychosocial phenomena through iterative analytic movement between empirical data and emerging theoretical constructs (Green et al., 2007).

Grounded theory is one of three qualitative designs, namely, ethnographies, case studies and phenomenological studies (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Grounded theory is mainly used for the qualitative research approach, but may also be used for quantitative research (Walsh, 2014). Grounded theory has its origins in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). It was developed by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss who believed that theory could emerge through qualitative data analysis. Although alternative perspectives exist on grounded theory, as explained by Underwood and Dia Lima (2015), the researchers decided to keep to the original approach by Glaser and Strauss. In applying grounded theory the researchers use multiple stages of collecting, refining and categorising data (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Strauss and Corbin, 2008). As identified in the literature, making constant comparisons and applying theoretical sampling are necessary strategies used for developing grounded theory (Creswell, 2003; Locke, 1996; Strauss and Corbin, 2008; Taylor and Bogdan, 1998). Furthermore, the characteristics of grounded theory: 'include the theory being grounded in data, use of a constant comparative method, the use of memo writing by the researchers, and theoretical sampling' (Moss et al., 2014: 4; Larose, 2015).

The major difference between grounded theory and other research methods is its specific approach, which consists in seeking to develop theory that is grounded in data that have been systematically gathered and analysed. The grounded theory approach also proceeds on the premise that initial data collection and preliminary analysis should precede the literature review.

In the context of grounded theory data analysis consists of seeking out the concepts behind the actualities by looking for codes, then concepts, and finally categories. Key words in the data texts are highlighted in specific colours according to emphases and topics which are evident. The subsequent process of colour grouping facilitates the identification of particular themes and their subordinate categories. Coding is a form of content analysis aimed at winnowing and conceptualising the underlying issues from the irrelevant 'noise' in the data (Allan, 2003). Strauss and Corbin (2008) also refer to data analysis as coding, which involves three levels of analysis: (1) open coding; (2) axial coding; and (3) selective coding, used in concert to assemble a picture that indicates how the information gleaned from data collection is configured in its assembled state (Strauss and Corbin, 2008). During this first phase, the researcher compares data and continually asks questions about what is and is not understood. The categories, properties and dimensions within and among the data can be identified by applying a variety of systematic techniques (such as allocating numbers (codes) to words or highlighting similar words with a specific colour) to examine the document as a whole, or parts of it (Strauss and Corbin, 2008).

The next step (axial coding) entails assembly of the data in new configurations that allow connections between categories. Axial coding mainly consists of questioning and comparison, which feed into inductive and deductive thinking as the substrate of relating subcategories to categories (Strauss and Corbin, 2008). The grounded theory approach claims therefore to be inductive rather than deductive.

Strauss and Corbin (2008) define selective coding (the final stage) as identifying and putting in place the core category, systematically connecting it to other categories, validating similarities and relationships between categories, and completing categories that need refinement and development. Only after the process of crucial integration of weaving and refining all the major categories into the selection of a core category can the grounded theory emerge (Strauss and Corbin, 2008).

A vital part of the developing theory is the use of theoretical memos (sometimes called analytic memos), which can be seen as a private diarising activity of the researcher. 'Memos are the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes/themes and relationships as they strike the analyst while coding'

(Glaser and Strauss 1967: 90). As part of the process of developing grounded theory, Strauss and Corbin (1990), Glaser (1978, 1992), Allan (2003) and Moss et al. (2014) strongly recommend the writing of theoretical memos. The idea is that, whenever a researcher is struck by an idea during coding, they should break off at that point and write a memo to develop the idea.

The final phase entails integrating the categories in the axial coding model. This phase typically consists of the presentation of conditional propositions (or hypotheses), and it results in substantive theory relating to a specific problem, issue or group. It is: 'the process of selecting the core category, systematically relating it to other categories, validating those relationships, and filling in categories that need further refinement and development' (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 116; 2008; Heppner and Heppner, 2004).

The literature tends to favour an inductive approach and, rather than trying to force the data into a preconceived mould, allows the data to dictate and shape the course of the research. It is deliberately fused so that initial data analysis can be used to shape continuing data collection. This is intended to provide the researcher with opportunities to increase the 'density' and 'saturation' (no new information) of recurring categories and to follow up on unexpected findings (Johnson and Christensen, 2004: 30; Strauss and Corbin, 2008). The process is continued until no new insights are revealed that shed light on these relationships as regards the core idea. Only then, can new theories be defined. Once a theory has been formulated, the process itself is complete, and testing of the theory is not required to confirm its status as validly grounded (Dey, 1993; Glaser, 1992: 25; Strauss and Corbin, 2008).

Dey (1999: 1–2), drawing on Creswell (1998) and Green et al. (2007), list the following key issues pertaining to research based on grounded theory:

1. The aim of grounded theory is to generate or discover a theory.
2. The researcher has to set aside preconceived theoretical ideas to allow a 'substantive' theory to emerge.
3. Theory focuses on how individuals interact in relation to the object of study.
4. Theory asserts a plausible relation between concepts and sets of concepts.
5. Theory is derived from data acquired through fieldwork interviews, observations and documents.
6. Data analysis is systematic and begins as soon as data is available.
7. Data analysis proceeds by identifying categories and connecting them.
8. Further data collection (or sampling) is based on emerging concepts.
9. These concepts are developed through constant comparison with additional data.
10. Data collection can stop when new conceptualisations emerge.
11. Data analysis proceeds from 'open' coding (identifying categories, properties and dimensions) through 'axial' coding (examining conditions, strategies and consequences) to 'selective' coding around an emerging storyline.
12. The resulting theory can be reported in a narrative framework or as a set of propositions.

In the following sections the methodology as well as the data collection, data analysis, discussion of the findings, literature review and conclusion will be discussed. Our findings could assist school leaders to overcome challenges in multicultural education.

## **Empirical investigation**

The researchers adopted a qualitative research approach based on a phenomenological research design to obtain an understanding of the views of school management and youth councils on the

**Table 1.** Count of pupils according to culture.

Year: 2014; Grade: All grades; Register class: All classes; House: All houses.	
Pupils	968
Race: African	611
Race: Asian	6
Race: Coloured	49
Race: Indian	51
Race: White	251

**Table 2.** The profile of the school management team.

Participant	Race	Gender	Age
School principal	White	Male	62
Vice-principal A	White	Male	50
Vice-principal B	White	Female	48

**Table 3.** Composition of the group of ten head prefects.

Race	Asian	Black	Coloured	White
Boy		2	1	3
Girl	1	2		1

challenges they face in a multicultural education setting. A parallel-medium, multicultural public school was chosen that was convenient for the researchers, where Afrikaans as well as English are used as tuition languages. This school was chosen because it is an example of accommodating different cultures, presenting a multicultural nation. The distribution of learners according to culture during 2014 is described in Table 1:

Purposeful sampling was used to select 13 information-rich participants who fulfilled leadership roles in the school. These participants included the school principal and two vice-principals who are members of school management. The profile of the school management team is indicated in Table 2:

The other ten participants were the group of head prefects of the youth council. These learners were all grade 12 learners. The composition of the group of these ten head prefects was as follows (Table 3):

The participation of the members of school management was sought in order to ascertain their views on the challenges that exist in multicultural education and also in the hope that new ideas might emerge from the interviews with them. In this research one of the researchers initially conducted two focus group interviews, first with the youth council members and then with the principal and two vice-principals.

The first researcher started out with a very general research problem: 'As leaders of this school, what are the challenges that you face in multicultural education?' The interviews that were conducted lasted approximately 60 minutes and were audiotaped. Ethical requirements were complied with by maintaining the participants' anonymity and treating all information in the strictest confidence. Moreover, no coercive measures were used to secure participation, and participants were assured that they could withdraw at any stage.

In this research credibility and dependability were established, making use of two researchers. Both the researchers analysed the data on their own and then they compared their interpretations. This was done to contribute towards trustworthiness. During the data collection, field notes were made in the form of memos to identify the main findings. A detailed discussion of these procedures follows.

During the interviews, notes were made (memos) by the first researcher to identify key words and to make short notes for follow-up questions where more information was required (Green et al., 2007; Moss et al., 2014). According to Strauss and Corbin (1990) memos are short documents that one writes to oneself as one proceeds through the analysis of a corpus of data. Having successfully collected the data by transcribing the interviews, both researchers commenced 'open coding' on their own, which was done by reading each line, sentence, paragraph and so on in order to answer the questions: 'What is this about?' and 'What is being referenced here?', to which end key words were highlighted (refer to findings below) and data were broken down, examined, compared, conceptualised and categorised.

Once the data had been 'open coded', the researchers commenced axial coding. This involved reassembling the data obtained from the open coding in order to identify a central phenomenon. In order to do this, connections between the categories were identified (this is evident from the findings below as identified from the data).

### *Focus group interview with heads of youth council*

According to these participants, the type of **culture** in their parallel-medium school is a challenge, because it makes more demands than single-medium schools. According to a white female participant: 'the **respect** from learners needs to be earned. If you show respect, other cultures will also show respect'. It would seem that this participant believed that not enough respect was shown for the different cultures. However, one white male participant insisted that **respect** was bound up with **rules** by replying that: 'if you do wrong you need to bear the consequences'. Learners needed **boundaries**, and leadership in multicultural schools was predicated first and foremost on respect for rules. The participants' statements boil down to **mutual moral values** and therefore rules can also be interpreted as moral values. One of the black male participants said the following: 'White learners are more focused on excellence and achievements. Money earns respect in some other cultures'. 'Respect is not high in our schools, learners are spoilt and have an open say', according to an Asian participant. A white male participant believed that: 'cultures might not understand each other. **Communication** is also a huge challenge and a reason for misunderstanding between learners in multicultural schools'.

**Language** can also be a barrier to building relationships. One of the black female participants stated Afrikaans-speaking teachers have a special bond with Afrikaans-speaking learners, because they have the same mother tongue and they understand one another. According to this participant they discuss family issues, for example. However:

[i]n English classes there is nothing for the teacher (who is Afrikaans-speaking) to relate to an English or Indian child. Relationships are better between Afrikaans teachers and learners. Home languages differ. The relationship between teachers and learners with the same mother tongue also differs from that between teachers and learners where the teacher's cultural background and mother tongue differ from those of the learners.

One black male participant quoted Mandela as follows: 'If you talk to someone in their own **language**, then it goes to the heart, but if you talk to them in another it goes to the head'.

**Parents at home teach children wrong and encourage racism. Problems are sometimes at home** and not in school. A black male participant said that the black learners do not have the same support from their parents as the white learners have. The participant explained it as follows: 'It is sometimes difficult to excel in sports, for example, because of travel time to home, poor transport and unsafe conditions'. This participant added that **team** building activities and socialising opportunities can build strong relationships in multicultural schools. According to a white male participant, a prerequisite for multicultural schools to promote sound relationships between learners from different cultural backgrounds is that for both learners and teachers to focus on being united by encouraging mutual support and respect are sound values.

### *Focus group interview with the management team*

According to these participants it is important to understand and respect the different cultural backgrounds of learners. It is all about a **mind change**. Without that, teachers will find it hard to interact with the learners. This mind change is all about **knowledge and experiences** of other cultures in order to understand each other. Staff must understand that **cultures are different, also because teaching staff are typically drawn from a single culture**. One of the male participants said that: 'The mind shift is very important, but the heart shift is even more important'. According to him, some parents need to change their hearts and minds because they have the biggest influence on their children and are important role players in multicultural schools. The need for a **change of heart** speaks to **motivation**; failing which only a head shift will be accomplished.

However, it goes hand in hand with open **communication** and listening to each other according to another male participant. The needs of learners from **different cultures** need to be addressed by first listening to them. This would lead to **mutual understanding**. Once **mutual understanding** has been accomplished, **mutual moral values** can be identified and fostered in **multicultural schools**. Identifying **such values is a big challenge**, but it is frequently met by systems of religious belief, which cater on balance for rather similar value systems and enable mutual respect between cultural groups, which is another serious challenge. Conferring by one of the male participants: 'Talk to learners from other cultures to hear what their values are. Use mutual values to meet each other halfway'. According to the one female participant: 'teachers must also earn respect. Don't shout at learners, mutual respect is very important. Staff members need to respect learners'.

The challenge is to move forward with **both black and white millennium learners**. In a school it is difficult to find common values that undergird and promote the development of a progressive society. 'Our school does well in this regard, because **our country is unique** compared to other countries. We must **start our own new culture**'. The new generation (team) must find new traditions and values for the new compensation. In writing memos that connect themes and patterns no need was found for additional coding and categorising, or even for further data collection. The table below (Table 4) summarises the themes identified from the data analysis:

In Table 5 the themes and supporting categories identified from the data obtained from the interviews with the school management team and the youth council, as indicated in Table 4, are consolidated:

### **Grounded theory on leadership in multicultural schools**

A theory is basically an explanation, based on scientifically collected and analysed data. What we found as parameters for our grounded theory (based on the data analysis and findings as summarised in Table 5 above) is that the challenges of leadership in multicultural schools are a reality and also a major concern for all the participants. Both the youth council and the school management

**Table 4.** Main themes identified by the participants.

Youth council	School management team
Cultural diversity	Cultural diversity
Respect	Mutual norms and values, like respect
Communication	Communication
Language	Cultural sensitivity
Moral values	Moral values

**Table 5.** Consolidated themes and categories.

Themes	Categories
Cultural diversity	Respect Racism Mind shift to heart shift Communication
Moral values	Respect for rules Mutual norms and values

team expressed core beliefs that should be present in managing multicultural schools. These principles include the acceptance of different cultures, mutual respect, communication, language differences and the motivation to make not only a mind shift but also a heart shift. Teachers have to accept responsibility for managerial tasks like motivating not only learners but others too. Moreover, teachers and school leaders have to ensure that they achieve their goals despite the harsh realities of South African schooling, such as communication problems, cultural differences, poor transport and unsafe conditions. Common values must be brought into focus and cultivated, and managers should be motivated to empower and encourage people (including themselves) to respect other people’s otherness and diversity in general. The challenge is to walk in other people’s shoes and empathically assume their social and cultural group identities. Elements needed for social transformation include recognition of different cultures and moral obligations.

Managing moral and ethical conduct in multicultural schools is an indisputable responsibility that leaders in the youth council and the school management team should assume. Before any action can take place, leadership based on school values needs to ensure that learners in multicultural schools conform to socially acceptable behaviour that proceeds from knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, universal values. Intrinsic motivation (the will to act according to moral values) is needed to convey these values through values-based leadership in schools as social environments or community.

On the basis of the key themes and categories forthcoming from our findings (see Table 5 above), we came to the following grounded theory on leadership in multicultural schools:

Leadership in multicultural schools is dependent on two key factors, which together constitute the key requirements for effective leadership in multicultural schools.

The first factor is the school leader’s cultural sensitivity, exemplified by respect for all culturally diversified stakeholders in the school; the ability to continually make the shift from mind to heart in dealing with leadership challenges; open communication channels throughout the school; and avoidance of any issues pertaining to racism.

The second factor is the school leader's moral values, exemplified by respect for principles and rules and the firm establishment of a mutually accepted framework of norms and values in the school.

These factors are of equal weight and importance, and are intimately linked.

An extended exposition of a theory cannot be done yet, because it will be premature. Our theory must be verified first. Subsequently, a literature control was undertaken to consider the extent to which established studies and theoretical insights either support or refute our grounded theory.

## Literature control

The literature control focuses on the two core themes that were identified in our empirical investigation in our grounded theory, namely cultural sensitivity and moral values.

### *Cultural diversity*

According to Kempstra and Parry (2011: 106), thoughtful understanding of the manifestation of the leadership phenomenon in multicultural schools is needed. Leaders need to assess their own cultural knowledge and adapt to the dynamics of diversity to encourage social representativeness of multiculturalism in schools (Terrell and Lindsey, 2008 cited by Madsen and Mabokela, 2014: 76). Effective principals and their school management teams must prepare their teachers and learners to thrive in multicultural schools. However, the process cannot be achieved overnight (*Pretoria News*, 2014: 10).

Marsh et al. (2014: 24), agree that it is the responsibility of school leaders to develop supportive relationships and to assert a positive influence on the school's multicultural climate and culture. Buma and Du Plessis (2014: 1184) concur that diversity can present multiple challenges for the development of a culture of teaching and learning at integrated schools.

According to Lisak and Erez (2015: 3), school leaders need to have three critical characteristics, namely cultural intelligence, global identity and a ready openness to cultural diversity. They need to be endowed with leadership competence premised on cultural intelligence applied in the setting of a multicultural school (Rockstuhl et al., 2011). Leaders with a high 'cultural IQ' take due cognisance of values in their multicultural schools and can analyse and adopt an appropriate leadership style. They will need appropriate skills to adapt to the various cultural contexts, to continuously review their perspectives on diverse cultural situations in their schools and to learn to interact effectively and respectfully with staff members and learners from diverse cultures. Practising these skills effectively will lead to professional fulfilment (Livermore, 2011).

As noted, the second critical characteristic that school leaders need is a global identity. If school leaders are to overcome cultural obstacles and maintain positive relationships with other team members, they must be inspired and motivated to share a common interest to accomplish goals for their multicultural schools, thereby gaining a sense of being part of a group with others from different cultural backgrounds and, for example, displaying their global identity in the group context of their membership of multicultural schools (Shokef and Erez, 2006 cited by Lisak and Erez, 2015: 6). School leaders with highly developed global identities may serve as global role models for their followers. The followers observe their strong sense of belonging, while the school leaders facilitate teamwork and understanding of multicultural education (Lisak and Erez, 2015: 6).

The third global characteristic that school leaders need is ready acceptance of cultural diversity. School leaders with high levels of openness to cultural diversity view differences as positive, are willing to learn from others regardless of their cultural orientation and try to understand views that

are or seem to be at odds with their own. If they have a positive attitude towards cultural diversity, they will be motivated to resolve problems and address challenges. Openness to cultural diversity is an important leadership characteristic of school leaders in multicultural schools, which leads to respect, satisfaction, commitment and trust in actively seeking cross-understanding of all individuals in multicultural schools (Huber and Lewis, 2010 cited in Lisak and Erez, 2015: 6).

Leadership in multicultural schools means applying leadership strategies regarding teaching and learning that is based on democratic values that foster cultural pluralism. An aim that should be pursued by leaders in multicultural schools subsists in promoting educational equality by developing learning content, such as life skills (different cultural holidays, and cultural songs and dancing) that is predicated on a just understanding of ethnic groups.

Successful multicultural education depends on school leaders' effective management of diversity, to which end they should use every opportunity to promote school reform. For example, they should find ways for individuals (e.g. school managers and learners) to demonstrate respect for cultures other than their own, to deal with discrimination and to accommodate different values and norms (Arends, 2012: 90, 112, 119). Although diversity enriches schools by broadening school leaders', teachers' and learners' views, issues related to diversity often lead to conflict as well. Group cohesion has often been weakened by such clashes (Terrell and Lindsey, 2008 cited by Madsen and Mabokela, 2014: 93).

Essentially, then, school leaders have to inspire, motivate and encourage and even reframe challenges as opportunities. They serve as role models in their schools and have to engage with learners from multicultural backgrounds. School leaders in multicultural schools are the people who provide opportunities for people to engage with each other. They need to be alert to changes and they must take responsibility to create an open, knowledge-sharing culture where trust and cooperation are core values (Berkovich, 2014: 16). Engagement through relationship reflects a developmental approach to leadership and performance across cognitive, affective and behavioural dimensions (Ekmekci and Casey, 2009; Walumba and Hartnell, 2010 cited in Sascha et al., 2014: 22).

### *Moral motivation*

Authentic leadership in multicultural schools also has a moral dimension with a focus on and a commitment to ethics, values and beliefs (Duignan, 2006 cited in Frawley et al., 2015: 2). It is: 'knowledge based, values informed, and skilfully executed and entails professionally effective, ethically sound, and consciously reflective practices' (Begley 2001, cited in Frawley et al., 2015: 2). Moral values are needed for ethical conduct. Leaders set the ethical tone of an organisation and are instrumental in encouraging ethical behaviour and reducing interpersonal conflict among their subordinates. School leaders actively model ethical behaviour in schools (Mayer et al., 2012: 167), which is guided by moral values.

In order to fully understand the need for and value of moral values in leading multicultural schools, it is imperative to shift the attention to the role of moral motivation as associated with schools and education per se.

Moral motivation begins with moral consciousness, which is discernible in conduct that evinces an ever-deepening moral wellspring. Education must cultivate the four dimensions of moral motivation according to Mustakova-Possardt (2004), namely:

- a sense of moral identity;
- a sense of moral responsibility;
- a sense of moral relatedness in all spheres of life;
- a sense of moral purpose.

**Table 6.** Development of three human powers in relation to two primary human concerns (Danesh, 1994).

Primary human concerns	Human power		
	Knowledge	Love	Will (motivation)
Self	Self-experience	Self-preoccupation	Self-control
	Self-discovery	Self-acceptance	Self-confidence
	Self-knowledge	Self-development	Personal responsibility
Relationships	Sameness of people	Acceptance of empathic obligation to others	Competition
	Uniqueness of people	Unity	Cooperation and equality
	Oneness of people		Service

Cultivating the four dimensions of moral motivation as mentioned above must be visible in the ethical conduct of school leaders. They are role models in schools and their actions serve as examples. Through education, humans develop these dimensions of moral motivation. Therefore, the purpose of education is to integrate mind and heart, developing the four dimensions of moral motivation and critical judgement and integrating these into optimal consciousness for positive change in one's social world.

Empirical analysis shows that at the heart of the desire to engage life fully and responsibly is a moral yearning inherent in human nature and progressively amplified from early childhood by authentically moral environments. Since the late 18th century, people have become increasingly aware of an inner calling to seek their idea of the good from within (Taylor, 1991: 26).

Danesh (1994) compares the characteristics of moral yearning with three powers on which human relationships in society are built, namely, knowledge, love and will. Through these powers moral behaviour becomes noticeable and understandable, especially if employed together. Table 6 summarises Danesh's understanding of the lifespan development of human spiritual powers in relation to primary human concerns.

According to Danesh (1994), numerous combinations of uneven development are possible. The pursuit of knowledge without a parallel pursuit of love may render technological advances and academic brilliance, but not necessarily moral concern. Likewise, a vigorous pursuit of agency and relentless exercise of will may render great pragmatism, but without knowledge and love the solution may be worse than the problem. When the striving of the human spirit to know truth, to love beauty and to pursue goodness in the sense of seeking the wellbeing of humanity at large is amplified by exposure to conducive environments from an early age, it becomes the motivating force behind the progressive constructions and reconstructions of the true, the good and the beautiful (Mustakova-Possardt, 2004). It leads to a higher level of integration of cognitive, volitional and affective capacities and to a greater consistency between what people know, what they love and what they choose for themselves in real life (socio world).

Kohlberg (1971 in Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977: 54) developed the cognitive developmental approach, which entails values teaching that, like intellectual (cognitive) teaching, is based on the structuring of active schools and patterns of thought and the presupposition that there is a forward movement from one cognitive level to the next. He distinguishes between three levels of cognitive moral development with two stages at every level, which tallies to six different stages of cognitive moral development during a learner's origination years (Kohlberg and Hersh, 1977: 54).

However, evolving morality is sometimes still seen as centred primarily around knowledge and love and will appear to be by-products of knowing. Hoffman's (1991: 105–110) approach seeks to strike a balance between affect and cognition and is consistent with the findings of neurobiology

regarding the importance of feelings in decision making (Damasio, 1999). Gibbs (1991) takes even further the argument about the complementarity of justice and empathy as: 'equally primary and mutually irreducible sources of moral motivation'. A case in point was Gandhi's life story, which reveals that the power cultivated and amplified in him by the 'ethos of goodness' of his early environment resulted, in due course, in this power being transformed into an independent passion for justice (Gandhi, 1927).

The discussion about the roots of moral motivation would not be complete without defining the third human faculty, will. Mustakova-Possardt (2004: 152–153) understands will as people's freedom to choose between good and evil, between action and inaction, and to determine the direction and quality of their lives. A spiritual approach to moral motivation recognises the role of free will, as well as the relevant contextual qualifications, subject to socio-historical factors and the history of the person concerned. Leadership must understand the need for knowledge, love and will in order to motivate moral conduct.

The construct of optimal moral consciousness refers to consciousness that brings systematic thought and an engaged dialogical relationship together productively from a place of unity of mind and heart, of integration of high levels of knowledge, love and will, and which provides a normative framework for rethinking education. That is to say, optimal moral consciousness enables appraisal of the strengths and limitations of current educational models in the historical context of an emerging global society and, therefore, the exploration of new possibilities of educational integration that can meet the challenges of the world as it is at the present juncture (Mustakova-Possardt, 2004: 255–257).

The significance of these theories for this study can be found in the fact that they place all three powers, namely, knowledge, love and will (motivation) on the same level. The researchers, however, differ from this argument by stating that the power of will (motivation) is a prerequisite for the other two powers. In order to obtain knowledge, motivation (will) is needed and in order to love, one needs to have a motive (motivation). In other words, in order to have values-based multicultural schools, learners, teachers, parents and school leaders need to be (morally) motivated. Only then would they be able to reflect a heart shift.

The question leaders have to ask is: 'What kind of overall educational shift would constitute an adequate collective response to the developmental readiness of learners in multicultural schools to be educated towards moral motivation?' Another question leaders need to ask is: 'How can diverse cultures incorporate into their public education across the curriculum a consistent understanding of the dimensions of optimal moral consciousness?' To the extent that good education happens, it is the result of often unappreciated individual educational leaders going far above and beyond their defined goals and objectives and setting out to cultivate hearts through love and personal example. It is important to appreciate the following goals by educational leaders in order to foster hearts through love and personal example. The essence of this can be summarised as follows:

- cultivating heart;
- cultivating a moral sense of identity and responsibility;
- cultivating relatedness;
- cultivating a conversation on the meaning of life.

The wellbeing we all want depends partly on our efforts, but more on other people and the structures of the workplace and society. So, how best to be morally motivated? The question for the purpose in hand is whether learners in multicultural schools are morally motivated by school leadership to uphold moral values that will contribute to best advantage to the wellbeing of society as a whole.

## Conclusion

Our literature control verified our grounded theory conclusively. Leadership in multicultural schools is indeed crucially dependent on the school leader's cultural sensitivity and their moral values, together with the ability to disseminate moral values through the entire fibre of the school's educational enterprise.

Learners from diverse cultural backgrounds define the school community and school climate. School leaders need to understand the complexities of diversity and their leadership responsibilities in this regard. Moral leadership means the ability to influence the thoughts and actions of others in such a way that they are motivated to act according to moral values.

The consensus among participants was that cultural differences should be acknowledged without fear or favour. To show respect can be achieved by adopting various practices that are conducive to multiculturalism in that they offer ways to achieve social harmony and integration in diverse societies based on equal principles. The challenges we have identified in this article can be broadly classified as culturally inclusive education, which is undoubtedly a moral endeavour and a laudable goal for moral education, one which takes a step beyond a merely multicultural approach. There are a number of practical and theoretical lessons for moral education we can draw from our research. These include suggestions to help leaders to overcome challenges in multicultural education, as indicated in both the comments of the participants and in the literature review.

Finally, our contribution to theory is twofold. First, this verified theory (against data and literature) can be used by other researchers. Second, this theory's practical implication is that it can be used by schools as a basis for a selection criterion for appointment of new school principals in multicultural schools.

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