
THE AFRICA POLICY JOURNAL

A Harvard Kennedy School student publication



2021—2022 Edition



The *Africa Policy Journal* Team



A few members of the 2021-2022 Africa Policy Journal Team

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About *The Africa Policy Journal*

The *Harvard Africa Policy Journal* (APJ) is a student-run online publication dedicated to promoting dialogue about African policy and current affairs in the realms of governance, law, education, business, health, design and culture. The Journal was initially started in 2006 by the Harvard Kennedy School of Government but has recently expanded to encompass all the schools of Harvard University. With its new online platform and annual publications, the APJ will act as a hub for timely debate, opinion, research, and analysis.

As the only student journal in America dedicated exclusively to African policy issues, APJ seeks to publish thought-provoking content that provides fresh insight into the most significant opportunities and challenges facing African nations and peoples today. Interested authors can submit pieces on any of the following topics: politics and governance; development issues and trends; business, finance and economics; social issues including human rights; public health; science and technology; and African culture and policy.

All views expressed in the *Africa Policy Journal* are those of the authors or interviewees only and do not represent the views of Harvard University, the John F. Kennedy School of Government, the staff of the *Africa Policy Journal*, the Faculty Advisory Board of the *Africa Policy Journal*, or any associates of the journal.

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We would also like to thank Martha Foley, Assistant Director of Student Services at the John F. Kennedy School of Government (HKS). Your guidance, direction and wisdom has been invaluable in the production of this year's publication.

To Nancy Gibbs and Maja Niksic of the Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy team, thank you for giving us a broad canvas on which to paint. Your excitement for what is possible helped us think and dream big.

We want to thank the 12 other journals at the Harvard Kennedy School for creating a safe space where we could discuss ideas and insights. Special thanks to the Anti-Racism Policy Journal for aligning so strongly with us throughout this year, for supporting and encouraging us. Thank you Thomas Bishop and Kacey Short.

We would like to thank our incredible APJ publication and interview editors and designers for their work throughout the year, for helping bring this edition and all APJ's activities to life. Thank you. We could not do this without you.

To our layout designer, Liliana Ballesteros, thank you for your commitment to excellence and for the incredible ease with which you worked with us to design this publication.

And to our contributors, we are indebted to your eagerness to share your work with us, to your patience throughout the process of selection and editing, and to your willingness to work on your pieces after our feedback. We appreciate you, and hope you are as proud of this work as we are to showcase your thoughts and insights.

From the Editor-in-Chief

It is truly a privilege to present the 16th edition of the *Africa Policy Journal (APJ)*. The 2021-2022 *Africa Policy Journal* Publication has come out of a year of incredible transitions. In the last two years the new normal of COVID-19 has had everyone feeling their way through mandatory lockdowns and mask mandates. Harvard and other institutions navigated back to in-person classes after a year of strictly remote learning.

Transition. It's that blurry place of uncertainty that leaves you both excited and cautious. We've all felt it these last two years. It is both exhilarating to imagine what could be possible in this new normal and exhausting because all you want to do is get back to a place that is familiar, where you are, or think you are, in control.

This year the *Africa Policy Journal* has found itself navigating transition; working to maintain the incredibly important role of an annual print publication while also ramping up online activities and re-introducing in-person events. It's been amazing, and it's been a lot to take in. This year has allowed us to leverage our existing partnership with the Harvard University Center for African Studies, and build new partnerships, notably with Collateral Benefits and the Africa Soft Power Project. We have been excited to build on existing ideas and try out new initiatives, such as the *Africa Policy Journal* Fireside Chat, and the APJChat podcast, to continue to tell important stories for the African community.

In this publication we explore how Africa has transitioned out of the pandemic and what that has meant for African institutions, culture, politics, and people. The pieces this year reflect responses to critical issues facing Africa's economy, health, politics, and education. In this edition, our authors have made salient recommendations for health policy reform, have reminded us of the power of language to create or break barriers, and advocated for peace education policy as a way to mitigate conflict. Interspersed between the heavy-hitting policy pieces are glimpses of poetic narratives and overviews of the activities the APJ team worked on during the year.

When I came in as Editor-In-Chief, one question was uppermost in my mind; How do we continue to engage a community that had been strictly online for the last year due to COVID? Thankfully I had so much help; from the previous editorial leadership, Danielle and Jameel, incredible support, tips, and insights. From the APJ leadership team that signed up to run the journal, Lead Interview Editor Noah Asfaw, Online Editor Shambhavi Singh, and Lead Publication Editor Aaryan Morrison, I got a fantastic work ethic, readiness to lead and ideate, and seamless delivery. Thank you for doing this with me. I am truly grateful. From the APJ team, the publication editors and interview editors, I got willing responses whenever there was a task to be done, despite busy student schedules. Thank you so much Winston, Monique, Jeffah, Aishat, Clark, Michelle, Sirak, Kwamboka, and Abosede. Finally, from the Harvard Kennedy School student services and Shorenstein Media Center, Martha Foley, Maja Niksic, and Nancy Gibbs, we got the encouragement to dream big, be creative, and think outside the box.

It has been a year of learning and rebuilding the in-person community. We continue to grow the digital presence of the APJ, and have seen incredible engagement from Africans and those who love the continent online, as our social media platforms continue to flourish. This too, is exciting.

We hope this publication gives you a glimpse into the fantastic work that the team and our contributors have put in this year, a year filled with uncertainties and unknowns, yet with so much promise. We are coming out of this transition stronger and full of stubborn optimism for the continent that we all love, one in which we continually strive to live out Ubuntu; I am because we are. We remain #StrongerTogether.

In light and love,
Adaobi N. Ezeokoli
Editor-In-Chief

From the Lead Publication Editor

For two years now, I have had the honour of working to publish the 15th and 16th editions of the *Africa Policy Journal*. Each publication cycle brought with it its own set of challenges and opportunities. Last year, many authors from the Continent and the Diaspora contemplated the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic for the Continent- for both its people and its policies.

This year, authors took a variety of approaches. Some chose to explicitly focus on the state of Africa and the pandemic, analyzing the ways in which inequitable vaccine access has affected, and will undoubtedly continue to affect, lives and policies on the Continent. In a gesture to the ways in which many of us have slowly taught ourselves to adapt to life with the virus, others chose to shift their central focus away from COVID-19. Economic development policy in South Africa and maternal healthcare in Nigeria, as two of our authors convincingly suggest, need to account for the pandemic's impacts in these spheres. Still others turned their focus to policy challenges that persist through and beyond the ravages of the virus—the politics of reforms to secondary education in Sierra Leone, the problematic use of the French language in Senegalese courts, the complexity of the “orphan tourism” industry in Kenya.

Creating the 16th edition of the *APJ* challenged both authors and editors to begin to confront the lasting impacts of the pandemic. Through hundreds of emails and dozens of video calls, we collapsed the geographic and social distance between us to craft ideas of national, regional, and global significance. I invite you, our readers, to take up this same challenge. It is an opportunity to read beyond the confines of your specific time and place; to engage with our authors as your interlocutors, consider their contexts, and evaluate their ideas with a critical, but hopeful, eye towards the future of Africa.

Wishing all health and hope,
Aaryan Morrison
Lead Publication Editor



WHERE HARVARD AND AFRICA MEET

The Harvard University Center for African Studies is a globally recognized, interdisciplinary body at Harvard University committed to broadening knowledge about Africa and African perspectives. Their vision is to deepen knowledge and understanding of Africa through global connections and communities of learning.



Collateral Benefits is a platform that through a series of Perspective Papers aims to lift up the voices of African and Afro-descendant people from all walks of life, so that African and Afro-descendant intellect, wisdom and experiences can contribute to and shape the global conversations on the critical issues of our time.

We centre **AFRICAN VOICES** and reflections about the Africa we want, now and for the future.



The Shorenstein Center on Media, Politics and Public Policy is a **Harvard Kennedy School** research center dedicated to increasing understanding of how people access, create, and process information, particularly as it relates to news and societal issues, and describing potential solutions to the problems facing our information ecosystem.

The Center advances its mission of protecting the information ecosystem and supporting healthy democracy by addressing the twin crises of trust and truth that face communities around the world. It pursues this work through academic research, teaching, a program of visiting fellows, conferences, and other initiatives.



The Africa Soft Power Project is an Africa led movement focused on how Africa can optimize its creative industries, knowledge economy, and harness its soft power effectively to propel itself forward, while championing the inclusion of African voices, and the voices of the diaspora community, in global discourse.

Africa Caucus

The Africa Caucus is the Kennedy School student organization focusing on Africa. Our community brings together students, policy makers, academics and supporting members interested in re-energizing the reflection on the continent's future prospects. Our goal is to inform the debate on Africa at Harvard and beyond. In an effort to renew the perspective on the continent, the overarching theme driving all our activities is Taking Africa to the next level! We instill a spirit of reform to encourage our community to think outside the box and re-invent a vision for the African continent.



The Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs is the hub of Harvard Kennedy School's research, teaching, and training in international security and diplomacy, environmental and resource issues, and science and technology policy. In 2021, the Belfer Center was named a "Center of Excellence" by the University of Pennsylvania's Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, in recognition of the Center's six consecutive years as the world's #1 university-affiliated think tank.

Meet the 2021-2022 APJ Team



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Noah Alemu Asfaw is the Lead Interview Editor at the *Africa Policy Journal*. He is a Mid-Career MPA student at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He has more than 13 years of work experience in development and public service focusing on agriculture manufacturing and government performance management. He has worked on strategy and policy formulation, institutional design and establishment, and investment promotion coupled with grassroots project implementation in Ethiopia, Rwanda, Ghana, and Kenya. Prior to HKS he was working for the Tony Blair Institute (TBI) as an Advisor and as a Senior Advisor to the Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC) and Rwanda Development Board.



Shambhavi Singh is the Online Editor at the *Africa Policy Journal*. She is pursuing a degree in Education Policy and Analysis at the Harvard Graduate School of Education as a Fulbright-Nehru scholar. Her goal is to critically examine the accessibility and quality of higher education along the intersection of multiple identities in a comparative framework of both government and market being the service providers, in a global context. She has worked for over six years with grassroots and international non-profit organizations and government institutions to address issues of educational inequity at local and large-scale systemic levels in India, and countries of Eastern and Southern Africa. She has a bachelor's degree in English Literature from Lady Shri Ram

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Jeffah Ombati is the Partnerships Editor for the *Africa Policy Journal* and an LL.M Candidate at Harvard Law School. He is an Advocate of the High Court of Kenya and Associate Arbitrator at Chartered Institute of Arbitrators. He holds a Bachelor of Laws Degree with First Class Honors from University of Nairobi, Kenya and a Postgraduate Diploma in Law from Kenya School of Law. Prior to HLS, he was working with the Parliamentary Service Commission of Kenya, Directorate of Legal Services, Senate. He is passionate about promoting intra-African trade as envisioned in the African Continental Free Trade Area. He serves as Head of African diaspora in the Council of African Youth Advocates.



Monique Motty is a Publication Editor at the *Africa Policy Journal*. She is a Mid-Career MPA candidate at Harvard Kennedy School. She has worked internationally on projects and policies focused on climate technologies, clean energy transition, and green finance mostly in African countries for a multilateral development bank, an international think tank, a national forest entity, and various UN agencies. She co-authored and contributed to peer-reviewed articles and reports on climate finance for energy transition, tenure related to bioenergy development, adaptation finance in the context of covid-19 and opportunities for upscaling private sector green investments. She holds a MSc in Energy, Environmental Technology and Economics from City, University of London. A board member of the Future Energy Leader program from the World Energy Council (WEC), she sits on the Technology Executive Committee and Expert Group on action and support (ASEG) against loss and damage of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and is an Executive of the Congo World Foundation.



Winston Michalak is a Publication Editor for the *Africa Policy Journal* and a senior at Harvard College studying electrical engineering. His research interests include African technology and energy innovation and policy, foreign policy and international relations, and economic development. At the Kennedy School, Winston has served as a research assistant on the Future of Diplomacy Project and supported study and scholarship related to international collaboration and security. He is originally from Evanston, IL.



Aishat Okesola is a Publication Editor at the *Africa Policy Journal* and an LLM candidate at Harvard Law School. She holds double First-Class degrees from the University of Lagos and the Nigerian Law School. Prior to commencing her LLM, she worked in the Energy and Natural Resources Practice Group of Banwo & Ighodalo, one of Nigeria's leading law firms. Aishat has over three years of experience providing legal advisory services to government agencies and private organisations on various domestic and cross-border transactions involving corporate and financial restructuring, acquisition and disposal of petroleum assets, joint ventures and general corporate advisory matters in the energy and infrastructure sector. At Harvard, she is pursuing an LLM degree with a focus on corporate law.



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Michelle St. Clair is the Events and Logistics Coordinator at the Africa Policy Journal. She is a Mid-Career MPA Candidate for the Class of 2022 and an Edward S Mason Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School and the recipient of the Rausing Public Service Fellowship for Barbados.

A licensed land surveyor by profession, Michelle has dedicated the past 15 years in service of the government and people of Barbados in the areas of surveying, mapping and spatial policy. Within the region, Michelle is dedicated to the pursuit of regional collaboration and a unified voice in the call for support for the countries and territories of the Caribbean.

She is also interested in issues related to the African diaspora and realizing the untapped potential to be unlocked as we strengthen the African-Caribbean relationship.



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She is Consultant Obstetrician and Gynaecologist, a development practitioner and social entrepreneur. She is the founder of Kia Kia Health, a health tech platform that is aimed at reducing maternal mortality by providing timely sexual and reproductive health services to women and girls. She writes about sexual and reproductive health issues and tweets as @NaijaObgyn. She is interested in nation building and good governance, with focus on policies affecting the health and wellbeing of girls, women and underserved communities.



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Improving COVID Vaccine Equity in Sub-Saharan Africa

By Clark Azubuike



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The best available tools for mitigating the current pandemic are the highly effective vaccines. However there has been uneven adoption of the vaccines, especially in most low- and middle-income countries, including those in Sub-Saharan Africa. Experts believe that low population vaccine uptake explains, at least in part, the increased risk for mutations in the current circulating strain of the virus, increasing the risk of the emergence of newer strains of the virus. These newer variants of the SARS Cov-2 virus have potential risk for higher transmissibility and worsened virulence. In addition to continued mortality and morbidity, the appearance of new variants

creates the risk of potential development of vaccine-resistant viruses and impedes progress in the global fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. Expanding global vaccine access equitably is a key component in the mitigation of the pandemic. I aim to explain the roots of the current global vaccine inequity and seek expansion in donations of COVID-19 vaccines to countries in sub-Saharan Africa and other low- and middle-income countries worldwide to increase global vaccination rates.

Since the 11th of March 2020, when the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic, more than 5.28 million people have died from the disease, with an estimated 264 million confirmed cases reported worldwide.¹ In order to mitigate this evolving challenge, governments around the world have taken unprecedented steps to curb the spread of the disease including adopting non-pharmacological methods like lockdowns, social distancing, widespread stay at home orders, isolation of suspected cases, quarantining of confirmed cases, widespread use of face masks and health education on handwashing and environmental hygiene measures.²

Rapid invention and widespread deployment of safe and effective vaccines have proven to be the most effective solution to reducing hospitalizations and deaths from the coronavirus. Existing evidence points to the immense benefits of the available vaccines, even though the jury is still out on the efficacy and safety of the vaccines for the long term.³ As of December 2nd 2021, 8.1 billion vaccines have been administered worldwide. 44% of the world's population has been vaccinated. However, only 3.2% of

people in low-income countries have been vaccinated and 7.5% of Africans have been fully vaccinated (accounting for 245.9 million doses administered). This contrasts with high income countries who have administered 1.8 billion doses and have fully vaccinated 67.9% of the population.⁴

According to the WHO, most African countries failed to meet their commitment to vaccinate at least 10% of their populations by September 2021. This disparity in vaccine distribution portends a lot of risks for the global fight against the pandemic. These findings are consistent with data from low- and middle-income countries all over the world. It stems from a resource gap between low- and high-income countries. These countries have been unable to obtain the necessary doses needed for widespread vaccination, as the major vaccine makers have prioritized access for procurement to high income countries who are able to buy and hoard them.

In July 2021, reports indicated that the US was sitting on 26 million unused vaccines, enough to vaccinate 13.1 million people. The UK has bought 467 million doses of COVID vaccines with 170,000 doses of Moderna vaccines at risk of expiry.⁵ Similar trends have been reported in other high-income countries including France, Switzerland, Canada, Germany, and Italy.

The vaccine rollout disparities have a lot of implications for the fight against the pandemic. The emergence of potentially more virulent and highly transmissible variants of the virus are at least partly explained by mutations of the viruses in certain unvaccinated populations.⁶ The emergence of the Omicron strain (and the Beta and Delta strains before it) of the virus, first reported in Southern Africa in November of 2021, gave cause for concern because it showed unprecedented mutations on the viral genome. At the moment, other than a demonstrable and significantly increased

risk for transmissibility, the implications of this are unknown. As at the time of writing, most cases reported are mild in symptom presentation. However, it resulted in a spiral of broad measures intended to clamp down on the spread, including new lockdown measures, a regional ban on transportation, increased testing, and surveillance, as well as impacting global and local markets. Unquantified is the psychological and emotional toll the news of these variants is causing on the population.

The current modality for distributing vaccines to low-income countries relies on an inconsistent mix of donations from the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility (COVAX) vaccine-sharing scheme, bilateral deals, and donations from wealthier nations. The COVAX vaccine-sharing scheme is the most important mechanism for the distribution of vaccines to low-income countries, as it was the first and the most robust plan for increasing vaccine supplies to countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. The scheme aimed to distribute enough vaccines to protect at least 20% of the populations in 92 low- and middle-income countries. It is managed by multilateral organizations including the WHO, Gavi, and UNICEF, and is constituted of vaccine dose donations from wealthy countries (including the UK, US, France, Portugal, Australia, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Japan, UAE, Germany, New Zealand) in collaboration with pharmaceutical companies. Nevertheless, the G7 countries have bought up over a third of global vaccine supplies despite accounting for 13% of the global population. They have hoarded these vaccines and many of the doses are almost expiring.⁶

I will consider some options for mitigating these challenges. However, they are mutually reinforcing.

Wealthy countries need to fulfil their commitment to the COVAX sharing scheme and strengthen various aspects of it. COVAX

is based on a public-private partnership model that is upheld by three frameworks: risk sharing, dose sharing, and burden sharing. In June 2021, the G7 committed to donating 870 million vaccine doses to the COVAX scheme. It offered to share the risks and benefits of the vaccine development, vaccine doses, and the burden of financing COVAX and the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) as a whole. What the G7 and COVAX do not share is the decision-making power nor the technology and technical know-how to produce vaccines. Wealthier benefactors deliberately hoard the intellectual property around the production of vaccines, and this increases the cost of the vaccines. G7 nations can ramp up donations to low-income countries, as well as increasing the capacity of low-income countries to manufacture these vaccines locally. There are concerns about the capacity of countries to handle the logistics of manufacture, storage, and distribution of vaccines locally, and these concerns could be addressed through systems strengthening and capacity building in the medium to long term.

Secondly, a common cause for concern that has impacted vaccine uptake in sub-Saharan Africa has been vaccine hesitancy. While this issue is not unique to the region, the root cause of vaccine hesitancy in Africa stems from a history of malfeasance by pharmaceutical companies in the region.^{7,8} Measures to manage this should include open, transparent, and consistent communication of the data on the risks of vaccinations, as well as creating pathways for to hold vaccine manufacturers legally liable for adverse side effects related to the vaccine.

Understandably, pharmaceutical companies may remain unwilling to open themselves to legal liability because of the unique and unprecedented approach to clinical trial and drug regulatory compliance for the COVID vaccines. Nevertheless, a transparent conver-

sation with the public could ameliorate the concerns people in low- and middle-income countries have about long-term safety and efficacy. This will involve working with various stakeholders in the media, national and local government, and trusted community leaders who communicate the benefits of widespread vaccinations.

Finally, the G7 needs to meet their commitment to support healthcare infrastructure development in low-income countries. This is especially necessary now, as the global pandemic has revealed deep cracks in health systems worldwide, but more so in low- and middle-income countries. In 2019, the G7 nations committed to supporting primary health care in low-resource countries, however they have failed to meet their commitments in funding and implementations.^{9,10} To mitigate the vaccine inequity, G7 nations must increase funding for vaccination programs and commit to increasing vaccination rates through a myriad of measures. These would take the form of increasing donation of vaccination doses to meet the short-term vaccine windfall. It would also take the form of transfer of technical expertise and know-how to the developing countries, to create self-sufficient infrastructures for manufacturing vaccines within the region.

The COVAX scheme is a good framework within which to work. However, it must be strengthened to give low- and middle-income countries the capacities to produce vaccines domestically, both for local use and for export. Sub-regional export of the vaccines will reduce dependence of foreign donation of vaccines. Already, there are significant investments in local manufacturing of the COVID vaccines within some countries in the subcontinent including Botswana and South Africa.¹¹ This will, in addition to reducing the cost of vaccines, increase compliance, increase trust and adoption, and reduce overall public hesitancy,

as the populations in these countries view the vaccines through a lens of self-ownership.

The global vaccine roll out has been tainted by inequity and disparity, especially to the detriment of low- and middle-income countries. With the emergence of new variants that threaten the efforts to mitigate the pandemic, it is important that, now more than ever, G7 nations fulfill their commitments to increasing vaccine access and strengthening health systems in low- resource countries.

Endnotes

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Peace Education Policy: A Synergy to Mitigating Violent Conflict Risk and Peacebuilding in Nigeria

By Amos Oluwatoye



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Abstract

Mitigating the risk of violent conflict and building peace in Nigeria involves established principles that promote peace through formal and informal institutions of learning. Peace education policy contains the key principles of reducing the risk of violent conflict and building a culture of peace. This paper aims at promoting peace education policy as a solution to mitigate the risk of violent conflict

and peacebuilding in Nigeria. Qualitative research and content analysis of publications were carried out for this research. This paper affirms that one of the causes of violent conflict in Nigeria was found to be associated with violent education acquired and accepted by aggrieved individuals and groups as a means to achieve their social, political and economic goals. Ignorance of these victimized groups on how to wage conflict through nonviolent methods caused them to see violence as a means of fighting injustices in the society. This paper also supports that peace education plays several roles in alleviating violence and building peace in Nigeria. The analysis further suggests that the formulation and implementation of peace education policy is key in supporting efforts from the government, non-governmental organizations, and peacebuilders in alleviating risks to human security and building peace in Nigeria for sustainable development.

Introduction

Nigeria is faced with multiple violent conflicts: terrorism, kidnapping, separatist agitation, farmer-herder conflict, communal clashes, rises in cult violence, and others. These recurrent incidents are in part a result of postcolonial conflict since the 1960s, conflicts between ethnic groups, socio-economic inequalities, and government failure to serve social needs. Between 2015 and 2020, the government has spent at least ₦6 trillion, budgeted to the Ministry of Defense, intending to curb violence such as terrorism and banditry to work towards

the end goal of promoting national security. However, this expenditure has not had a positive impact in the last decade, adversely affecting the economic status of people living in the nation.¹ The ineffectiveness of money disbursed by the government to curb insecurity can be attributed to the absence of public policy that encouraged the inculcation of peace through formal and informal learning.

Formal institutions of learning, such as primary, secondary and tertiary institutions, have a huge role to play in preventing violence. Students have long been vulnerable to becoming tools for violent conflict in the country due to their lack of enlightenment on the principles of achieving justice through peaceful means. It is opined that children's inability to access formal education—or more generally activities that emphasize critical thinking, life skills, family, and community—makes them vulnerable to recruitment and radicalization.² Furthermore, formal education without the inclusion of a peace education curriculum still poses several challenges.

Informal institutions such as religious organizations, community groups, and traditional settings use the Bible, Quran, and cultural opinions to educate. For example, the Boko Haram insurgency is a product of radical Islamic education and institution. A special report published by the United States Institute of Peace states that there is unanimity that initial ignorance of religious teaching is the leading factor influencing the adoption of extreme religious views, especially among youth.³ Violent extremism and extremist movements, kidnapping and banditry, community clashes, and rises in cultism are often functions of the education received by aggrieved individuals who belong to one or more violent groups in a bid to advance their social, political and economic agenda.

Greater knowledge of the role and the positive implication of establishing peace

education would help policymakers and peacebuilders foster the making of a peace education policy. Therefore, this paper aims at promoting peace education policy to promote peacebuilding in Nigeria. The objectives of this article are: (i) to examine violent education as a cause of violent conflict; (ii) to reveal the roles of peace education in peacebuilding; and (iii) to suggest relevant policy solutions to mitigate violent conflict risk and peacebuilding. This article is significant in that it gives policy insights and solutions to the legislative arm of the government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, policymakers and stakeholders in peacebuilding on how to alleviate violent conflict situations and build a culture of peace nationwide through the formulation and implementation of peace education policy.

The policy entails established principles that legitimize the teaching of peace education in formal and informal institutions of learning to tackle the scourge of violence affecting people living in the Nigerian communities. The implementation of this policy in the next two decades would enhance the knowledge of citizens that are vulnerable to violence on how to live peaceably with others. It will also build a generation of peace actors that would continue to impact the knowledge of peace and transfer such knowledge from one generation to another to ameliorate the risk of violence and sustain development in Nigeria.

Violent Education as the Cause of Violent Conflict in Nigeria

Since 2009, the Boko Haram religious terrorist group has killed thousands of innocent citizens and displaced millions from their homes in the northeastern region of Nigeria. A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report shows that the Islamist insurgency has killed nearly 350,000 people in Northeastern Nigeria as of the end of 2020.⁴ The Nigerian government's war with

Boko Haram and Islamic State's West Africa Province has created one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees operational data portal shows that about 3 million people have been displaced from their homes, and more than 310,000 Nigerians have become refugees because of the insurgency.⁵ The displaced depend on aid. This dependency tends to continue as the conflict shows little sign of ending. It is estimated that 9 out of 10 killed are children younger than five-years-old, with an average of 170 people dying every day. More than 1.1 million people may die if the conflict continues to 2030.⁶ These data show that religious terrorism in the country today seems to have become an interminable plague due to radical religious knowledge impacted on vulnerable people.⁷

The report released by Global Terrorism Index (GTI) in 2019 shows that herders killed more Nigerians than Boko Haram in 2018.⁶ Fulani herdsmen conducted 654 attacks, killed 2,539 people, and kidnapped 253 more in Nigeria between 2017 and 2020.⁸ Most herdsmen push the communities out of states, directly impacting their socio-economic lifestyles. This results in banditry and kidnapping and causes a human security concern for local farmers, villages, communities, interstate travelers, security agents, policymakers, peacebuilders, civil society organizations, and local, state and the federal government. In their quest to possess lands for their cattle, the Fulani herders are known to have been inspired by the *jihād* of Usman dan Fodio and violently take over communities. Thus, such knowledge is violently impacting the nation.

Additionally, secessionist movements in Nigeria are increasingly becoming violent. A key example is the killings perpetrated by some violent members of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), a separatist organization in the Southeast region of Nigeria. Between

January 2019 and June 2021, separatist disturbances and targeted violence caused over 220 fatalities in Imo State, Nigeria indicating a resurgence of criminal victimization. Weekly "sit-at-home" orders were issued by IPOB members as support for the Republic of Biafra has increased insecurity in the State. In August 2021, gunmen killed two persons, burned two commercial buses for not having complied with the IPOB "sit-at-home" order in Ngwogwu town, Aboh Mbaise Local Government Area (LGA). In the same month, five people were killed, twenty shops and twenty vehicles destroyed in a series of attacks by gunmen in Okporo town, Orlu LGA. A bus driver was reportedly killed on October 1, 2021 by gunmen who were imposing the "sit-at-home" order in Nguru town, Aboh Mbaise LGA.⁹ The genesis of this increased violent agitation has been attributed to violent knowledge promoted through radio Biafra.¹⁰

As the 2023 general election approaches, various regions of the country have aligned with the presidency's position because political power has long been the determinant of the flow and distribution of economic resources in Nigeria. Should either states with predominantly Hausas or Fulanis groups win elections, additional economic resources are likely to flow towards the northern region. Similar outcome is possible under a Yoruba or Igbo reign. As election day approaches, political campaigns are likely to influence the reoccurrence and intensity of violence. As violent extremism is damaging the northern economy and other regions faced with violent conflicts, it threatens the development across the whole of Nigeria.

These circumstances make it imperative for Nigerian lawmakers, policymakers, and other stakeholders in peacebuilding to be strategic in the formulation and implementation of a public policy that supports peacebuilding.

The Role of Peace Education in Mitigating Violent Conflict and Peacebuilding

At the heart of UNESCO's mission is the promotion of peace through education. It is responsible for the coordination and implementation of activities that promote the idea that when a generation is well informed, it helps in violent conflict prevention and peacebuilding.¹¹

Violent conflict involves the use of physical force in resolving competing claims or achieving goals and objectives. Peacebuilding is the development of positive relationships across various types of groups— ethnic, racial, religious, class, and national.¹² Education is simply the process of gaining knowledge, skills and values. Education can take place in formal (primary, secondary and tertiary institutions) or informal settings (religious organizations, communities, traditional settings).

Peace education promotes the knowledge, skills and attitudes to help people prevent conflict from occurring, to resolve conflicts peacefully, and to create conditions for peace.¹³ It challenges the assumption that violence is inherent and proposes to transform the structure of education to curb violence in a given society.¹⁴ Peace education activities are intended to prevent violence and build a culture of peace with a focus on the following knowledge areas: Access to Justice System, Preventing Violent Extremism, Nonviolent Resistance, Tolerance, Dialogue, Conflict Negotiations, Conflict Mediation, Arbitration, and Conflict Adjudication.

- *Access to Justice System*: This refers to the functional mechanisms existing in any particular society aimed to ensure that ordinary people or citizens have the right and opportunity to seek redress when their fundamental human rights have been violated.¹⁵
- *Preventing Violent Extremism*: Violent

extremism refers to the use of violence based on an ideological commitment to achieve social, political, economic, and religious goals.¹⁶ The international community is keen on preventing violent extremism among youth through the use of education. In 2015, education was identified as a crucial tool in preventing violent extremism among youth. In this spirit, the Federal Ministry of Education and UNODC launched the Education for Justice (E4J) Initiative in Nigeria. The initiative seeks to prevent crime and promote a culture of lawfulness through education activities and materials designed for primary, secondary and tertiary levels.¹⁷

- *Nonviolent Resistance*: Nonviolent resistance refers to resorting to protest and other nonviolent methods of action in achieving social, political and economic goals. It is a method commonly used by marginalized and oppressed individuals and groups to campaign for justice and peace in an oppressive society. Research has shown nonviolent campaigns to be more successful than violent campaigns. Chenoweth and Stephan collected data comparing the successes recorded on all violent and non-violent campaigns around the world from 1900 to 2006 which led to the overthrow of a government or territorial freedom. A data set of 323 mass action campaigns was created and analyzed, demonstrating that nonviolent civil resistance was far more effective in producing change than violent civil resistance.¹⁸ Educating Nigerians on how to achieve justice through nonviolent resistance will help to mitigate the risk of violent conflict and build a peaceful country.
- *Tolerance*: Tolerance is the appreciation of others' diversity and the ability to exercise a fair and objective attitude towards those whose opinions, culture, religion are dif-

ferent than one's own.¹⁹ With a population estimate at 203.5 million, Nigeria is shaped by multiple ethnic groups and cultures, with over 521 languages and over 1150 dialects and ethnic groups.²⁰ 49.3% of the country's population is Christian and 48.8% is Muslim, while the remaining 2% belong to other or no religions, according to a survey by the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life in 2012.²¹ Ethnic and religious diversity prompted violent conflict on several occasions in Nigeria. Teaching tolerance towards others' cultures, religions and political views is a preventive measure to promote peace and dissuade violent conflict.

- *Dialogue*: Dialogue is a discussion that enhances relationships between or among conflicting parties for peaceful co-existence.
- *Conflict Negotiations*: It is a process of resolving conflict by providing for each conflicting party's needs, and adequately addressing their interests so that they are satisfied with the outcome.²²
- *Conflict Mediation*: Mediation is a conflict resolution process in which a neutral mediator assists the parties through constructive discussion and negotiation of their issues to reach a mutually acceptable resolution.²³
- *Arbitration*: Arbitration is a process of resolving conflict by agreement of the parties to submit a dispute to one or more arbitrators who make a binding decision on the dispute. In choosing arbitration, the parties opt for a private dispute resolution procedure instead of going to court.²⁴
- *Conflict Adjudication*: Adjudication may be carried out in various forms, most commonly, it occurs in the court system.²⁵

Peace education in the schools and communities does not imply the people would be taught how to keep quiet in the face of injustice. It is about teaching strategies and tactics of nonviolent resistance for achieving

political goals.

Peace Education Policy as a Synergy to Mitigating Violent Conflict Risk and Peacebuilding in Nigeria

Considering the roles of peace education in violent conflict risk and building peace in Nigeria, the government needs to make a public policy that proliferates the teaching of peace in various institutions of learning.

Public policy is the guide or framework which the government has designed for directions and practices in certain problem areas. Public policy is intended to address a particular problem at any point in time and not to solve all the problems in society. It is a course of action by political actors to solve a particular problem.²⁶ Peace education policy should be made in response to the increased level of violence in Nigerian states.

Peace education policy is a public policy that a government has designed to address and solve the problem of violent conflicts, promote justice, and foster peaceful co-existence in society. The policy encourages a curriculum that fosters peace through formal and informal learning institutions. It establishes qualitative learning principles, ways to engage in a peaceful relationship, resolve conflicts, and practice peace culture in schools and the greater community.

Peace education policy will trigger the impactful roles of peace education in formal institutions of learning, making it an instrument of change in their environment. Communities in various impacted states would benefit from this initiative when students in the institutions of formal learning are groomed in the knowledge, skills, and attitude of how to prevent violent conflicts, build peace and achieve social justice for sustainable development. Furthermore, informal institutions of learning such as churches, mosques, and traditional settings would also be guided by

peace education policy in building a culture of peace among individuals and groups in Nigerian communities.

Peace Education Policy Making Process in Nigeria.

Policy making is the process developed by the government to formulate and implement strategies to address a problem and meet desired goals and objectives. Peace education policy making is the process of formulating and implementing the strategy to address the scourge of violent conflict in society. For a successful peace education policy making it must pass through the following five phases of policy making also known as policy cycle: policy formation, policy formulation, policy adoption, policy implementation, policy evaluation.

Policy Formation Phase.

The policy formation phase is where we have a condition that needs to change. It is the stage of identifying the challenges people think something must be done about it. Nations are faced with different challenges that imply conditions that need to be changed for good. Examples are poverty, inequality, violent conflict, political marginalization etc. It is generally opined that every problem needs the government attention. Unfortunately, the government does not address all the problems through policy making; most times they prioritized challenges to address based on their urgency. The problem that is of high priority gets to the stage of policy agenda-setting.

For the challenge of insecurity to attract government attention, concern actors such as civil society organizations, policymakers, researcher, affected states and leaders of local communities needs to collaborate and draw the attention of the government to the need for peace education policy in formal and informal institutions of learning.

Policy Formulation Phase.

Formulation of policy consists of policymakers discussing and suggesting approaches to correcting problems that have been raised as part of the agenda. The ultimate policy that is chosen to solve the issue at hand is dependent on two factors. First, the policy must be a valid way of solving the issue most efficiently and feasibly possible. Effective formulation involves analysis and identification of alternatives to solving issues. Secondly, policies must be politically feasible. This is usually accomplished through majority building in a bargaining process. Policy formulation is, therefore, comprised of analysis that identifies the most effective policies and political authorization.²⁷

The policy formulation phase involves the following: Conception or identification of policy issues; specification of objectives; development of option/strategy; selection of preferred option/strategy; policy decision-making; implementation strategy design; policy review and reformulation. Formulating peace education policy in Nigeria is the responsibility of the president and his immediate advisers, other members of the executive branch, career and appointed administrative officials, specially appointed committees and commissions, and legislators who introduce bills for consideration by the National Assembly.²⁸ Formulation of the policy is done after the government is convicted of its need or persuaded by concerned actors working in the peacebuilding endeavor to include peace education policy as a priority agenda.

Policy Adoption Phase.

The third phase of the policy process is the policy adoption phase where policies are adopted by government bodies for forthcoming implementation or execution. Relevant institutions of government have to adopt formulated policies to be put into effect. Powerful interest

groups in peacebuilding works can use their political influence to determine the adoption of the peace education policy in Nigeria. The media can play a major role in peace education policy adoption. When media reporting and commentary is impartial, it provides a medium where the argument over various cases for policy adoption takes place. The media can boost a policy proposal's likelihood of adoption when it displays a favorable bias and vice versa.²⁹

Policy Implementation Phase.

Policy implementation is the fourth phase of the policy cycle in which formal policies that have been adopted by formal political office-holders are carried out by administrators. It involves the application of an adopted policy, of which the administrative agencies are the primary implementers. In the case of Nigeria, the courts and the national assembly are also involved. Where there is a question of a specific application of policy, the courts interpret statutes and administrative rules and regulations. Substantial power is delegated to the agencies to allow them to use their discretion when implementing policy.³⁰

Implementing peace education policy in Nigeria is a coordinated effort of the national assembly, courts and administrators charged to carry out the implementation. In Nigeria, public policies are implemented with the assistance of public servants.³¹ Therefore, a well-functioning public platform such as a ministry for effectual implementation of peace education policy could be suggested. This platform will create a viable platform for the government of Nigeria to implement a peace education policy in formal and informal institutions of learning.

Policy Evaluation Phase.

This policy evaluation phase consists of assessing the changes that happened due to the pol-

icy. It is an evaluation of the effect of the policy or whether the policy has been instrumental to cause the expected change. The evaluation can take place during the policy design i.e before implementation of policy, to compare the cost-benefit or cost-effectiveness of alternative policy options. Evaluation can also be conducted during policy implementation to monitor the outcomes of the policy in short and medium terms. This is known as outcome evaluation. Evaluation can come at the end of policy implementation to evaluate long term indicators of how the policy has caused the expected changes. This is known as impact evaluation.³²

After peace education policy has been implemented and executed, it is important to evaluate the impact of the policy. This peace education policy should be evaluated to know if it has achieved the expected result, which is alleviating human security risks in Nigeria.

In this context, a clear indicator needed to know whether peace education policy has achieved its expected goals and objectives is to collect and analyze data on the recent rate of killings through violent conflict has reduced in Nigeria.

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Pro-Poor Growth in Africa's economies

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Abstract

Pro-poor growth is a term used for primarily national policies to stimulate economic growth for the benefit of poor people (primarily in the economic sense of poverty). This notion has been observed largely in the developing countries, particularly in Africa. There are challenges that have been observed and various shifts in the economic development, but the growth is gradual, this is due to various

factors that fail and still fail to be addressed by many policy makers. One of these factors includes regressive dominant paradigms that have limited our understanding of the development challenges, particularly of Africa and developing countries. The paper therefore gives a brief critique of traditional concepts of growth and builds a case for broadening these concepts, particularly in as far as these relate to the pursuit of meaningful economic growth in Africa. It argues that these misconceptions or inability to conceptualise the multiple dimensions of growth hamper our ability as scientists and policymakers to adapt to the changes or sustainable dynamics of economic revamping. The impact on economic growth has a lot of challenges which still remain unaddressed. There is still a gap that remains unclosed.

Introduction

Thinking on pro-poor growth has for far too long been embedded in positivist and post-positivist paradigms. Since the 1950s, development discourse has centred on unilateral paradigms, which have adopted uni-polar dimensions of growth.¹ Though there have been gradual shifts in the thinking on growth conceptions ranging from 'pro-poor growth as economic growth' (1950s) to 'growth as economic growth, redistribution and structural change' (1980s and 1990s), much of the development discourse has been dominated by market fundamentalism and neo-liberal orthodoxy.² These are dominant paradigms that have limited our understanding of the development challenge, particularly of developing countries. The paper therefore gives a brief critique of traditional conceptions of pro-poor growth and thereafter builds a case

for broadening job-related conceptualisations of pro-poor growth, particularly in as far as these relate to the pursuit of meaningful economic growth in Africa.

Pro-Poor Growth – Traditional Conceptualisations

Many scholars have understood pro-poor economic growth to mean either of the two trains of thought: rising economic growth or reducing inequalities (i.e. income disparities between the rich and the poor) through redistributive modelling.³ These conceptions of growth and development are significant but limited. The obsession with single index measurements (i.e. GDP growth, income deficits, malnutrition etc) is an indication of a broader crisis in the development discourse: over-quantification and homogenisation of poverty, depersonalisation and externalisation of poverty, obsession with absolute measures, and over-reliance on non-linear theoretical lenses.³ Pro-poor growth strategies hardly take into account the social processes (i.e. unequal power relations, social categorisation, social conditions, etc.) by which poverty is produced and reproduced. Narrow definitions are attributable to the narrow and clinical analysis of poverty, as well as the limitations of research data and the quantitative instruments used to measure these. The resultant impotency of conceived growth strategies are, at most, a natural consequence of the weakness of our own representations of poverty as scholars and policy-makers.

Exposing the Poverty of Narrow Conceptions of Growth - The Case of Structural Adjustments in Africa

Structural adjustment reforms adopted by most African states in the 1990s demonstrate the scarcity of narrowly defined growth objectives in development discourse. Narrow concepts of growth have proved to be part of the problem,

and not necessarily solutions, to Africa's labour market economy challenges, as these have pursued an accumulation regime devoid of social justice.

Following the African economic crisis in the 1970s and the early 1980s, the 1980s saw the emergence of a new strand of development thinking based on a neo-liberal paradigm. Spearheaded by the United States, United Kingdom, World Bank, and International Monetary Fund, a market-based economic system in tune with economic liberalisation was to be adopted by developing countries as part of their lending conditionalities.⁴ This led to the structural adjustment policy focusing on efficiency and macroeconomic stability. Stabilization-cum-adjustment programmes, or Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs), designed to arrest the decline in job creation and improve the overall employment situation, were put in place. Standard measures under SAPs included a reduction in public expenditure in order to control the deficit, retrenchment of public sector employees, economic liberalization, currency devaluation, and privatization of public enterprises. The assumption underpinning SAPs was that the pursuit of economic growth through reduced state intervention would result in rising incomes and, consequently, respond to the socio-economic needs of Africa.

However, SAPs did not improve the situation at all. Many scholars have argued that SAPs, having badly hit the social sector, may have aggravated the deterioration of human security. Following the introduction of SAPs, human development indicators pertaining to health, education, and employment fell dramatically as decreed by subsequent development strategies such as the African-Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programme Africa (AAF-SAP) introduced in 1989 (ILO, 1999). The number of jobs created lagged behind the demand for jobs.

The newly-created jobs are precarious and of poor quality. Many of those jobs have disappeared, or are at risk of disappearing, due to the recession. There has since been recognition that development requires more than sound economic management, and that human development regarding education, health, nutrition, employment, and incomes require equal priority.

So how can economists account for this rather precarious condition?

Though economic recovery was first registered in Sub-Saharan Africa in 1993-1994, and Africa's regions showed improvement in the annual economic growth rates by 1995, growth rates were coupled with widespread unemployment, especially amongst the youth and women (ILO, 1999). According to ILO (1993), the combination of slow economic growth rates, rapid population growth, and large labour force combined with slow formal/wage employment growth and declining per capita incomes produced limited opportunities for adequate employment creation. The "employment content" of the renewed growth was therefore generally low. The employment challenges were largely attributed to the structure and growth of the national economies, slow economic growth, and little structural change, which were reflected in declining or stagnating levels of wage employment, decreasing real wages, and deteriorating living conditions for about 30-50% of the population. Africa's situation was undoubtedly compounded by other factors, which included *inter alia* the negative effects of increased debt burden and deteriorating terms of trade with some countries spending more than half of their export earnings for external debt servicing (ILO, 1999).

Despite the calls to liberalise global economies; the focal policy themes to *grow first, distribute later*; the narrowly defined economic growth trajectories since independence; and

the promises of "trickle-down effects," African states have not made significant progress towards reducing poverty levels. Instead, they have been bewildered by increasing unemployment growth levels.

Though the period of rapid economic growth from the 1990s until today has shown that economic growth is a necessary precursor for development, Africa's experiences since then prove that this is not a sufficient condition for accelerated employment growth — pro-poor growth. The truth is, if more multifaceted dimensions of growth had remained a key policy focus in the 1990s and in conjunction with the calls for sustained economic growth, there would be fewer people living in poverty, a stronger middle class in the world, more stable social and political systems, and a more dynamic global economy. Undoubtedly, the experience with SAPs has demonstrated that we cannot leave the well-being of the people in the hands of an unregulated market and that growth strategies should pursue twin objectives of sustainable economic growth and the creation of decent employment.

Towards More Qualitative Shifts of Pro-Poor Economic Growth In Africa

Fortunately, the 21st century has seen the emergence of alternative thinking on growth and development, wherein growth is not only seen as economic growth but also as improving the living conditions of the majority of a nation's citizenry. Haq (2005) correctly points out that this ideological shift in thinking can be seen, for instance, in the United Nations (UN) Development Programme's Human Development Reports, the UN's Millennium Development Goals, and the domino effects these have had on national policy formulation across the globe.⁵ In order to move towards a trajectory of meaningful economic growth, a conceptual policy shift has to be made, one

that moves beyond quantitative conceptions of growth.

Commendable in this regard is the work of Amartya Sen, whose expansion of development as freedom has contributed to the broader view of well-being and the concept of decent work. Sen (1999) analyzes poverty in terms of various forms of “unfreedom” that prevent people from realizing and enlarging their capabilities.⁶ This perspective on development has been broad and integrated, encompassing both civil and political liberties and economic and social rights as primary goals of development and the principal means of progress. Like Sen (1999), Chambers’s (2005) perspective on development also promotes economic and social rights as primary goals of development and the principal means of progress. The human development paradigm that Haq (2005) correctly attributes to the early leaders of political and economic thought is particularly useful in conceptualising pro-poor economic growth, particularly in as far as these relate to Africa. This conceptual policy shift must be commended, as it allows for greater appreciation of the lived reality of depravity and the depth of growth deficits, an appreciation which can better shape government intervention.

The paper therefore holds that pro-poor growth should encompass broadened job-related dimensions, which encompass the creation of decent and productive work for a populace, particularly those affected by unemployment and underemployment. The considered focus not only recognises the weakness of past definitions but also acknowledges that broadened focus will have a spiral effect on other poverty dimensions (i.e. health, education) that have not been included as primary indices. The paper therefore promotes decent work, labour-intensive approaches, and local enterprise development as amicable strategies in pursuing pro-poor growth in Africa.

Decent Work Agenda

This qualitative approach to development has since led to a policy shift that seeks to protect workers’ rights to a living wage. The ILO decent work agenda embraces rights and dialogue, as well as employment and social protection, and “situates conditions of work and employment within a broad economic, political and social framework” (ILO, 2003, p1).⁷ The World Social Summit definition of worker well-being also encompasses “the goal of ensuring quality jobs, and safeguard[ing] the basic rights and interests of workers and to this end, freely promote respect for relevant International Labour Organization conventions, including those on the prohibition of forced and child labour, the freedom of association, the right to organise and bargain collectively, and the principle of non-discrimination” (ILO, 2003, p3).

The decent work approach is particularly important to the understanding of pro-poor growth in Africa as it takes into account the acute realities of depravity in Africa’s labour market economies. Informality, casualization, and externalization of the labour have undoubtedly worsened Africa’s job crisis. Employment has increasingly become insecure, poorly paid, and largely unregulated, with few benefits and limited prospects for sustainable livelihoods. Not only has this led to weakened enterprise development, but this has also made minimum wages less effective and created a mismatch between skills and jobs available, especially for new entrants (ILO, 2003). The decent work approach is, consequently, crucially important to new concepts of pro-poor growth as it seeks to protect workers’ rights to a living wage by transforming informality to decent work, improving formal-informal links, reducing underemployment through triangular employment, and mitigating against the negative impacts of labour market deregulation. The

decent work agenda is, therefore, an essential part of the economic solution.

Prioritising Labour-Intensive Approaches

Bearing in mind that Africa's main assets are natural resources and surplus labour, there needs to be a policy shift towards labour-intensive production. The problem with Africa's development models is that they have been too advanced and, therefore, unable to respond to Africa's pressing realities. For instance, Africa has long faced a shortage of capital and an abundance of labour, but past growth strategies have often favoured capital- rather than labour-intensive investment (AU, 2004).⁸ Agricultural policies have often favoured production by larger, more capital- and land-intensive farmers and trading companies rather than targeting the needs of small farmers and landless labourers. Consequently, the models pursued have been unable to meet the social needs of its populace.

This is not to say that African states should not make use of technological advancement or pursue aggressive skills-development regimes to meet the demands of changing domestic structures of production. Undoubtedly, building skills is an essential component to improve productivity, incomes, and access to employment opportunities. However, this should be seen as the long term strategy, as changing the skills profile of an entire generation of low-skilled populace is not an overnight exercise and should be pursued with the future in mind.

Bearing in mind pressing constraints, Africa's macro-economic strategies must recognise the necessity to re-orient growth strategies so that these become more employment-intensive. Where possible and desirable, the different sectors of the economy (modern, agricultural, and informal) should explore priorities and strategies for

optimizing development within productive and labour-intensive sectors (i.e. infrastructure, agriculture, cultural industries, environment conservation, transportation, ICT, fisheries, forestry, trade and tourism development, and maintenance) for the creation of jobs and poverty alleviation (AU, 2004).

This proposal must, however, be examined in the context of optimal utilization of local resources, technological developments, local planning, community participation, and small-scale contracting and systems for maintaining rural infrastructure (AU, 2004). A strategy to achieve this objective lies in allocating more investible resources into employment intensive sectors, particularly the agriculture, rural, and urban informal sectors.

Local Enterprise development (LED)

Both internationally and in Africa, there have been vigorous debates about how to best leverage rural economies as a way to fight the poverty and unemployment plaguing the majority of citizens in rural settings. LED strategies have received much scholarly critique, particularly because

“typically, the highest incidence and severity of poverty are found in rural areas, especially if ill-watered. For many of the rural poor, their only immediate route out of poverty is by migration to towns, to face a higher expected income, though often a more uncertain one. This may or may not reduce aggregate poverty” (Lipton and Ravallion, 1993: p73).⁹

Asset deficits (i.e. insufficient land/equipment ownership, restricted access to microfinance, low skills) and market anomalies (i.e. asymmetrical information, monopolistic enterprise and other forms of imperfect competition) are also particularly prevalent in rural economies and

other marginalized sectors. It is not surprising, therefore, that pressing conditions have demanded a critical reflection of traditional approaches to development and that local and regional economic development has emerged as an innovative approach to the patterns of poverty and unemployment in rural areas.

With the liberalization of trade and mobility of markets (i.e. financial, product and labour markets), local markets have become more and more accessible to foreign competitors (Dplg, 2000).¹⁰ Trade liberalization and deregulation has brought both risks and opportunities to Africa's local economies. On the one hand, it has increased pressure on local and regional economies to compete internationally and adapt to global economic forces (Sachs, 2005).¹¹ On the other hand, it has opened opportunities to attract new markets and investors. According to Dplg (2000), the increasingly rapid flow of large quantities of information, with distance no longer acting as a barrier to trade, has shifted the focus of global markets from a national perspective to a more differentiated regional and local focus on potentials and competitive advantages of a territory (Dplg, 2000).

With this in mind, the promotion of community-based enterprise (cooperatives), micro- and small enterprise development remains central in pursuits to emancipate the rural poor from socio-economic depravity. These can be used as tools to provide opportunities for the rural poor to generate their own income, particularly targeted at women, rural youth, unemployed youth, and immigrants. Cooperatives and small business enterprises have proved to be key organizational forms in building new models to combat social exclusion and poverty through local development initiatives, for example. Similar to political decentralisation, strengthening local economic enterprise is also particularly important as a function of democratisation processes, allowing

broadened participation of citizens in the design and control of economic processes that determine their livelihoods.

Undoubtedly, meeting the challenges of globalization requires innovative thinking on inclusion strategies, which itself requires strong local communities, leadership, and solutions (Dplg, 2000). African states should therefore prioritise LED approaches that stimulate local commerce and to strengthen local economic cycles, as well as build up the capacity of local economies. Governments should make concerted efforts to build comparative skills of regional actors, enabling them to tap into the comparative and competitive advantages of regions, the potentials of natural resources, and the leadership of private sector enterprise (i.e. production of agricultural and cultural artefacts, tourism, infrastructural development and/or maintenance). LED ventures should aim to empower local participants to utilize business enterprise ventures, labour, capital and other local resources to establish competitive advantage, in order to create the necessary linkages between economic growth and employment creation in rural economies. At the end of the day, breaking the cycle of poverty in Africa ultimately means creating new cycles of employment opportunities, as well as creating opportunities for local citizens to create wealth.

Closing Remarks

A key question for the immediate future is the quality and composition of economic growth in Africa. What the continent now needs is a new mix of policy instruments that will give meaningful expression to pro-poor growth, redesigned to promote national priorities (i.e. decent jobs), reduce poverty and unemployment, address increasing casualisation, informality and externalization of our labour markets. It is Africa's urgent task to shift its policy perspective and innovate towards

addressing both the underlying and structural causes and their distressing consequences in order to reduce uncertainty and insecurity in the lives of working-class Africans. Africa must therefore put the spotlight on the qualitative aspects of growth and innovate to find pro-poor growth paths with meaningful trajectories.

Endnotes

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2021-2022 Events Overview

The Africa Policy Journal Fireside Chat

March 8th, 2022

#APJFiresideChat with Rt. Honourable Dr. Saulos Klaus Chilima, VP, Republic of Malawi

The Africa Policy Journal
FIRESIDE CHAT

GUEST: **Right Honourable DR. SAULOS KLAUS CHILIMA**
Vice President of the Republic of Malawi

MODERATOR: **PROF. ZOE MARKS**
Lecturer, Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School

TUESDAY, MARCH 8 / 8 A.M. EST / 3 PM CAT / VIRTUAL (ON ZOOM)

Hosted by The Africa Policy Journal in partnership with the Harvard Center for African Studies

AFRICA POLICY JOURNAL HARVARD UNIVERSITY

In this Africa Policy Journal Fireside Chat, Public Policy and African Studies Lecturer, Prof. Zoe Marks of the Harvard Kennedy School, explored the role of agriculture, technology, and entrepreneurship in harnessing the potential of Africa's young people, in conversation with Right Honourable Dr. Saulos Chilima, Vice President of the Republic of Malawi. Dr. Chilima has been Vice President

in the Southern African country since 2014, and prior to entering politics had garnered extensive experience in both multi-national organizations and at the intersection between the public and private sector.

You can watch the conversation on the APJ's Youtube Page: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4VAjDaAHtBQ&t=13s>

March 25th, 2022

#APJFiresideChat: A conversation with Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka



The Africa Policy Journal team was excited and honored to host Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka at the Africa Policy Journal Fireside Chat. The event, held on Friday, March 25, 2022, was held in collaboration with the Harvard University Center for African Studies.

Dr. Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka spoke on a range of issues, from expanding women’s civil and political participation, to her experiences while leading UN Women.

“You need to think and see how gender issues are integrated into your studies. Gender neutral policies are discriminatory. Raise these issues in class, at the individual level, make that decision. It is bad corporate governance to be a sexist policy maker,” Dr. Mlambo-Ngcuka told the room of students spanning from different Harvard schools.

She spoke of the importance of engaging men in conversations, and actions, around gender



based violence and gender equality. “There is definitely increase in the men who are speaking against gender discrimination issues. We are targeting men in power to speak against these issues, we also work with boys and children and engage them together,” she said.

She noted that engaging men in issues of gender equality is important, and is a collective responsibility. “It is important to continuously involve men in cleaning their mess — it’s a



collective responsibility,” she said. She urged those in attendance, especially the students in the room, not to forsake the world of politics, after they were done at Harvard. “You have to go into politics. You cannot leave politics to the worst people. The more you move away from politics, the more you leave

it for people who are not qualified. We want thinkers and people who care about people at politics,” she said.

Dr. Mlambo-Ngcuka is the Former Executive Director of UN Women, and former Deputy President of South Africa. She is the founder of Umlambo Foundation, a Gender Activist and a Campaigner for Universal Access to Education. She has devoted her career to issues of human rights, equality and social justice. Dr. Mlambo-Ngcuka has worked in government, private sector and civil society and was actively involved in the struggle to end apartheid in her home country of South Africa. She is currently a Hauser Fellow at Harvard’s [Center for Public Leadership](#).

April 27th, 2022

#APJFiresideChat: A conversation with His Excellency Martin Kimani, Kenya’s Ambassador to the United Nations



In this Africa Policy Journal Fireside Chat, Ambassador Martin Kimani spoke with Africa Policy Journal Editor In Chief, Adaobi Ezeokoli, about Kenya’s upcoming elections and the way that democracy has fared in Africa, the African Union’s response to the ongoing crisis in Ethiopia, African solutions to African problems, the AU’s Agenda 2063, and a reflection on his comments about the United Nations inability to live up to its mandate of preventing wars in light of the Ukraine crisis.



Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) final at the Harvard Kennedy School.



Photos credit: Ada Ezeokoli/APJ

When the Court Does Not Speak Your Language Linguistic Imperialism in Africa: Case of Senegal

By Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Ndiaye



Cheikh Ahmadou Bamba Ndiaye is an African writer from Senegal. He has lived in Burkina Faso for seven years. He holds a bachelor's in social sciences from the

Africa-focused Program of Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po); and three Master's in law and communication. He is now pursuing a Master's in Public Law and Public Financial Management at the École nationale d'administration and Université Paris Dauphine-PSL.

Abstract

French has been proclaimed Senegal's "official" language, where 20% of the population speaks it. In their day-to-day life, the Senegalese use their twenty national languages to communicate, among which there are *Wolof* (employed by more than 90% of the population), *Pulaar* (by 27%) and *Séeréer* (by 17%). This produces the urgent question of why a colonial, foreign and minority language continues to be the sole authorized language in official government and jurisdictional communication. This article applies Bourdieu's theory on the fabrication of the "official" language to the Senegalese context. More than a communication tool, language is an instrument of symbolic domination. This

article highlights how such an instrument of domination has been maintained after Senegal's independence. More importantly, it will demonstrate the disastrous effects of the linguistic status quo regarding the fairness of trials. This paper presents contestations and alternative citizens' initiatives concerned with the redefinition of Senegal's language policy.

Introduction

Senegal boasts around twenty languages. This figure is not precise due both to the various criteria used to classify languages (in groups and sub-groups) and the definition of ethnicity in studies.¹ Each language corresponds to an ethnic group, except Pulaar, which is common to the Tukulóor, Pël and Lawbe groups. The territorialization of languages is not marked in Senegal. "All languages are spoken in almost all regions."² Intense interethnic mixing, the strong territorial mobility and the close origins of the different Senegalese languages are some of the leading causes. The Lexar, Saafeen, Noon languages share 75% of common roots, whereas Pulaar and Séeréer share 37%.³ Studies have confirmed the cohabitation of Wolof, Pulaar and Séeréer in Tekruur (10th century), in Waalo and Jolof (13th - 14th centuries).⁴

Next to the common origins, there are two features of the Senegalese linguistic situation: polyglotism and the predominance of Wolof. In 2002, 38.5% of Senegalese used at least two languages of communication.⁵ The number of Wolof speakers is more than double the number of members of the Wolof ethnic group.⁶ This figure increases by 22% every generation.⁷ More than 90% speak Wolof fluently.⁸ Since

the decree of the 24th of July (1968) on the transcription of national languages, reviewed by the decree of the 21st of May (1971), Senegal codified and homologated Wolof and the five main languages: Joolaa, Mändi, Pulaar, Sééréer, Soninke. Currently, they all have the status of “national language”, which they have been sharing since the adoption of the Constitution of January 2001, with “any other language that may be codified.”⁹ There are now twenty-two languages that share this status.

This dynamism of the Senegalese languages, their mixing and nascent recognition should not make us forget another fact recalled earlier in the Constitution: “French is the official language of Senegal.” This provision is supported by Article 28 of the Constitution: “All candidates for the presidency of the Republic must ... know how to read, write and speak fluently the official language.” Imposed by colonial oppression, French was spoken by 10 to 15% of the population when instituted as an official language of the Senegalese during the accession to independence in 1960.¹⁰ Today, despite French being the medium of education, government communications, administration and the courts, it is still a minority language, understood by about 20% of Senegalese. Therefore, one unavoidable question arises: why is French the “official”, “legitimate”, “the only” language of Senegal, even though it is only understood by a minority, and where the population, in daily life, predominantly use their national languages, like *Wolof* (employed by more than 90%), *Pulaar* (used by 26.7%) or *Sééréer* (by 12.7%), to communicate?¹¹

One should begin to grasp this paradox of the Senegalese language policy by considering the main objective of a language, as Pierre Bourdieu did. “Language merely functions as a pure instrument of communication.... It is the place of symbolic power relations,

where different speakers or their groups are battling.”¹² In Senegal, French as an “official” language has led to its fabrication as an artifact, an instrument of prestige and authority. This article analyzes the mechanisms of this fabrication, “legitimation” and “naturalization”, by going back to its origins. It then looks at the undersides of the confirmation of French as Senegal’s “official” language, as well as its disastrous consequences, particularly in terms of fair trial. Finally, it presents the original, and now growing, resistances to the imposition of French in Senegal, and the ongoing strategies of emancipation.

The fabrication of the “official” language in Senegal

*The domination of a people’s language by the languages of the colonizing nations was crucial to the domination of the mental universe of the colonized. (Wa Thiong’o, 1986)*¹³

The presence of French in Senegal goes back to 1659, with the installation of the first trading post on the island of Ndar, renamed Saint-Louis of Senegal. Until the end of the 18th century, the French traded from the coast. In a second move, they established strong trade relations in the country’s interior by claiming land concessions.¹⁴ From 1838, a more offensive policy of armed conquest emerged. *Faidherbe* alone killed 20,000 Senegalese within eight months.¹⁵ However, the domination was far from totalizing, as the acts of resistance were multiple: intense armed struggles, frequent popular uprisings, refusal to pay taxes, refusal to be enrolled in the colonial army, and school absenteeism.¹⁶

As elsewhere, the defeat of adversaries and the concentration of opportunities for domination is accompanied by a social transformation.¹⁷ In Europe, the former warriors

became the aristocracy of the courts, where they manufactured “good manners”, which became the means to pursue rivalry. Language is an integral part of this arsenal of “good manners” or “civilization”. In Germany, German, called by Frederik II of Prussia “a half-barbaric language,” was banned from the courts in favor of French. “Nothing is more vulgar than writing letters in German,” wrote Gottsched’s fiancée to her fiancé in 1730.¹⁸ This way of labeling others’ languages as “barbaric” or “vulgar” is characteristic of this mechanism of domination. “In the same way, the ancestors of “civilization”, namely “politeness” and “civility”, served as a basis for the predominance of the court aristocracy.”¹⁹ Moreover, the conflicts between the foreign language and the Senegalese languages are conflicts for the symbolic power “having at stake the *formation* and the *re-formation* of mental structures.”²⁰ French is proclaimed, by Abbé Grégoire, as “a new national language, conscious of its identity.”²¹ In Senegal, it was erected as “an element of fusion of African races and languages,” which were belittled as “different, disparate, inadmissible.”²²

After the war of arms, the school took over to impose French. The intransigence of the colonial oppression on sending young Senegalese to their school, from a very young age, is justified by its need to uproot all those who, because of their royal origins, could compromise its interests in the future. In appointing King Alboury’s son, Chaudié, governor of the French West Africa, stated: “This young man is nineteen to twenty years old; he was raised under our surveillance at the *École des Otages*.”²³ In 1928, a decree reminded teachers who missioned to “naturally incline pupils to see and feel things in the same way”²⁴ that French was the only language authorized in schools. The use of national “idioms” and “dialects” during class or recess was formally banned.²⁵ Apart from

the reward and sanction (grading) mechanism entrusted to the teachers, learning French was considered a rite, a consecration. To be a student was to speak French, and to have the privilege of doing so. The student who spoke French badly was humiliated, with a dunce’s cap. Inversely, the student increases his chances of success in the new colonial economy.

The confirmation of French as the “official” language of Senegal and its effects in the legal field

*The influence of language is so important that the European metropolises think that they can withdraw from Africa politically, in an apparent way, while remaining there, in a real way, in the economic, spiritual and cultural field. (Diop, 1960)*²⁶

Like other countries in so-called “Francophone” Africa, Senegal is one of the few states in the world to have exclusively retained the imperialist language as its “official” language. This attitude is to be studied in the light of the predisposition of its new ruling class, symbolized by Léopold Sédar Senghor. Senghor was entrusted to missionaries at an early age. Teacher of French, linguist, and member of the French Assembly in 1945, he was reluctant to accept independence, which he considered premature.²⁷ Nevertheless, he was the president of Senegal from 1960 to 1980, with France as a model. As a founding member of the Francophonie and future member of the French Academy, Senghor considered it “neither desirable nor possible to replace French as the official language and language of instruction.”²⁸ Accusing the defenders of national languages of being “irresponsible romantics,”²⁹ Senghor took refuge behind the pretext of the Senegalese plurilingualism, once asking “By which language do you want

French to be replaced?”³⁰, while simultaneously questioning the maturity of national languages. “... How, when there is not even a good grammar in *Wolof*, to teach modern sciences and succeed where languages written for thousands of years still fail?”³¹

Behind Senghor, a certain elite that owes its prestige and power to French continues to defend, with the funds and pressures of the Francophonie, a “language of culture”, “international”, “universal.”³² Meanwhile, Senegalese educated in national languages or in the 6040 Koranic schools have their training unrecognized by the state.³³ In the labor market, their prospects are limited to the informal sector. In addition, 80% of the population must content themselves with laconic translations from the press to understand official government or administrative communications. In court, they see the imposition of French undermining their right to a fair trial. Article 255 of the 1965 Code of Criminal Procedure, like the Article 92 of the recent 2016 Code, states:

*“An interpreter must be called in if the accused does not speak or understand French. When the accused or witnesses do not understand French, a “sworn interpreter is called in; or an interpreter, aged of at least 21, appointed ex officio and made to swear an oath by the president.”*³⁴

Even when the judges transgress the law and speak in a national language—which can happen—it remains that the indictments, pleadings and judgments must be in French.

In a courtroom, an interpreter is required for two speakers who could have spoken and understood each other without the intermediation of French. Not only is this costly, in terms of money and time, but it contradicts common sense. Furthermore, the Senegalese law seems to give more attention to the use of French

than to the comprehension of the litigant. From its perspective, it is better to call upon an improvised interpreter, whose command of the language is not guaranteed, who may have no command of legal technicalities, and who may be unaware of the context of the case, than to let the court and the litigant talk in a national language that both understand perfectly. Interpretation, which is normally an exception, becomes the principle in the case of Senegal, where as many as 80% of citizens do not understand the language used to judge them. Even if French was only used for the indictments, pleadings and judgments, the issue is still critical. “Fairness requires effective communication between litigants and between litigants and the court. Mutual comprehension is not merely instrumentally related to the pursuit of a fair trial; it in part constitutes fairness.”³⁵

Finally, the axiom of any legal system is that no one is supposed to ignore the law. In Senegal, this conscience of the law comes up against a double barrier: technical and linguistic. Jurists are trying to create a specialized language, with its own forms and with new meaning to ordinary words. This new language is already alienating for the layman.³⁶ Their situation worsens when the legal word is spoken in a foreign language with an obscure form of French.³⁷ Citizens find themselves disconnected from the law, turning away from state justice, deemed opaque, and resorting more naturally to customary institutions.³⁸ This partly explains why only 53% of Senegalese trust their justice system.³⁹

Contestations and surpassing of French in Senegal

The dangers associated with the imposition of an “official” minority language were perceived early by citizens, who tried to counter them in various ways. Even today, some people refuse to enroll their children in French schools,

forbidding them from pronouncing a single French word.

A cultural resistance, a vector of a dense literary production in the national languages, cannot be undermined. It is due both to individuals, often organized in associations, and to religious and intellectual figures who escaped the influences of colonial oppression. The poets of the various religious brotherhoods first recalled the equal dignity of languages. Under the pen of Serigne Moussa Ka, one learns: “*Béppub lakk rafet na / Buy tudd ci jaam ngor la / Buy leeral ci nit xel ma.*” “Any language is beautiful / Which glorifies virtue / And enlightens humans.”⁴⁰ Following them, in 1958, Cheikh Anta Diop and the students of the Grenoble Group, with their syllabary *Ijjib Wolof*, opened the way to numerous initiatives, including publication of newspapers, creation of publishing houses, translation of classics of African and world literature, and the writing of dictionaries and scientific works in national languages. This activism is behind the first decrees recognizing national languages, their experimental introduction into the education system after the 1981 education Estates General (preceded by months of violent protestations). In 2014, national languages became authorized in the national Parliament, after the organization of the first Arabic baccalaureate in 2013.

In the legal field, in 1963, the Constitution was translated into Wolof. To date, the Wolof ak Xamle Group, with 3,000 members on WhatsApp, is translating fundamental legal texts. They are also developing a simultaneous translation app that will be made available to the government, Google and Facebook.⁴¹ In parallel, legal clinics are beginning to flourish. They are trying to reduce the gap between legal texts, language and citizens. As salutary as they are, these initiatives have not yet shaken up practices in the courts, where citizens remain “dispossessed” even though their interests,

their fate, are at stake. “Interpreters have been hired to work in the courts since 1997 and court interpreter training was started very recently, in 2014.... In the words of a judge working at the Palais de justice in Dakar: the *procès criminels* treat the harder cases and thus demand a more solemn attitude, which necessitates speaking...French.”⁴²

Conclusion

Language as a natural reality does not exist. The dominant groups, concomitantly with their success in monopolizing the chances of success, favor the “officialization” of the language they master. This situation did not change when Senegal regained its independence. Nevertheless, the failures in the education system, the demystification of French, and the rise of popular demands forced the Senegalese state, which had been wait-and-see in its relationship with national languages, to make room for them.⁴³ These concessions have been symbolic, in contradiction with the social reality. Some authors have spoken of a “Senegalese school without a society.”⁴⁴ The obstacles to implementing a Senegalese linguistic policy have so far been political. This status quo is beginning to shift; the balance of the social forces is increasingly in favor of national languages, thanks to the growing awareness of the perverse effects of the imposed French. In Senegalese courts, one is silenced when they do not speak French. The parties that do not take the initiative to redefine linguistic policy will find themselves forced to address it. With all due respect to the caste of the last intellectuals who go to the rendezvous of the Universal, looking away, and leaving behind them, with no voice, their own population.

Endnotes

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The Orphan Industrial Complex: A Theater of Altruism

By Melanie Chan



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the Kennedy School's Center for International Development, as well as innovation for the savings group program at HOPE International. Prior to the Kennedy School she taught art in Kenya and was a greeting card designer at a social enterprise employing women who are survivors of sex trafficking in the Philippines. She holds a B.A. in Psychology and Art Practice from UC Berkeley.

In my early twenties I spent many weekends at an orphanage in Ngong, a cluster of cement buildings with *mabati* roofs nestled at the foot of seven green hills just outside Nairobi, Kenya's capital. During the week, I was an art teacher at an international school in Nairobi and on the weekends, I'd board an unruly bus at Dagoretti Corner and ride for forty-five minutes past Racecourse, Karen, and Bulbul, to the T-junction that constitutes the whole of Ngong town, and then catch a *bodaboda* or walk the remaining mile of muddy road to the borehole that marked the orphanage's entrance.

Orphanages are called children's homes in this part of the world, and this one was home to more than eighty children, who

hand-washed their clothes, cleaned the halls, finished their breakfast of boiled arrowroot and *chai*, and started their studies before the crack of dawn every morning. They also kept a little farm of cows, chickens, rabbits, and hydroponic fodder for revenue, and pumped methane from underground vats of cow dung straight to the kitchen to light their cooking fires. The borehole provided water, which they also sold for a fair price to the neighboring residents. These were the things they'd show off to the teams of Westerners that came every summer to volunteer, who, just by showing up, unwittingly played their part in the orphanage's veneer.

One of the older boys who had been at the home the longest was always busy drawing or creating things, like beads out of recycled newspaper or furniture out of old tires. Everyone at the home told me he was born to be an artist, and since I was an art teacher, I offered to give him drawing lessons. I taught him how to look at something familiar like it was new, to gesture at the outline of a shape, find a light source and cast a shadow. But these drawing lessons, however, turned into informal therapy sessions. Over the course of a year, his typical sunny extroversion and generous disposition turned moody and brooding. He began to confide in me more and more about his personal life – he was HIV positive, on medication, and frequently fatigued. This led to restless and agitated behavior. Despite my best intentions, I found myself wildly and awkwardly beyond my depth when he grew increasingly clingy and would, without warning, start whining like a younger child or

cry. However, there was no one I could refer him to, and no professional at the children's home who knew any better way of helpin. With my recently minted B.A. in Psychology, I was disturbingly the most qualified person on the compound.

The greatest upheaval, however, was listening to him talk about his father whom he spoke about in the present tense. After asking around, I discovered that not only was his father alive, but he also lived only a couple hours car ride away. And this was not an anomaly; the more children I got to know, the more I heard mention of a father or a mother just a county or two away in their rural upcountry. I realized I had not been spending weekends visiting a children's home for orphaned children. I had been spending weekends visiting a home for institutionalized children who were separated from at least one of their parents. So what was I even doing there?

Every summer, I would also help coordinate the arrival of a team from America, a motley crew ranging from high school seniors to working professionals to retirees seeking a way to serve, a sense of community, an adventure, a story to tell, or some combination of the above. But with each successive trip I coordinated, I began to understand what these trips too often were: a stage for people's escapist fantasies, a veneer of well-meaning intent flaking off to reveal people's misplaced philanthropic desires.

I watched the same scene play out again and again: Westerners exit the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport, and the steamy equatorial climate—something about the quality of the sunlight and the way humidity releases earthy smells—almost intoxicates them, heightening suggestibility. Westerners arrive at the children's home and the children, curious who has come this time, come flocking. Within the hour, even the shiest ones will follow the Westerners around, hold their hands,

take selfies with them. Westerners post on social media of choice, a photo of themselves surrounded by poor, joyful African children.

As the week transpires – and Westerners have spent multiple days digging latrines or covering walls with a fresh coat of paint, learning some of the children's names and running around the compound with African children on their shoulders under the expansive African sky—these posts grow thicker with delusion, captioned with sentiments like “these children are angels,” “I wish I could stay here forever,” and “this is my African home/family.”

Westerners have carried over suitcases full of old t-shirts (that feed the *mitumba* second-hand clothing markets), soccer balls, pencils, and candy, which they hand out ad hoc to eager children who already have yellowed, rotting teeth. So intoxicated are these Westerners that they don't realize that these poor, joyful African children are indeed human children, and if they were to see their own children back home exhibiting such behaviors—trauma bonding and disordered attachment—they would rush them to intensive developmental psychotherapy and a dental hygienist instead.

Then, inevitably, the team of Westerners, sated by their good work, generosity, and the warm glow of dancing, singing, and playing soccer with dozens of children all week, wish a tearful goodbye (but only the Westerners are tearful), promising to come back next year. They return home with their African bracelets, photos, and tales, having labored physically and emotionally all week, having given generous sums of money, and never knowing they have both exploited and been exploited.

The reality is that orphanage tourism is often a business in Kenya, financed by well-intentioned travelers from wealthy nations.¹ Charitable children's institutions (CCIs)

(i.e. orphanages or children's homes) can be lightning rods for charitable giving, as many foreign tourists that come to Kenya each year spend time with children at CCIs as unskilled "voluntourists," and make sizeable donations or sponsorships to them.² This allows CCIs to be viable and even lucrative businesses, sustaining what is known as the "orphan industrial complex."³ Children come from poverty-stricken areas and are institutionalized with the promise of education and healthcare, even though many of them actually have at least one living parent or close extended family members. This is how the Western demand for altruistic experiences meets the Kenyan supply of children's homes.

As of 2017, however, the Kenyan government has put a moratorium on new CCIs.⁴ There is now a growing movement to "deinstitutionalize" these children, to reunite them with their families, and instead, strengthen social services locally, provide cash-transfers, and build capacity for community-based care.⁵ Even J.K. Rowling has her own nonprofit, the *Lumos Foundation* (<https://wearelumos.org>), dedicated to this. But the research tells a more complicated story.

While the negative impacts of institutionalization on children's development are well documented, and there is no denying the dangers of neglect and abuse within CCIs, there is also significant research on how institutions are sometimes better equipped to care for children, given the high risk of physical or sexual abuse in certain family-based environments, and the effects of poverty and rapid urbanization in Kenya.⁶ The debate is still ongoing, about whether CCIs should be eliminated or whether that is an overreaction to the "orphan industrial complex."

I still don't know what to make of all of this—ten of the young adults who grew up in that children's home have graduated with at least a two-year university diploma, and three

of them are pursuing degrees at universities in the United States through connections made by visitors to the home. Despite the theater that these homes can be, with Kenyan "orphans" and Western "voluntourists" dutifully playing their roles on this strangely artificial stage called the "children's home," these resources would not be available to the children otherwise.

I have an upcoming interview with the boy to whom I used to give art lessons. I will steer the conversation to talk about how he feels about his time at the children's home—does it make sense why he was there?; what was his take on the visitors?; and how was it growing up without a father? I want to peel back the velvet curtain, reveal the stage, and examine its artifice. But I might just end up asking him whether he still makes art.

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Unpacking Infrastructure-For-Resources Deals in Africa's Mining Sector and Best Practices for Future Investments

By Esther Ocheni



My name is Esther Ocheni. I am a policy professional of Nigerian descent currently working in the education policy space as Senior Researcher and Policy Analyst at the

First Nations Education Steering Committee in Vancouver, Canada. Before this, I worked as a junior policy consultant for the United Nations Development Program in Cambodia. I got my Bachelors degree in Development Studies from American University in Washington, DC and a Masters in Public Policy and Global Affairs at the University of British Columbia (UBC). I have extensive research and policy analysis experience, including a 2-year project with UBC's Institute of Asian Research exploring China's political, military and economic activities in Africa. I believe that the current China-Africa trade relationship is underutilized and more effective collaboration could be achieved through stronger negotiations and a clearer African development vision.

I became passionate about development, owing to my experiences growing up in Nigeria. My interests include international development, finance and economic policy, rural development, poverty research and much more.

Abstract

Africa's combination of a huge infrastructure gap, poor international credit rating and abundant natural resources is attractive for an energy

and natural resource-hungry construction behemoth seeking to bolster its ambitious Belt & Road projects and increase its diplomatic reach. However, Africa's mining sector's lack of regulation makes it a casualty in Resource-for-Infrastructure (RFI) deals with China. This paper contributes to the existing literature by assessing the impacts of RFI deals on Africa's mining sector and uses Zambia's copper belt as a microcosm of the regulatory dysfunction and the social and environmental casualties happening across the continent when deals are poorly negotiated, and regulations are ineffectively enforced. This paper concludes by identifying cost-mitigating best practices to raise revenue in existing deals, secure better returns from incoming investments by competitors, and take a stronger stance in the new frontier in China-Africa relations as outlined by FOCAC 8.

Introduction

There is a dichotomy of the views of Chinese activities in Africa, as a threat or an opportunity. RFI deals, 'hidden debt'¹ and the opacity of loan agreements are often cited as evidence of threats, while the opportunity-camp spotlights China's provision of crucial growth-enabling infrastructure such as ports and roads. Numerous scholars have already assessed this debate and identified that the impacts vary.² Africa's huge infrastructure gap, poor international financial market credit rating and abundant natural resources, are attractive for a natural resource-hungry construction behemoth seeking to bolster its ambitious Belt & Road

projects and increase its diplomatic reach. Negotiations tend to be tied to electoral considerations to create political legacies as African bureaucrats seek political points and loans without strings, while Chinese investors seek profits—a perfect match.³

African countries are generally rich in natural resources—minerals alone account for an average of 70% of total African exports and about 28% of GDP—but poor in infrastructure; thus, rationalizing the popularity of the resource-for-infrastructure lending model of the Chinese.⁴ This model combines China's business and resource security interests with its comparative advantage in wealth to provide financial assistance and infrastructure construction. However, Africa's poorly regulated natural resource extraction sector makes it vulnerable to exploitation and degradation.

This paper argues that Africa's mining sector's lack of regulation makes it a casualty in resource-for-infrastructure deals with China—which sets a precedent for other investors to do the same. This paper contributes to the existing literature by assessing the impacts of RFI deals on Africa's mining sector, using Zambia's Copperbelt as a case study, and identifies cost-mitigating best practices to raise revenue in existing deals with China and secure better returns from competitor investments.

Zambian Case Study

In the mid-1900s, Zambia's copper-powered economy met the fate of the 1970s global copper price crash—leaving the country impoverished and heavily indebted.⁵ Structural adjustment reforms in the late 90s led to the sector's privatization and Zambia's attempts to diversify its economy; which attracted Zambia to join the Belt and Road in the 2000s.⁶ Following extensive mineral prospecting into Zambia's copper belt, pledged Chinese investments in the Zambian manufacturing

and mining sectors exceeded total pledged investments of the rest of the continent combined—a testament to the size of its reserves.⁷

The RFI deal with China helped Zambia's economy (long struggling under external debts) to rehabilitate its dilapidated mining infrastructure and construct processing facilities to enhance its production capacity.⁸ These investments have been proven to be more resistant to commodity price fluctuations than their Western counterparts.⁹

Zambia's Regulatory Infrastructure

The Zambia has two major government agencies that monitor its mining sector: Zambia Development Agency (ZDA) and Zambia Environment Management Agency (ZEMA). ZDA was established to implement the 2006 Zambia Development Agency Act outlining government initiatives to promote private sector economic development through trade and investment.¹⁰ ZDA's primary mission is to entice investors with fiscal (investments > US\$500,000) and non-fiscal (> US\$250,000) incentives to secure foreign investment in priority zones that employ at least 200 Zambians.¹¹ However, employment generation is the only indicator monitored in ZDA's framework which relies on self-reporting of the foreign companies.¹² Therefore, indicators such as safety of working environments, wage rates, etc. aren't effectively monitored. Furthermore, the government's preference for an 'encouraging environment' deters ZDA from enforcing punitive measures in response to malpractice, such as license revocations, and limits its monitoring capacity even as investors often fail to self-report.¹³ In 2010, Chinese owned Non-Ferrous Company Africa (NFCA) blatantly refused its legal obligation to pay property taxes to the Kalulushi District Council, within which it operates, under claims of being unable to afford it.¹⁴ This is bogus as it operated across the continent

at the time, and was ranked in the Fortune Global 500 for its operating revenue of USD 24 billion in 2013.¹⁵ On escalating the issue to the Ministry of Commerce, the district council advised ZDA against further efforts to recover the funds.¹⁶ This lackadaisical attitude towards corporate social responsibility (CSR) and government supported impunity disempowers the agency.

The Environment Management Act of 2011 established ZEMA for Zambia's environmental protection and as a watchdog of its economic—especially its copper mining—sectors.¹⁷ Environmental impact assessments (EIAs) is ZEMA's primary regulatory mechanism in granting permits to mining projects. However, to qualify for assessment, ZEMA organizes public consultations involving government agencies, civil society organizations, and interested and affected parties to establish the scope of the terms of reference between ZEMA and the company.¹⁸ 12-36 months post-permit approval, ZEMA conducts environmental audits to ensure compliance or revocation. These provisions are unfortunately difficult to transfer from theory to practice due to the understaffing of the agency and the gaps in the law relegating some environmental standards to mere conditions rather than legislated requirements.¹⁹

Sino-Zambia Relations: The Chinese Advantage

Sino-Zambian relations began pre-independence (1964)²⁰ but were monumentalized by the then-largest ever Chinese construction project in Africa—a USD 500 million interest-free loan. This loan funded the 1860km Tanzania–Zambia Railway (TAZARA) completed in 1975 which facilitated copper exports from land-locked Zambia.²¹, ²²

In the 2000s, Sino-Zambian relationships, as with the rest of the continent, pivoted from aid to conditional project loans that are tied

to Chinese contractors, Chinese majority ownership, and access to Zambia's resources. The conditional and secretive nature of lending engagements compromises the ability to align Chinese partnership with Zambian interests. Chinese companies enjoy exorbitant benefits from their government to provide comparative advantage in Zambia's copper-belt; and by developing the Zambia–China Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone (ZCCZ)—managed by state-owned NFCA—they draw further incentives from Zambia's governments.²³, ²⁴

Win-Win?

The tax shelters of the zone provided by Zambia are not limited to Chinese companies; Chinese government incentives include concessionary loans from the Chinese Development Bank, reduced VAT and tariffs on Chinese-bought machinery and personal income tax reductions, making these zones exclusively occupied by Chinese enterprises.²⁵ The co-development of the ZCCZ and agglomeration of Chinese enterprises in government priority zones gives Chinese companies major influence at the Zambian government level and creates powerful self-sufficient enclaves of Chinese power/wealth accumulation as they service each other (vertically and horizontally) to the exclusion of Zambian businesses and workers.

Another incidence of Chinese disregard for CSR is Zhonghui's obtention of a prospecting license for a total of 656,050 hectare in Lupula, backed by Chinese EXIM Bank to invest USD 5.3 billion, despite Zambia's Mines and Minerals Act prohibiting licenses exceeding 500,000 hectare.²⁶ It is public knowledge that Zhonghui circumvented this rule by operating through three company names, but the magnitude of the investment earned them a pass.²⁷ Impunity is detrimental to environmental sustainability especially when the allocated area is remote, densely forested

and governed by small local governments against powerful corporate rent-seeking. The projected employment of 40,000 workers to previously sparsely inhabited areas imply likely displacement and deforestation. Additionally, a toxicology report conducted by a consortium of universities showed that drinking water and crop samples close to mining sites in Zambia (and the DRC) were contaminated by metals (copper, zinc, lead, uranium and more), which have major implications for food security.²⁸

98% of Chinese FDI to Zambia is in its mining and minerals processing sectors and over the 2000s, China surpassed South Africa to become Zambia's second largest export partner—copper accounting for 83% of exports.^{29, 30} Over the years, the Zambian mining sector has raised concerns. The government faced political criticism over the legislative loophole created by the clash between development agreements signed during the privatization era—following the global copper price collapse—and its more lucrative Mines and Minerals Act.³¹ Facing political backlash due to high unemployment and high fiscal deficit, Zambia's ruling government of the 70s cut down royalties by 80%, provided numerous deductibles on capital expenditure and exemptions from import duties and levies.³² Pressure from civil society and voters led to the government rescinding the agreements in 2008 and imposing a more stringent tax regime to capture more revenue.³³ However, resistance from mining companies against the 'windfall tax' led the Zambian government to scrap it for fear of disinvestment.³⁴

Worse than the lost revenue due to tax loopholes is the year-after-year massive discrepancies in value and quantity of copper imports reported by China versus exports reported by Zambia. In 2009, China reported USD 570 million more copper trade than Zambia; same year, Zambia reported zero unrefined copper exports while China reported USD

463.6 million unrefined imports.³⁵ The latter alone amounts to a USD 69.5 million loss to Zambia given that its new tax regime imposed a 15% levy on unrefined copper. The cause is unknown but possible factors include poor monitoring and reporting mechanisms of Zambian agencies, illegal Chinese export activities, corruption or a gross administrative error by Zambian customs.

Human/Worker Rights Violations

The main company involved in the reporting discrepancy is NFCA, a subsidiary of China Nonferrous Metal Mining Company (CNMC), which owns majority shares in multiple copper mines and constructed and owns numerous copper smelters (including the Chambishi Copper Smelter, CCS). NFCA has been linked to the explosion of the explosives factory in Chambishi that killed forty-six Zambian employees, the death of five Zambians shot by police during a wage increase protest and CCS's firing of 500 unionized employees for striking against labor conditions.^{36, 37} In order to circumvent Zambia's strict labor laws and strong mine workers' unions, NFCA discriminates between its workers by offering permanent positions to only fifty-two out of 2100 of its Zambian employees versus all 180 of its Chinese workers.³⁸ The casual status of its contracted Zambian workers enables it to pay them the lowest wages in the industry, give less benefits, and maintain an overall lower job security.³⁹

In 2010 the Zambian government dropped all charges against the Chinese Managers at the Collum Coal Mine who indiscriminately opened fire on their employees to break up a protest over poor pay and unsafe conditions.⁴⁰ The Zambian government has been criticized by civil society and opposition parties for its failure to condemn or act against these incidents which Zambian pundits say is due to fear of damaging diplomatic relations since

Chinese companies, especially NFCA, have strong government ties.

Other African Nations Not Exempted

Since Africa's resource wealth is distributed across the continent, the Sino-Zambian relationship described above is no outlier. Africa's copper-cobalt ores, called the Copperbelt region (which includes Zambia, DRC and Angola) is the largest sediment-host copper province in the world.⁴¹ The DRC holds the world's largest cobalt reserve and Africa's leading copper deposit; 70% of which is owned by Chinese-owned Sicominex, who secured these deposits tax-free when the DRC was desperate for infrastructural investments.⁴² President Felix Tshisekedi's government is renegotiating the loans, and they were unfairly negotiated by Congo's former president and the infrastructure remains largely undeveloped as of October 2021.⁴³

Africa's oil reserves are valued at over 125 billion barrels and are distributed across Nigeria, Libya, Angola and Algeria, with more African countries discovering more deposits.⁴⁴ Chinese oil companies, such as China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) and Sinopec, operate and own significant stakes in twenty African countries.⁴⁵ South Africa dominates the globe in gold and manganese reserves and has experienced labor rights struggles with China African Precious Metals Corp, as well.^{46,47} Ghanaian environmental activists sued Ghana over a bauxite-for-infrastructure deal that threatens the Atewa forest.⁴⁸ Evidently, corruption, poorly negotiated deals, incapacitated government agencies are a phenomenon across the continent.

As seen in the DRC, Gabon, Nigeria and more, numerous loans and projects have been frozen or indefinitely halted due to regime

changes, environmental harm, unfair distribution of gains, the COVID-19 pandemic and the fluctuating value of resources—but China-Africa trade from January to September 2021 reached \$185.2 billion, up 38.2% year-on-year.⁴⁹ This is concerning, as the structure of China-Africa deals ensures that capital transfers go directly from the borrower's account with the China EXIM Bank to Chinese constructors.⁵⁰ Thus the benefits of transfer of knowledge, local capacity building, and infrastructure development lag behind trade.

Policy Recommendations

As reports of souring China-Africa relations continue to rise due to evidence of the challenges and inconclusive benefits of RFI deals, it is important to recognize the essentialness of China's hard-infrastructure provision, recognize that China's loans offer better and non-politically conditional terms, and that its donor-contractor direct disbursement channel reduces embezzlement.^{51, 52} The solution is not to cut or reduce ties with China but rather to establish revenue raising, environmental monitoring and transparency-enabling policies to protect these sectors. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) action plan for 2022-2024 engagements prioritize investments in medium and high-technology manufacturing, technology transfers, expansion of mining industrial chains and promoting local industrial development to build Africa's domestic processing capacity.⁵³ This FOCAC also saw a lowered investment into infrastructure development—understandable given that most African countries are at their debt capacity—and instead emphasized technology/knowledge transfers, COVID vaccine supply, and digital infrastructure.^{54, 55} These changes in priorities demonstrate some attentiveness to Africa's needs and Africa only needs better policies such as:

Deviating from mono-resource dependency

Many African countries are mono-resource dependent for their foreign exchange earnings and revenue.⁵⁶ Economic crises, high debt, price fluctuations and the lucrativeness of these resources create a cycle of further dependency which forces them to lax mining regulations to sustain their revenues. Supporting FOCAC's commitment to building local capacity in varying sectors with diversification policies is crucial for developing a stronger negotiating standpoint.

Shoring-up regulatory capacity

Good governance is a prerequisite to harness the financial and economic values of Africa's resources, incoming investments, and Sino-African collaborations. As demonstrated, a major barrier to inclusive and sustainable development on the continent is the structural failures of domestic agencies for reasons including underfunding, understaffing, outdated policies, corruption and poor monitoring and evaluation (M&E) implementation frameworks. Reviewing existing 'unconscionable' mining deals is important to capture the gains to trade. Legislative loopholes must be rectified to match international standards. M&E of infrastructure projects must ensure that they are comparably being realized as China reaps its profits. Labor laws must provide job security, protect workers, and fairly distribute wealth. Transparency, accountability, and public participation are needed to ensure public representation in negotiations with investors.⁵⁷

Greater protective state presence in remote areas

Remote areas overwhelmingly constitute the majority of mine sites and tend to be further away from government influence, are harder to access by inadequately supported

government agencies and lacking the presence of local governance.⁵⁸ As demonstrated in Zambia, these regions turn into enclaves of poorly regulated Chinese power, labor rights violation and mining malpractice. Stronger governance in remote areas is needed to protect forest biodiversity, protect human health, and capture development opportunities for more inclusive growth.

Tie investment incentives to CSR standards

Chinese companies enjoy dominance in the mining sectors of multiple African countries which it leverages to strong-arm government agencies and legislators into acquiescence. The enclaves of Chinese contractors and subcontractors running every level of project implementation not only denies the host country of the multiplier effect that should normally happen at the local level but out-competes and harms it.⁵⁹ Improved CSR standards will be especially important as G7 countries shore up investment funds through the Build Back Better and Global Gateway Infrastructure initiatives to compete with China, and also in the next frontier of FOCAC collaborations. Setting a higher standard for incoming investors will capture more revenue for Zambia and create an ethically competitive environment in the sector.

Conclusion

With better mechanisms in place, Chinese participation in Africa would achieve the win-win model it claims to be and be an integral part of the continent's economic development. Better frameworks encourage knowledge transfers, greater transparency, job security, adequate regulatory enforcement, and higher project completion rates. Continuance with the inadequate and feeble regulatory mechanisms will make Africans,

the environment and economy casualties of the global scramble for key minerals. The new FOCAC commitments for 2022-2024 signal China's openness to addressing many of the issues identified in this paper—thus, Africa only needs to leverage the true dimension of its bargaining power to fully reap the benefits of an opportune partnership.

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I AM OF MALAWI

It's the greenery of the countryside
 The dramatic stances of its hills and mountains
 It's the tortuous rivers
 It's the endless lake
 With its world-topping fish species
 Bobbling up and down
 The freshest azure waters

It's the easy warm smiles of the people
 Their elaborate greetings
 Where strangers are just family
 we haven't been introduced to
 And parents are a community heritage
 Not only belonging to you
 And the other one
 With a forehead like yours
 It's where children
 Are the responsibility
 Of every adult in the commonwealth

It's the long summers
 The vibrant winters
 The melodious rains
 The gaudy colours
 The pitchy flavours
 The dinner tables
 Where food is itself
 Confident in its own taste
 Without enlisting the cheer-leading of spices

It's the perpetual peace
 The clockwork transitions
 From one regime to another
 It's the hope even in lack
 The love out of nothing
 The diligence even in delayed reward
 The belief so national
 For a country better than the present
 It's the many other intangibles
 You can't tag a GDP number on
 That I am especially proud
 To say I am of Malawi
 The warm heart of Africa.

Chisomo Nyamalikiti Nthiwatiwa Mdalla
 08.03.22

Chisomo Mdalla more prominently known as Nyamalikiti Nthiwatiwa (literal: Giraffe Ostrich) is a Malawian artist of quite a few persuasions: prose, poetry and drawing who took to writing as a self-healing process from the debilitating thoughts of becoming an orphan early in life. He has performed at International Festivals such as Commonwealth Literary Fest, Arts/Alive, British Council's Crossing Borders, Poetry Africa, Africa Slam Competition, Lake of Stars, and Land of Poets- and in countries as diverse as Uganda, South Africa, India, Zimbabwe, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Malawi. Anthologized in three volumes in Malawi, he is currently working on a multi-form sophomore publication of his works, exploring the theme of what remains of our memories post trauma with COVID-19 as the diving platform. Accompanied by his tongue-pan drum, he is performing and researching nostalgia in places he lived in as a pass-on child as part of the bigger work alluded above.



Secondary Education Reforms and Partisan Politics in Sierra Leone: Implications for Students and Teachers

By Christiana Kallon Kelly



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fellow. Her research interests include education, youth, gender, peace and conflict, development, technology, and public policy in Africa. Christiana's dissertation is a comparative case study of the impact of the 2018 Free Quality School Education Program on the schooling experiences and future aspirations of secondary school students in Sierra Leone. Previously, she conducted policy research for EdTech Hub, UNESCO Dakar, and UNOPS Amman. She also worked as an assistant dean of undergraduate admission at William & Mary and as a senior resident assistant for the Mandela Washington Fellowship Program at the Presidential Precinct. Christiana was born in Sierra Leone and raised in Pakistan, Kenya, Uganda, and Bangladesh before immigrating to the United States to pursue higher education. She holds a B.A. in sociology from William & Mary and a M.S.Ed. in international educational development from the University of Pennsylvania.

Abstract

In recent years, African governments have tried to expand access to schooling for

the region's growing youth population by introducing tuition-free policies and other education reforms at the secondary school level. But political elites often design and implement policies that serve individual and party interests at the expense of teaching and learning needs of students and teachers. This article explores the implications of partisan politics on the schooling experiences of secondary school students and teachers in Sierra Leone. Drawing on policy document analysis and ethnographic data collection in three Government secondary schools in Freetown and Makeni, this study argues that divergent policies around school fees and the number of years required to complete senior secondary school introduced under Sierra Leone's two main opposition parties - the All People's Congress and the Sierra Leone People's Party - have reproduced inequalities through additional schooling costs and insufficient time to prepare for high stakes national examinations that marginalize under-resourced students.

Introduction

A lack of financing for secondary education in Africa has left critical gaps in quality schooling opportunities for youths in the region. The average primary school gross enrollment ratio in Sub-Saharan Africa is 99.75% compared to 43.21% for secondary school.¹ Over the last decade, African governments have introduced tuition-free policies and other education

reforms at the secondary level in an attempt to expand access to education for students who have completed primary school but have not yet acquired the qualifications to enroll in tertiary institutions.² Without careful monitoring and evaluation, political elites are likely to implement education policies that benefit individual and party interests over the teaching and learning needs of students and teachers.³

The influence of partisan politics on education planning in Africa has been well-documented by scholars and practitioners. A cross-national statistical analysis of Chinese aid in forty-four African countries found that birth regions of the current political leader are significantly more likely to receive education aid.⁴ Country case studies also demonstrate that political parties seek to acquire votes during elections by paying fees for national examinations⁵ or by introducing Universal Primary Education and abolishing school fees.^{6,7} However, these studies tend to focus on the impact of partisan politics at the primary school level.⁸ Furthermore, few studies have assessed the implications of partisan education policy planning for students and teachers.

This article uses a case study of Sierra Leone to demonstrate how partisan politics hamper long-term efforts to reform secondary education so that it benefits the most marginalized. Drawing on policy document analysis and ethnographic data collection in three Government secondary schools in Freetown and Makeni, this work argues that divergent policies around school fees and the number of years required to complete senior secondary school under Sierra Leone's two main opposition parties — the All People's Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP) — have reproduced education inequalities through additional costs and insufficient time to prepare for high stakes national examinations that marginalize un-

der-resourced students. Patterns of partisan politics in education planning and their implications for students and teachers are important to analyze as Sierra Leone and several other African countries prepare for upcoming presidential elections in 2023.

Education and Politics in Sierra Leone

Sierra Leone is a small country of roughly 7.8 million people bordered by Guinea and Liberia. The historical significance of Sierra Leone as an education hub in West Africa and its experience with civil war from 1991-2002, the 2014 Ebola outbreak, and 2020 COVID-19 pandemic all resulting in school closures for over 2.5 million students makes it an important case study of the politics of contemporary education reform in Africa.

Education provisions in the 1999 Lomé Peace Accord called for a number of reforms, most notably that “the Government shall provide free compulsory education for the first nine years of schooling (Basic Education) and shall endeavor to provide free schooling for a further three years.”⁹ However, nearly two decades after the end of the civil war, there have not been significant improvements in the education system, especially at the secondary school level. The secondary school gross enrollment ratio in Sierra Leone is 41.8% compared to a global average of 75.35%.¹⁰ Adolescent girls have been disproportionately affected by a broken education system resulting from crises amidst existing cultural norms, gender-based violence, and teenage pregnancies.¹¹ Despite valuable research on education in Sierra Leone, there remain important puzzles as to why educational outcomes are so poor, considering the extensive international investment and sustained effort to reform the education system.

This article seeks to explain why educational outcomes are so poor by considering

partisan politics between two main political parties in Sierra Leone: the All People's Congress (APC) and the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP). While there have been several smaller political parties throughout Sierra Leone's post-independence period, the APC and the SLPP are the largest and most influential political parties with an enduring history of disagreement and violence over various issues.¹² This paper explores how contentious politics between the APC and the SLPP emerge in the education sector and asks two interrelated questions: 1) What are the major differences in postwar secondary education policies introduced under the APC and the SLPP? 2) How do these differences shape the schooling experiences for students and teachers in Sierra Leone?

Research Design and Methods

To answer these research questions, this study systematically reviewed two comprehensive national education reforms that were designed and implemented under the APC and the SLPP: the 2010 National Education Policy (NEP) and the 2018 Free Quality School Education (FQSE) Program. In addition, press releases, presidential and ministerial speeches, newspaper articles, and photographs relevant to these policies were reviewed. Documents were retrieved from Government and international organization websites, print newspapers were collected, Google and *LexisUni* database were used to search for online news articles, and *NVivo* qualitative software was used to code digital material.

Next, ethnographic data was collected from September 2020 through December 2021 as part of a larger study on the gendered impact of the FQSE. During this period, classroom and school observations were conducted in one co-educational Government secondary school in the capital city of Freetown and two single-sex Government secondary schools

in the town of Makeni located three hours north of the capital that have been approved for tuition free subsidies by the Ministry of Basic and Senior Secondary Education. These ethnographic observations were supplemented with 12 focus group discussions with students and over 90 informal and semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, families, and policymakers in English and Krio. The combination of document analysis and ethnographic data collection allowed for a holistic and in-depth analysis of the implications of partisan politics on the experiences of students and teachers in Sierra Leone.

Policy Analysis and the Rhetoric Surrounding Education Reform

After the end of the civil war in 2002, both APC and SLPP promised to reconstruct the education system leading up to presidential elections in 2007, 2012, and 2018.^{13,14} The 2010 NEP under APC and the 2018 FQSE under SLPP are two comprehensive education reforms resulting from these campaign promises. In these policies, both parties acknowledge the negative effects of the civil war on the country's education system and view education as key to peacebuilding and economic growth.

But while the APC and SLPP share a commitment to increasing access to quality secondary education for youths in Sierra Leone outlined in the 2004 Education Act, they developed conflicting policies around school fees and the number of years required to complete senior secondary school. The NEP introduced tuition-free education only for primary and for girls entering junior secondary school.¹⁵ In 2018, the FQSE extended tuition-free education for pre-primary, primary, junior secondary, and senior secondary school students attending government and government-assisted institutions.¹⁶ This policy was met with criticism from the opposition, who

said that the government does not have the funds to support this project.¹⁷ The government, however, increased education spending from 11% to 21% of the national budget to support this reform, and the President Bio directly addressed his skeptics in his remarks of the launch of the FQSE on August 20, 2018:

“During the election campaign when I promised free quality education, my political opponents said it was never possible and described it as a political gimmick. My political opponents also said the promise was a political deception just to win votes and the cynics thought it was the usual election promise that quickly disappears after election results. In less than six months since I assumed Office as President, we are gathered here today to say free quality education is POSSIBLE.”¹⁸

Despite the FQSE being the flagship program of his administration, President Bio has refuted claims that this reform is motivated by partisan politics, stating that “this free quality education programme is for every Sierra Leonean. It is not for one region, one tribe, one political party.”¹⁹ Nevertheless, the perception amongst some Sierra Leoneans interviewed by the author is that this reform favors those affiliated with the SLPP.

The number of years required to complete senior secondary school has also been a topic of contention between the two parties. During his first term as President, APC representative Dr. Ernest Bai Koroma implemented the 6-3-4-4 national system of education: six years of primary school, three years of junior secondary school, four years of senior secondary school, and four years of college/university.²⁰ This change was stated to have been made to improve learning outcomes by providing senior secondary school students with an extra

year of schooling to prepare for their national exams. When SLPP regained power in 2018, President Bio removed the fourth year of senior secondary school, returning the schooling structure back to the 6-3-3-4 system, stating concerns about lack of classroom space and teaching capacity to support the additional year of secondary schooling. In addition, he explained that limiting the number of years required for senior secondary school would mitigate teenage pregnancy and early school leaving among girls who consider the number of years of schooling to be too many.²¹

The SLPP's return to the 6-3-3-4 schooling system has been met with criticism from APC opposition who warned that “the sudden change from 6-3-4-4 to 6-3-3-4 is not being done before an inquiry by thoughtful educators to weigh the strengths and weaknesses of both systems.”²² The current Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education, Dr. David Moinina Sengeh, has denied that education policy and planning under the Bio Administration have been influenced by party interests, stating that “when President Bio says Free Quality School Education isn't about politics, he means just that. Education cannot be politicized.”²³ However, in his keynote address at the launch of the FQSE on August 20, 2018, President Bio remarked, “I promised the pupils that there will be no more SS4 and today I have honored that promise,” which indicates the removal of the fourth year of senior secondary school was, in fact, politically motivated.²⁴

Partisan Politics in Education: Implications for Students and Teachers

Ethnographic research reveals that partisan politics in the education sector have important implications for students and teachers in Sierra Leone that coalesce around additional costs of tuition-free education and the high stakes of

national examinations. Since the introduction of the FQSE in 2018, enrollment across the country has increased, especially at the secondary school level. According to the 2020 Annual School Census, the enrollment in junior secondary for the 2019/2020 academic year increased by 3.5% and senior secondary increased by 5.4% from the previous school year.²⁵ However, schooling infrastructure and teaching capacity is not available to support this rapid increase in enrollment. The high teacher-student ratio presents many challenges for student learning, giving feedback on school assignments, and teacher classroom management. Overwhelmed teachers frequently turn to corporal punishment to manage student behavior in class and tend to focus on supporting the few high achieving students that they believe will do well on national examinations, leaving the learning needs of academically challenged students at the margins. In addition, some schools function under a double-shift system with separate sessions in the morning and the afternoon due to a lack of classroom capacity. Overcrowded classrooms also make it impossible to observe COVID-19 social distancing protocols.

Another challenge is that while the FQSE covers school fees, families are still responsible for providing uniforms, school supplies, transportation, and meals. Yet many families cannot afford these items. Teachers and administrators also expressed that the school subsidies per pupil provided by the Ministry of Education to Government schools are insufficient compared to the revenues that previously came from student tuition. To meet this financial gap, teachers and school administrators sell school supplies, uniforms, badges, practice examination questions, food, and other items to students, which are not affordable to all students. A fragmented education development plan between the APC and the SLPP Administrations on how to deliver

free education has led to unequal schooling opportunities for under-resourced students.

Unequal educational practices resulting from insufficient time to prepare for high stakes national examinations is another consequence of partisan politics in the education sector. There are three main national exams taken prior to tertiary education in Sierra Leone: the National Primary School Examination (NPSE) taken after class six to enter junior secondary school, the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) after the completion of final year of junior secondary school, and the West African Secondary School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) after the completion of the final year of senior secondary school. In 2019, the national average pass rate for the NPSE was 72.8% compared to 49.9% on the BECE and 7.6% on the WASSCE.²⁶

Changes from the 6-3-3-4 system under SLPP to the 6-3-4-4 system under the APC back to the current 6-3-3-4 system under the SLPP has not helped to address low performance in secondary school examinations. Some students take additional lessons outside of normal schooling hours, which are conducted by teachers or other independent private instructors. Some students also participated in a practice called ‘camping’ where they spend the night at school with fellow classmates and their teachers for several days leading up to the exam revising past examination questions and covering additional content in the syllabus. On the surface, extra lessons and ‘camping’ seem to enhance learning, but the financial costs associated with these activities create unequal learning advantages for students and families who can afford these services while marginalizing their less-resourced students. This uneven distribution of learning opportunities has encouraged examination malpractices such as cheating and paying or taking bribes.²⁷ Sierra Leone’s Anti-Corruption Committee has tried to address this problem by raiding

centers and homes where malpractice is taking place and establishing fines, but this has done very little to stop these practices.

When discussing issues of extra lessons, ‘camping’, and examination malpractices with secondary school students and teachers, many stated not having enough time to cover all the materials in the syllabus in preparation for national exams as the primary motivation for partaking in these activities. Limited time to prepare for national examinations was a major source of anxiety for students and teachers during the 2020-2021 academic year due to the delayed start of schooling resulting from COVID-19 school closures. Some students admitted that they participated in examination malpractices because they just simply did not know the academic content. In a discussion with one secondary school principal, he expressed his dissatisfaction with the removal of the SSS4 and stated that “the Government did it because they wanted to get votes from the pupils. In Sierra Leone, you have to be 18 to vote and many of the secondary school students are around that age. Many of them also do not want to go to school, so the Government did it to win their votes.”²⁸

Conclusion

This case study of Sierra Leone illustrates the impact of partisan politics on education sector planning and the implications competing policies have on teaching and learning. Over the past decade, the APC and SLPP have implemented conflicting designs in the 2010 NEP and the 2018 FQSE around school fees and the number of years required to complete senior secondary school. The lack of coordination between the two parties on these policy issues has led to teaching and learning costs as well as financial costs for students, their teachers, and their families. By shedding light into these challenges, I hope to foster closer monitoring and evaluation of

education policies during elections and party transitions in order to limit the propensity of political elites to implement education policies for individual and party interests at the expense of students and teachers.

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Reorienting the Identity Management System in Nigeria

By Olusesan A. Makinde



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Target 16.9 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is aimed at providing legal identity for all by 2030, including birth registration.¹ Progress towards achieving this target has many impediments. For example, the development and implementation of national policies on identification management and civil registration and vital

statistics (CRVS) systems remain challenged across countries in Africa.² Initially advocated as independent systems, the need for integration of CRVS and citizen identification in a digital world requires new perspectives and legal frameworks that are often unavailable.³ Owing to its increasing importance, the United Nations Statistics Division in 2019 released guidelines for the development and integration of CRVS and identity management systems.⁴ However, streamlining of established processes and institutions in countries can be a challenge as it might require scrapping or merging of institutions and inevitable job losses. This is the reality in Nigeria where the identity management agency and the civil registration management entity are under different ministries, each with its bureaucratic processes.

Why does Nigeria need an efficient identity management system?

In an evolving and increasingly digital world, the importance and ability to identify individuals physically or remotely cannot be overemphasized. An efficient identity management system is instrumental to eliminating fraud and crimes that can be associated with attribution. It is also important for security, especially tracking of criminals and for several other administrative processes.⁵ Nigeria has been battling an armed insurgency in the Northeast of the country which is gradually becoming widespread. There are concerns that many of the insurgents are not Nigerians. However, with a poor identity management system, these claims are difficult to verify, as Nigeria has porous borders. Also, it is difficult to follow up on policies on rehabilitation and

release of insurgents if their identities cannot be duly tracked for easy identification of repeat criminals. Furthermore, the identity management system is necessary to measure the progress towards achievement of universal health coverage targets, one of the important health SDGs.⁶

When citizens are registered in the national identity database at birth and exited at death, the national identity database can serve as an important and complete data source on the population. A proper identity management system will help reduce the cost of governance in Nigeria as different government agencies have established parallel processes for the collection and verification of citizen information. These institutions have committed resources to developing systems and procuring hardware for collection of biometric data, thereby resulting in a waste of scarce resources. A cross section of institutions collecting biometric data and issuing unique identification to citizens in Nigeria include the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), Independent National Electoral Commission, the Federal Road Safety Commission, Central Bank of Nigeria, National Communication Commission, Federal Inland Revenue Service and the Nigeria Immigration Service.

Despite the concerted efforts embarked upon by the Federal Government over several years to get citizens registered and to obtain a National Identification Number (NIN), it was announced in May 2021 that only 54 million Nigerians, approximately 27% of the population, have been successfully registered since 2012.⁷ It is unknown how many of these people have died or how many have which will make the estimate quite inaccurate. Death registration is very poor in Nigeria and even with that, its integration with the national identification system is yet to be achieved.⁸

Development of the identity management

system in Nigeria has not been a cheap venture and its failure over several decades begs for answers. Since democratic rule returned to the country in 1999, successive governments have invested billions of Naira into the effort. However, this input has not matched the result. Its poor track record includes a former minister dying in police custody over accusations of corruption in 2004. Concession was later made to have a private company manage the project, which again became muddled in contract violation, abandonment and litigations, but not before more than 121 billion Naira (~\$300 million dollars) had been committed.⁹

Convinced of the need for a working citizen identification system in line with the SDG 16.9 target, the Nigerian government is further enhancing its drive with a new digital identity effort. The government is injecting a fresh \$433 million USD into the identity management infrastructure through a World Bank facility.¹⁰ As part of strategies to provide guidance for the process, the federal government inaugurated a steering committee in June 2020 to guide the process.

Often, decisions are made without adequate consultations with experts outside of government circles. This contributes to inadequate assessment of the problems. When the problems are unknown or not properly understood, quick fixes are advocated rather than a holistic review of the system. Pertinent questions that need to be answered before a direction is taken for any new investment include: why has Nigeria failed to deliver on an identity system for several decades? How can the country best use the available resources to achieve more? What is the most sustainable way for Nigeria to achieve its goal? These pertinent questions should drive any decisions on the approach.

This opinion piece is written to contribute to the effort of achieving universal legal

identification in Nigeria as part of effort towards attainment of the SDGs, including suggestions on the role of integration of citizen identification and civil registration.

What exactly are the problems with achieving universal citizen identification in Nigeria?

Citizen Identification with issuance of a NIN is the responsibility of the National Identity Management Commission (NIMC) which was established in 2007 by an Act of the National Assembly.¹¹ The Act empowers the agency to maintain a citizen's database for the country. Birth registration and immigration which establish citizenship are traditionally managed by the National Population Commission or Local Government Authorities, and the Nigeria Immigration Service respectively. The Act which established NIMC failed to acknowledge these established processes and promote ways for integration of these institutions. Rather, the Act granted NIMC the authority to also register births and deaths thereby resulting in duplicated responsibilities.

Recent guidelines from the United Nations Statistics Division highlights the importance and need for a unified civil registration and identity management system due to their interconnectedness.¹² This is based on logical reasoning and the advances that have been achieved today with the use of digital systems. Nigeria is making an effort towards universal birth registration as part of its commitment to the SDGs.¹³ Thus, with a concerted effort to register all citizens at birth, this can be extended to providing a unique citizen identifier as well within an institution.

Despite being a Federation of 36 states, there is centralization of the identity management process without taking advantage of the sub-national governments at the state and local government areas. This governance structure is similar to what has been reported

in the National Population Commission which has affected effective death registration in the country.¹⁴ The local government is the closest level of governance to the people and can help fulfill this role. A recent report on progress that has been made in improving civil registration and citizen identification in Rwanda and Bangladesh notes an integration of multiple processes, streamlining of institutions and decentralization of responsibilities, while investing significantly in digital infrastructure to enable this success.¹⁵ This effort has resulted in CRVS completeness improving from 2% to 70% within a few years in Bangladesh.¹⁶ To make such strides, this paper proposes strategies that Nigeria needs to consider.

What does Nigeria need to do?

Nigeria needs to reorientate the identity management system through well-thought processes and the engagement of the different stakeholders to develop a holistic and efficient approach to identity management and civil registration. In conclusion, this piece offers the following recommendations:

1. Firstly, there is a need for an update to the legal mandate that establishes identity management and CRVS. This update must unify identity management and CRVS mandates. This will enable easy coordination of entry into the identity database through birth registration and an update of an individual's status through death registration. However, effort needs to be targeted towards improving death registration, which is currently below 10%, as the identity database will become bloated and useless over time without the completion of this cycle by status change at death.
2. There is a need for the decentralization of data collection responsibilities through the integration of local government authorities in this new process. Although the constitution of the country gave responsibility for

the local government authority to register births and deaths, it failed to elaborate on how the National Population Commission and the local government authorities would relate. The new process should integrate local governments to manage continuous data collection for citizen registration so that they can take ownership of the process and ensure that registration is a requirement for other government processes in their communities. This will indirectly enforce the need for registration. In this approach, we propose that the federal government builds and maintains the information and communication technology infrastructure for managing the data while day to day registration processes are completed by the local government authorities. This devolution of responsibilities should also embed artificial intelligence for monitoring purposes to enable detection of fraudulent and duplicate registrations.

3. Maintaining a universal identity management system in a country is not a cheap venture. It also requires strong political will. Thus, the government must ensure adequate financing of the identity management and civil registration infrastructure. While the government has secured initial funding for this drive, there is a need for sustained planning and budgeting for the identity management infrastructure beyond the intervention funds identified above. The collapsing of numerous institutions duplicating identity management, whereby one institution manages this registration process and shares the data with other institutions, will free resources that can be committed to strengthening the identity management system further. Future financing models must embed contributions from local government funds to stimulate their commitment and promotion of the identity management system in their communities.

4. To properly guide its utilization, managers of the identity management system must develop guidelines and conduct wide sensitization of policymakers and allied government institutions on the processes of connecting to and leveraging the identity management system. This might require a pronouncement against future investing in identity infrastructure by other agencies.

5. To rapidly gain momentum, the federal government should incentivize the effort by rewarding performing local governments and states to improve competition and at the same time institutionalize sanctions for local governments involved in fraudulent registrations.

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Adopting an Eco-friendly Approach in the Settlement of Disputes in Africa

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Abstract

Awareness of the negative impact of climate change on the world’s ecosystem is increasing. Consequently, actors at the national and global levels are taking steps to combat the climate crisis. World leaders at the recently concluded COP 26 summit—a platform which brings together various countries to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change—affirmed their commitment towards alleviating the negative effects of climate change on the environment. While climate change generally has a devastating effect on the world at large, African countries have particularly been affected by the crisis. Without a doubt, there is an urgency for everyone, including government leaders and professionals, to take steps towards achieving a clean environment soon. This paper seeks to explore the role that the mechanisms for dispute resolution in Africa can play in the quest for a clean environment in the continent.

Climate change as a global and African problem

Climate change is a global emergency currently threatening the stability and health of the environment and all that are in it. Intense weather events, for example, have become observable worldwide. Glaciers are

shrinking, ice on rivers and lakes are breaking up earlier than expected, and plant and animal ranges have shifted.¹ Importantly, sea-levels are rising due primarily to the expansion of water volume resulting from the warming of oceans, the melting of mountain glaciers, and mass losses from the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets.² Climate change destabilizes the Earth's temperature equilibrium and has over-reaching effects on human beings as well as the environment. The direct consequences of climate change globally are rising temperatures and sea levels, higher ocean temperatures, increase in heavy rainfall, shrinking glaciers, and so on. Its indirect consequences, on the other hand, include the increase in world hunger, health risks, the spread of pests and pathogens, and loss of biodiversity.³

Africa is not excluded from these impacts of climate change.⁴ Climate change contributes to food insecurity, population displacement, and stress on water resources in the continent. Additionally, climate change has resulted in increased temperatures, rising sea levels, transformed precipitation patterns, and more extreme weather conditions threatening human health and safety, food and water security, and socio-economic development in Africa.⁵ In Mozambique, Malawi, and Zimbabwe, for example, devastating cyclones resulting from a change in atmospheric conditions affected 3 million people in the spring of 2018.⁶ In September 2021, the Kenyan government declared a state of emergency due to the overwhelming drought conditions pushing cattle herders, who were once prosperous, into poverty, thereby breaking up communities, and triggering new disputes over land rights.⁷ The United Nations's World Food Programme's Shelley Thakral has warned that four years of drought had laid the groundwork for the world's first climate change-induced famine in southern Madagascar.⁸ In Nigeria, there has been a rise in temperature levels, the

atmospheric weather conditions are unduly hot, and it seems as though the ozone layer over Nigeria is completely depleted. The country is also not spared from rising sea levels, flooding, drought, desertification, land degradation, and more frequent extreme weather events.⁹ These changes have affected freshwater resources and instigated a loss of biodiversity across Africa. More importantly, the general health conditions of African residents are being negatively impacted by the lingering climate crisis. The current health challenges being faced by the residents of these countries are worsened by an increase in temperatures and rainfall patterns. These changes also increase habitat suitability for biting insects and transmission of vector-borne diseases such as dengue fever, malaria, and yellow fever.¹⁰

African governments have begun to put measures in place to alleviate the effects of the crisis. Morocco, for instance, has built the world's largest concentrated solar facility to help achieve the country's goal of a 52% renewable energy mix by 2030.¹¹ The advanced 6,000-acre solar complex, Noor, serves as a clean energy source for around 2 million Moroccans and provides pivotal job opportunities as the country transitions from the fossil fuel industry.¹² Likewise, Nigeria has set a renewable energy target of 30% by 2030 and has announced its goal of having net-zero carbon emissions by 2060. In November 2021, Nigeria passed the Climate Change Bill into law with the overriding objective of providing a framework for achieving low greenhouse gas emission, inclusive of green growth, and sustainable economic development. In June 2019, South Africa passed its Carbon Tax Act which imposes specific levies on greenhouse gases from fuel combustion and industrial processes and emissions. It is anticipated that by 2035, the carbon tax could reduce the country's emissions by 33% relative to

the baseline.¹³

However, the responsibility of tackling the climate change crisis in Africa is not the exclusive preserve of governments. The next section will explore how dispute resolution mechanisms can play a role in safeguarding the environment.

Role of dispute resolution mechanisms in the fight against climate change in Africa

The primary dispute resolution mechanisms include litigation, arbitration, mediation, and conciliation. Litigation refers to the process of settling disputes by submitting and responding to a case before a court. As a neutral adjudicator, the judge(s) then determine(s) the rights and liabilities of the parties after considering the evidence and the relevant laws. Arbitration, mediation, and conciliation are alternatives to litigation. Arbitration is the resolution of disputes by submission to an independent third party or parties — specifically an arbitral tribunal that is designated by the parties for that purpose and who agree in advance to comply with the final decision of the tribunal. Mediation refers to the settlement of a dispute between parties with the help of a neutral third party known as a mediator who only facilitates the process of settlement. Conciliation also involves the resolution of disputes by a neutral third party who merely suggests solutions to the parties in dispute. The conciliator comes up with an opinion which is reduced to terms of settlement to be signed at the discretion of the parties.

A common feature of the above-mentioned dispute resolution mechanisms in Africa is the excessive use of papers to establish the parties' arguments and legal positions and to deliver procedural guidelines and final decisions. The papers being used are mostly produced from trees, thereby encouraging

deforestation. Deforestation, in turn, has a major impact on the environment, as it leads to other forms of environmental changes like global warming, soil erosion, depletion of the ozone layer, amongst others.¹⁴ Research has shown that as a result of the processes involved in dispute resolution, particularly arbitration, around 20,000 trees would need to be planted to offset the carbon emissions being caused by deforestation which is an indirect result of dispute resolution.¹⁵ In addition, dispute resolution proceedings, especially litigation, are usually conducted indoors. All participants involved in the dispute are required to either travel by road or by air to arrive at the location of the resolution. By the very nature of such proceedings in Africa, these participants may be required to make several trips to the destination given that there may be several adjournments due to the attitude of litigants towards delaying the proceedings, the volume of courts' dockets, and so on. Indeed, driving and flying are associated with fuel consumption by automobiles.¹⁶ The exhaust of most vehicles releases hydrocarbons, nitrogen oxides, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide.¹⁷ Hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides together react with the sunlight and cause an increase in ground-level ozone. Furthermore, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide threaten human health and contribute significantly to global warming.¹⁸ Hence, the procedures for settling disputes in Africa contribute to the damage of the environment and it places a responsibility on stakeholders involved in the settlement of disputes in Africa to play a key role in the transition towards clean energy.

Prospects for an eco-friendly dispute resolution regime in Africa

The journey to a completely 'green' dispute resolution regime in Africa requires concerted effort from all and sundry. There are several measures that can help promote

dispute resolution in Africa in an eco-friendly manner. First, the various rules of procedure governing the proceedings in court and other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms can be amended to reflect eco-friendly steps in the process of dispute resolution. For example, the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), through their recently promulgated Arbitration Rules 2021, recognises the concept of “greener arbitration,” which supports the resolution of disputes in an eco-friendly manner. Article 26.1 of the ICC Arbitration Rules 2021 provides that the arbitral tribunal may decide, after consulting with the parties and based on the specific circumstances of the case in hand, that a hearing will be conducted remotely by videoconference, telephone, or other appropriate means of communication (as opposed to by physical attendance). Similarly, Article 19.2 of the London Court of International Arbitration Rules 2020 embraces virtual hearings which is a positive step in the preservation of the environment. It provides that hearing may take place in person or virtually by conference call, videoconference, or using any other communications technology. The Chartered Institute of Arbitrators Arbitration Rules 2015 also recognises the taking of the testimony of witnesses virtually. Article 28.4 allows the arbitral tribunal to direct witnesses, including expert witnesses, to be examined through means of telecommunication that do not require their physical presence at the hearing.

These provisions play a positive role in reducing the amount of time spent travelling by parties for the purposes of arbitral hearings. Dispute resolution proceedings can be held virtually to reduce the amount of environmental pollution that would be caused by the transportation of parties, legal practitioners, judges, arbitrators, and mediators to the various venues used for dispute resolution. Consequently, the contribution by

parties to the release of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide and other harmful gases into the environment would be minimal, as parties can now attend hearings from the comfort of their homes or offices without the need to travel in an automobile. It is recommended that African dispute resolution institutions adopt and implement these laudable initiatives. Specifically, African institutions should encourage video and telephone conferencing as an alternative to travelling for hearings, and fact-finding and witness interviews. It is important for parties to always question the need of flying or travelling. The use of technology saves time spent travelling and, more importantly, prevents the further carbon emissions associated with flying or travelling.

Second, African lawmakers, politicians, courts, and arbitral institutions need to update policies, regulations, and foreign investment treaties on environmental change. Notable changes can include eliminating the use of hard copy filings and promoting the use of electronic bundles at hearings. Priority should be given to electronic correspondence unless hard copy correspondence is inevitably needed, while also being mindful that email has a carbon footprint.¹⁹ Thus, technological tools can be deployed in ensuring effective adoption of an eco-friendly dispute resolution system in Africa. Dispute resolution documents can be filed and served via email as opposed to the traditional use of paper. Further, steep penalties could be implemented for violation of these provisions in a bid to enforce compliance.

Third, dispute resolution professionals can commit to reducing their environmental footprint. For instance, an English, global law firm, Linklaters, recently outlined its plans to cut its carbon emissions over the next ten years. It undertook that by 2030, it will reduce its “Scope 1 & 2” emissions, primarily related to energy use, by 70% and

its “Scope 3” emissions, which are primarily related to the purchase of goods, services, and travel, by 50%.²⁰ This is a laudable initiative which African law firms, lawyers and judges can emulate. The benefits are not far-fetched given that the reduction in the emission of greenhouse gases will automatically decrease the negative impact of climate change and reduce the threat of global warming.²¹

Fourth, adequate funding is crucial, as migration to the electronic regime will not come cheap. An effective migration from the traditional regime to the electronic regime would require provision of adequate training for all those involved in the dispute settlement process, especially in relation to litigation because most African judges, registrars, and other administrative aides in the court system are not technologically literate. Moreover, adequate funding would be required to purchase the relevant facilities needed to ensure this transition. If the adjudicator is required to be present in the courtroom to attend the virtual proceedings without disturbance, there would be a need to provide for effective internet facilities as well as uninterrupted power supply. Whilst there has been a cost reduction regarding travel and accommodation, online platforms with new standards will signify a new line of costs as highlighted above. Funds will also be needed to raise awareness and sensitize the citizens of African countries on the existential threats posed by climate change. Therefore, the governments of African countries need to step in to bridge the gap in funding. This could be done by an inclusion or allocation of funds targeted at helping to attain eco-friendly resolution of disputes in the national budget of African countries. In addition, well-meaning citizens of Africa and other countries can collaborate with governments and dispute resolution stakeholders by sponsoring this migration.

Conclusion

Climate change has become a global concern for many African countries, especially due to its impact on the living conditions, health, and safety of the environment. The efforts of all concerned stakeholders are required to mitigate the adverse effects of the exposure to climate change. In contributing to the transition of an eco-friendly environment, dispute resolution professionals must take concrete steps towards resolving disputes in a “greener” or more eco-friendly manner. These steps would include making deliberate efforts to overhaul the traditional processes involved in dispute resolution and replacing them with eco-friendly alternatives.

Legal professionals can take reformative steps towards ensuring disputes are resolved in an eco-friendly manner. Such steps include eliminating the use of excess paper and travelling less (whether by road or air), as these are significant contributors to the emission of greenhouse gases and, consequently, to the climate change crisis. Also, new legislation and the implementation of new rules designed to protect the environment would be required. Finally, awareness should be raised and there should be a consciousness of actions that contribute to climate change, among the citizens. Although these reformative steps will surely change our traditional approach to dispute resolution, this paper reveals their many benefits in protecting Africa and the world from the devastating impact of climate change.

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2021-2022 Interviews Overview

#APJChat



The Africa Policy Journal conducted a number of interviews with African entrepreneurs, policy students, and policy leaders, as part of the Africa Policy Journal Chat series. These interviews are featured on the APJ's website and YouTube platforms.

Claude Grunitzky, CEO and Managing Partner, The Equity Alliance and Founder, True AFRICA, was interviewed by Ada Ezeokoli, APJ's Editor In Chief.



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I didn't feel like there were enough actual real native sons of Africa like myself or native daughters of Africa who were writing African stories and bringing a fresh lens to how young Africans were reinventing themselves.

Claude Grunitzky,
CEO & Managing Partner, Equity Alliance/ Founder, TRUE Africa

Kingsley Ezeani, Co-Founder CashEx, was interviewed by Noah Asfaw, APJ's Lead Interview Editor



Soud Hyder, Founder of Chap-Chap Go, was interviewed by Shambhavi Singh, APJ's Online Editor



 AFRICA
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“This is the best time to be an entrepreneur- be ready to try and fail”

Soud Hyder,
Founder, Chap-chap Go

Susana Edjang, Co-Founder, Collateral Benefits, was interviewed by Ada Ezeokoli, APJ's Editor In Chief.



 AFRICA
POLICY
JOURNAL
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“

People of African descent and minorities were the hardest hit around the world; I wanted to ensure that in the midst of everything that was going on (with COVID), that we did not feel alone, that we knew there was a community that cared.

Susana Edjang
Co-Founder & Co-Editor, Collateral Benefits

Mandla Isaacs, Edward Mason Fellow and MC/MPA Candidate, Harvard Kennedy School, was interviewed by Noah Asfaw, APJ's Lead Interview Editor



Quadri Oguntade, Co-Founder, Novustack, was interviewed by Winston Michalak, APJ Publication and Interview Editor



Martin Fayulu, Presidential Candidate for the Democratic Republic of Congo, was interviewed for the APJ by Milain Fayulu, MIT Legatum Fellow



Samson Itodo, Executive Director, YIAGA Africa, was interviewed by Abosede Lewu, APJ Interview Editor



Kissi Agyebeng, Special Prosecutor of the Republic of Ghana, was interviewed for the APJ by Kwasi Danso Amoah, LLM Candidate at the Harvard Law School



Memme Onwudiwe, Co-Founder Evisort, was interviewed by Ada Ezeokoli, APJ's Editor In Chief



Afrocracy: A Values-Based Indigenous Governance System In Africa

By Seth Appiah-Mensah, PhD



Dr Seth Appiah-Mensah is a veteran peacekeeper and a scholar with cumulative experience from the Ghana Armed Forces, ECOWAS, African Union and the United Nations. He

served as the first Military Advisor for the African Union Mission in Sudan (Sudan) in 2005. From there he joined the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the United Nations Secretariat from where he has worked extensively on planning, deployment and management of several complex peacekeeping missions, as well as on UN-AU partnership. In 2014, he served as the Team Leader for the UN Support Team attached to the African Union force, MISCA, in the Central African Republic. In addition to enhancing the capacity of MISCA HQ, the UN Support Team also coordinated the successful transition of MISCA to UN mission, MINUSCA. Seth has worked in senior positions at the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU) in Addis Ababa where he led a team of UN experts to advise the AU and the Regional Economic Communities on peacekeeping issues. He is a graduate of US Naval War College (Diploma), University of Wollongong (MA) and the University of Western Australia (PhD). He is a Fellow of the UWA African Centre for Research and Engagement Centre. He has published on African maritime security, peacekeeping, African security partnerships and contemporary pan-African politics.

Abstract

Despite significant scholarly work on the utility of indigenous governance systems in Africa in place of liberal democracy in the last few decades, scholars are yet to come up with an agreed genre or family name under which the discourse is taking place. Yet, just as the blackness of ancient Egypt is being contested by Western scholars, there is a risk the continent would be deprived of its ownership to these indigenous political systems in the future. It, therefore, behooves contemporary scholars to consolidate these disparate theories on indigenizing the African governance system into a common conceptual framework. We contribute to filling this gap by proposing ‘Afrocracy’ as a unifying and collective term for the different shades of indigenous governance systems proposed for Africa.

‘Before even the British came into relations with our people, we were a developed people, having our own institutions, having our own ideas of government.’ J. E. Casely-Hayford, 1922. African (Gold Coast) Nationalist¹

Introduction

On September 2, 2021, Pope Francis condemned the United States and its allies for imposing democracy on others following the failure of America’s twenty-year nation-building efforts in Afghanistan. He accused them of deception for “twenty years of occupation and then leaving;” calling it “deceit or a lot of naivetés.”² Such strong words from the Vatican could have come a lot sooner

because many countries especially those in sub-Saharan Africa have been in the throes of the democratic laboratory since independence. A significant portion of Africa's woes can be traced to what Quist-Adade calls "the trilogy of slavery, colonialism and neo-colonialism,"³ or the *triple tragedy* for the sake of this paper, democracy being the most potent weapon the West has used to effectively hypnotize the elephant that needs to be awakened.

The combined effect of what the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres calls an "epidemic of coup d'états" in Mali, Guinea, Sudan, Burkina Faso, attempted coups in Niger, Madagascar, the Central African Republic and Guinea Bissau, and a spiraling conflict in Ethiopia is an inflexion point for democracy in Africa.⁴ But too often, questions posed by researchers seek answers to fix democracy in Africa as if democracy belongs in Africa. The real fundamental epistemic question is whether the Western liberal democracy template is fit-for-purpose in Africa. In response, many scholars have suggested an indigenous governance system as a plausible alternative, but none has so far suggested a brand name for it. This paper aims to perform the long-overdue task of coining a collective name for the values-based indigenous political system that these traditional theories portend. Beginning with a review of relevant literature, followed by an assessment of the African political condition, the paper will argue for a fitting political genre for the indigenous governance system in Africa.

Theoretical jungle of democracy

At its core, democracy is a principled governance system where all members of society are treated as if they are all equally qualified to participate in decision-making processes, and in governance, and as if politically equal.⁵ Traditionally, Greece is credited with the invention of democracy where it was known

as *demokratia*, meaning a political system that promotes *kratos* (the rule) of the *demos* (the people) in Greek.⁶ Although, some contend that this cliché often ignores the body of evidence about the governance assemblies of ancient Syria-Mesopotamia, and the contributions of the early Islamic world and Africa.⁷

As a result, scholars, especially African traditionalists such as Wiredu, Nketsia, and Wambia dia Wamba have long argued that liberal democracy in Africa must be jettisoned and replaced with traditional democratic systems.⁸ They contend that Africa should not just accept what the conceptual West imposed on them as democracy. Fayime recognizes the value in elements of indigenous practices which he argues could be refined for contemporary application, thereby pushing for a pluralistic understanding of democracy or a "consociational view of eclecticism" to address tensions emanating from Africa's "multi-ethnic, religious, ideological, linguistic, regional and cultural cleavages."⁹ Pragmatism or eclectic theoretical approach is people-centered, ensures a fairer distribution of power and influence in society, and is underpinned by the spirit of communalism, a mixed economy of socialist and capitalist orientations and social justice rooted in African ideology. This paper is aligned with the eclectic or pragmatic concept of African traditional governance systems which at this stage do not have a genre, family identity or conceptual name. But we must first understand Africa's political condition before discussing the genre of the political systems.

African Political Condition

The legendary African philosopher, Ali Mazrui, rightly argues that Africa is caught between rebelling against the West and seriously imitating the West.¹⁰ As the story of post-independence Africa's struggle has demonstrated, it is hard to do both at the same

time. Mazrui posed a question that still begs for answers; why is Africa, the most central continent geographically, the most politically and economically marginalized? In *The African Condition: A Political Diagnosis*, Mazrui analyzed the continent with a metaphor in which he (the doctor) examined the patient (Africa). He effectively uses six paradoxes to explain the contradictions in African political development.¹¹ Clearly, the African political condition evokes serious democracy and governance dilemmas. Even among the top nine African countries identified by Freedom House as “free” on its Global Freedom Index, there is “increasing public dissatisfaction and declining support for democracy as the best system of government.”¹² The prospect of democracy in Africa is at best ominous given that the epidemic of coups is fueled by pervasive bad governance, corruption, and weak regional blocs on the continent. This is also exacerbated by political systems that promote selfish capitalist approach to governance, in total contrast to African philosophy which preaches communalism, collectivism and solidarity. By caving to a system that is guided by “an every-man-for-himself philosophy,” Africa has effectively jettisoned its “eternal brotherhood” philosophy.¹³

Since Mazrui’s work, several scholars have offered prescriptions to his patient in the form of African democratic theories and the indigenous political system. In his essay *Indigenous African Institutions*, George Ayittey postulates six key features of the African indigenous political system; i) decisions are made by public opinion; ii) checks and balances are implemented to curb despotism; iii) decentralization of the political system; iv) freedom of expression; v) decision-making by consensus; and (vi) participatory democracy.¹⁴ These are broadly consistent with Williams’s extensive list for the ‘African Constitution.’¹⁵ This should provide a solid foundation for

dinner table discussions in Africa, yet scholars are dissipating efforts at theorizing variants of indigenous governance types. I argue that without an African patent, the continent risks pursuing this important discourse disparately *ad infinitum*.

Mazrui later identified three schools of African philosophical thoughts with political consequences: cultural, ideological and critical.¹⁶ Cultural philosophy is the most enduring and authentic because it is built on key premises of African conservatism, the sacredness of ancestry, kinship solidarity and elder tradition. Cultural philosophy is collectivist and cumulative, and usually ethnic-specific, although as Williams (1987) observes, the political traditions of African political societies are very similar. Assuredly, this is the best philosophical foundation for Africa’s political salvation.

One of Africa’s foremost pan-Africanists, Professor Patrick Loch Otieno Lumumba, reinforced the need for Africa to develop its own political system, arguing that African democracy cannot be uniform, must be specific to each country and be defined by Africans.¹⁷ He also cautioned against adversarial politics imposed on Africa through multiparty systems, electoral politics and constitutional term limits. For him, Africa’s political salvation demands that the continent defines itself by decolonizing the mind. Taking this further, we will propose a unique name for the genre of the values-based indigenous African governance system informed by cultural philosophy as explained above by Mazrui. What’s in a name? Shakespeare once asked. For Africans, a name is important for several reasons, including showcasing one’s spiritual, cultural, political, socio-economic status and reinforcing identity and dignity. Names also exemplify the commitment of the people to their culture and their readiness to defend it with pride and dignity,¹⁸ symbolizing own-

ership and patents. Simply put, no name equals no ownership. If Africans do not name their brand of governance, there is a risk that future generations would be told it never existed, just as Africa is struggling to reclaim its historicity in ancient Egypt despite the dominant black African features (thick lips) in the Sphinx and the old Egyptian stock as noted by historians and archeologists.¹⁹ In a post-truth world, western democracy is only going to get more contentious while fragile African political institutions become even more hapless.

Afrocracy – towards values-based indigenous governance system

An African (Akan) proverb says *se wowerɛ fri wokrom hene abɛn a woyera wɔ badwamu*, meaning if you forget the anthem of your chief in a durbar of chiefs (festival), you will get lost. Amidst the loud music, drumming and dancing associated with such festivities, representing the ongoing political mis-culturing and identity crisis, Africa must discern and follow its own anthem. Otherwise, the continent risks carrying other people's garbage ad infinitum.²⁰

It has been more than four decades since Mazrui the doctor diagnosed Africa the patient. Since then, the patient's condition has gotten ominously complicated. The task of patient care has now fallen on the current generation (the new doctor) not only to undertake further diagnosis but to offer specific prescriptions. We propose *Afrocracy* to define an authentic African governance system to kick-start the branding of values-based indigenous governance systems in Africa. Given the heterogeneous nature of the African polity, a unified name is important for political coherence on the continent, although each *Afrocratic* practice would be unique to the respective national context. We define *Afrocracy* as an inclusive indigenous governance system developed for

Africa by Africans through their struggle, sweat and blood from the *triple tragedy* to unify pan-African political ontology and identity. We argue that *Afrocracy* would not only reinforce but also indigenize the continent's governance portfolio, thereby ensuring accountability, transparency, and integrity. *Afro* unmistakably represents the African people and their struggle, and *cracy*, the Greek word 'kratos', meaning rule/governance.

Like a chameleon, the political coloration of *Afrocracy* would take after the existing African condition in the country. The way clothes are sown to fit individuals according to the body curves and curvatures, *Afrocracy* would not be devised with any less rigor and details. To be authentic, the *Afrocratic* garment should be stitched with African philosophy, history, mythology, and proverbs. This is cultural philosophy *a la* Mazrui which "is basically about a familiar way of life, intellectually accessible to almost every man or woman in the village".²¹ The village always reminds Africans that the system is from the ground-up, authentic, falsifiable, and collective.²² Accordingly, we invoke philosophical thoughts such as *Ubuntu*,* *Nnobia*,** *Medemer**** etc, underpinned by communalism and collectiv-

* *Ubuntu* is a Zulu word meaning the individual is a component of a greater (inclusive) collective whole, and it stresses social consciousness and unity. Simply put, I am because you are.

** *Nnobia* is an Akan (Ghana and Ivory Coast) word translated as mutual-aid or self-help. It is used in cooperative ventures such as farming, informal banking sector and fundraising.

*** Ethiopia Prime Minister, Abiy Ahmed introduced *medemer* as his cardinal philosophy. *Medemer* is a concept of national unity that seeks to bring all Ethiopians from all sides to work for the common good, prosperity, and sustainable development.

ism, to dictate Africa's political futures instead of foreign cultures shaped by individualism.

Against this backdrop, *Afrocracy* is a spectrum of different political colorations ranging from one end, shaded by significant philosophical and traditional values (maximalist), to the other end, a system that is only tethered by a few African values (minimalist). For instance, the maximalist may opt for a system where the traditional leaders (chiefs) are restored and constitute the national government as the National House of Chiefs, representing their people directly. That effectively displaces full-time politicians as we know today, although some of them will continue to serve as technical experts at home and abroad. The House of Chiefs would select the President, a position that would be periodically rotated among the agreed ethnic representation in the country. The minimalist, on the other hand, would look more like Botswana's example where chiefs are integrated into public administration at the local level.²³ Underpinned by the Tswana adage *Kgosi ke Kgosi ka morafe*, 'the king is king by the grace of the people',²⁴ Sir Seretse Khama, the first president of Botswana in 1996 introduced far-reaching but inclusive reforms that set the country on the path of economic development.**** While chiefs lost significant powers and authority through the reforms, chieftaincy remained critical and formal political institutions after independence unlike places such as Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda.²⁵

Undoubtedly, *Afrocracy* can add real value to the African polity ranging from the drastic reduction of bureaucracy, decentralization, effective local accountability, socio-economic development driven by a community agency, conflict resolution, trust

in governance, enhanced unity within and without the artificial boundaries, reduction in government expenditure and dignity of the African. Given the limited scope of this paper, we will only highlight a few of them.

Chiefs are not autocrats or dictators as Western literature would have us believe. Rather, chiefs represent their people directly, take direct responsibility for their political, and socio-economic development, and are accountable to them. The people can hold the chief accountable for his actions because as noted by anthropologist Isaac Schapera 'the people are seldom afraid to speak openly and frankly'.²⁶ Arguably, accountability at the grassroots is most effective. In the Asante kingdom, chiefs were destooled for different reasons by the people, including King Osei Kwame for being absent from his place of duty and failing to perform religious rites at a festival in 1799; King Karikari for extravagance in 1874; and King Mensa Bonsu for the imposition of higher taxes on his people in 1883.²⁷ Failing institutional procedures, some African traditions used spontaneous actions to bring about justice and accountability such as *adom ye* (Akan), *kirikiri* (Yuroba) and *itwika* (Gikuyu).²⁸ Traditional rulers are held to higher standards than contemporary politicians. I argue that if some of these traditional judicial practices are incorporated into the modern judicial system, corruption would be minimized, and justice will be dispensed far quicker.

The chieftaincy institutions also defy national political boundaries. In 2020, a former Ivorian president, Konan Bédié, paid homage to the Asantehene (Ashanti King) in Ghana to consult and seek his counsel and blessing. Bédié traces his roots to the Ashanti Region of Ghana (Nsuta) where the Asantehene is the overlord and pledged allegiance to the Golden Stool.²⁹ The fact that a prominent Ivorian politician will pledge allegiance to the Asantehene (Ghana) is quite telling and

****With a centralized government, he established pluralistic and inclusive economic institutions and a stable democracy that boasts of the highest per capita income in sub-Saharan Africa.

demonstrates the unifying power of the old institution. I would argue that if politicians were to get out of the way traditional authorities would bring the continent together much faster.

Across the continent chiefs are mostly regarded as agents of socio-economic development, filling critical gaps in governance. For example, in 2000, the Asantehene (Asante King), Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, launched an ambitious international project, Otumfuo Educational Fund, to mobilize resources to facilitate primary, secondary, tertiary and vocational education in his kingdom.³⁰ Without a doubt this exemplifies good governance by all standards.

While *Afrocracy* will not solve all political problems in Africa, it can unify the people against a corrupt, individualistic and capitalist governance system imposed on them. We acknowledge that the chieftaincy institution itself is problematic particularly when it is manipulated by the state and turned into a decentralized despotism.³¹ As a result, some of the chiefs have been corrupted by politics and money. As former Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn once noted, some of the traditional authorities have been too diluted and corrupted to be effective agents of change.³²

Against this backdrop, it will take a major shift in mindset to move Africa towards *Afrocracy*. In fact, a sea of change in generational attitude. Ayittey identifies two types of African generations, the cheetah and hippo generations.³³ The cheetahs have the can-do spirit and are eager to move the continent forward beyond its slavery and colonial trappings. They acknowledge many of the current crops of leaders are hopelessly corrupt and will not lead the continent anywhere. They do not make excuses for the continent's predicament, although they see the Western plot in every African adversity. The hippo generation, on the

other hand, is "intellectually stigmatized and stuck in their colonial pedagogical patch".³⁴ They condemn injustices perpetrated by the West against Africa but ignore the very same abuses under their noses. They only scream about oppression and exploitation when perpetrated by the West and lead their countries to the gutters. We put *Afrocracy's* future in the hands of the cheetah generation because they are the action takers who not only understand the fierce urgency of the times but are also concerned that the current generation of leaders is leading them to the ditch.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that whilst significant African epistemic scholarship has proposed an indigenous form of governance as an alternative to democracy, none has thus far provided a genre or family name under which this discourse is taking shape. The risk is that without branding the political system, Africa will be deprived of ownership just as some Egyptologists have successfully done to deny ancient Egypt of its blackness. We suggest *Afrocracy* as a collective name, identity and genre for the full gambit of indigenous coloration of political governance in sub-Saharan Africa. *Afrocracy* recognizes the heterogeneity of political culture across the continent and provides the best collective framework within which genuine political discourse can take place without any loss of identity, pride and self-esteem. Given its simplicity and ground-up approach, it provides the best guarantee for decentralization of authority and governance, and hence accountability. Of course, there are significant problems associated with chieftaincy institutions in many parts of the continent that merit attention during the sifting process. Just as adversarial politics would be jettisoned, the cheetah generation would do well to leave bad traditional values in the dustbin of history.

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Unlocking inclusive development in South Africa

By Mandlesizwe Isaacs



Mandla Isaacs is a political economist and public policy expert. As a former senior public servant in the Government of South Africa, he worked on immigration and economic policy

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South Africa's development progress appears stalled.

We have many things going for us. Our democratic transition and constitution are both admired around the world. We are the third biggest economy in Africa and the second most complex.^{1,2} We have enormous mineral wealth. We have the biggest electric power system in Africa, with nuclear power capability. We have globally competitive universities and scientific research institutes.

Yet most core measures of human development tell a troubling story. GDP per capita did not grow between 2009-2019.³ Our unemployment rate has stayed at 35%; it is the highest in the world and was so before the pandemic.⁴ We are the world's most unequal society: the top 20% of South Africans retain 68% of income. Half of our thirty million people live in chronic poverty.⁵

Our life expectancy is 64 years, compared to 75 years in developing Asia, and 80 years in advanced economies. Our public education system is characterized by low throughput rates and poor learning outcomes.

Many observers have long argued that this structural social inequality makes our society precariously brittle, unstable and unsustainable. The anxiety of the privileged few is visible in the distinctively South African preponderance of gated residential estates, high walls and private security companies.

In July 2021 we saw a glimpse of the kind of societal breakdown many South Africans fear. Two of the nation's largest provinces slid into lawlessness for a week, causing at least 342 deaths and tens of billions of Rand in property damage.⁶ The unrest, which President Ramaphosa called an "insurrection," was initially sparked by an attempted political insurrection by supporters of former President Zuma.⁷ It quickly spread on the tinder of widespread poverty and marginalization. Underlining the deep deprivation with which millions of South Africans live, a heartbreaking viral video during the looting showed a boy leaving a store with 'looted' underwear.

Yet South Africa has not wanted for economic development plans. There have been at least 6 over the last 15 years.⁸ The National Development Plan Vision 2030 along with several others had creditable ideas around the need to improve export competitiveness in targeted sectors, remove binding constraints, ensure an enabling policy environment and increase fixed investment, among other worthy proposals. In addition to these government plans, there have been detailed public pro-

posals and recommendations from business, international experts, and think tanks.‡

Clearly then, development progress in South Africa has not stalled because our government does not know what steps it can take to accelerate inclusive growth. It has stalled primarily because our current leaders are incapable or unwilling to chart a new course.

The binding constraint for developmental progress in South Africa is a political leadership which is committed and capable of driving bold, growth-promoting policies and reforms. The ruling party essentially concedes this. In national addresses, President Ramaphosa continues to promise the building of a capable and developmental state. This begs the question why the ANC has been unable to build a capable state after three decades in power. It seems even the massive economic crisis precipitated by the Covid-19 pandemic was not enough to jolt South Africa's political leadership into action. No less an authority than former President Mbeki dismissed the government's policy response – the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan – as not being the “required transformative plan” which the country needs.⁷

Most of the leaders in the national executive – the Presidency and Cabinet Ministers – have presided over a decade of stagnation and decline. After four years in office on a change ticket, having famously promised a “new dawn,” President Ramaphosa has little to show in the way of tangible progress on citizens' biggest concerns: the economy, public corruption and crime. Two million jobs have been lost during the pandemic.⁸ The Zondo Commission of Inquiry into State Capture has laid bare the ANC's complicity in the looting and hollowing out of the state, with little to no major prosecutions to date.⁹ The lack of arrests associated with the July 2021 insurrection and the seeming complete absence

of security allowing Parliament to be set on fire in January 2022 give the impression of a state losing its ability to enforce law and order.

South Africa seems trapped in a Gramscian interregnum, where the old is dying but the new is yet to be born. We need a changing of the guard. South Africa needs a new generation of leaders who are of-the-moment, and whose best years are ahead of them, rather than behind them.

We need leaders who understand the challenges and opportunities of the present and offer new solutions which will help us better navigate the future.

Several capable leaders in other sectors of our society shy away from politics. For many it is seen as too dirty or risky, especially when compared to alternative career options in the professions, business or academia.

William Gumede describes our political culture as closed, noting its hostility to racial minorities, women and outsiders. He contrasts South Africa's political culture with the United States which, whatever its other flaws, has a dynamic political culture in which people from diverse backgrounds can achieve prominence:

“The easy bringing in of outsiders, as in the case of the US, generates the continual renewal of ideas and innovation. It brings extraordinary dynamism, energy and vibrancy to the country's politics, economy and society.”¹⁰

So what is to be done?

A new generation of idealists must have the strength of their convictions. Would-be reformers – including some of Gumede's outsiders – must embrace the challenge of shaking up our politics and overcoming the inevitable resistance. Power will not yield itself, it must be wrested. Yet there is opportunity for the new to be born that is overlooked.

South Africa's low voter turnout is often

attributed by commentators to voter apathy, especially among youth. This may be missing an important story.

In the 2019 national election, just less than half of eligible voters voted.¹¹ This is certainly low by international standards. The question is *why* the other 18 million eligible voters chose not to vote. My view, from objective data – such as that a third of voters say no party represents their views – and subjective intuition, is that a significant number of South Africans aren't voting because *they are unhappy with the existing options*, not because they can't be bothered to vote.¹²

If South Africans voted at the median of countries, at the United Kingdom's rate of 63%, five million more people would have voted in the last national election. If they voted in the top quartile of countries, at Ghana's rate of 72%, eight million more South Africans would have voted. In addition to courting currently active voters, aspiring reformers should look to these five to eight million South Africans as a massive opportunity to bring new voters into the political process. They should seek to understand why they remain outside of the political process and develop new modes of political engagement which appeal to this silent electorate.

South Africa's moribund politics are ripe for disruption. A new reform agenda must offer a compelling vision for the excluded: the unemployed, youth, women and the economically marginalized. It must distill a bold, implementable growth program from the existing cottage industry of economic development plans. Or develop completely new ideas. Crucially, it must address the political economy, forming a new reform coalition which can negotiate policy concessions from the existing elite.

New leadership is required for South Africa to ignite accelerated and inclusive development.

Notes

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Maternal Health in Nigeria – Biosocial Theory, History & Implications of COVID-19

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She recently won a Best Poster Prize at the International Society for Blood Transfusion 2021 Congress in Amsterdam for research she

led and coordinated on blood services in 34 tertiary hospitals in Nigeria during the COVID-19 pandemic, and a Best Poster Prize in the Blood Donation category at the 2021 British Blood Transfusion Society Conference for research she also led and coordinated on the impact of COVID-19 on Nigeria's National Blood Service. Dr Adaeze Oreh was also recently named a recipient of the 2021 Montegut Global Scholars award by the World Organization of Family Doctors and the American Board of Family Medicine.

Abstract

According to the World Health Organization, nearly 830 women die from preventable causes daily. About 99% of these deaths take place in low- and middle-income countries, and more than half of those occur in sub-Saharan Africa alone. The target of the Sustainable Development Goals is to improve maternal and reproductive health outcomes and reduce global maternal mortality rates to fewer than seventy deaths per 100,000 live births by 2030. Every woman has the right to live and thrive. To accept the tragedy that one woman in the world dies every two minutes from pregnancy or childbirth due to preventable causes is to deny their basic right to life. This article, based on the Nigerian context, identifies biosocial theories, historical antecedents, metrics relevant to maternal health, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, describing the potential of policy for rights-based interventions that address (1) inequity in access to safe basic and emergency obstetric care; (2) disenfranchisement and disempowerment of women; and (3) women's rights and respectful maternal care in health care settings. The

article also describes how innovative strategies that are multisectoral, community-oriented and people-centered can help accelerate the response towards ending preventable maternal deaths for a more balanced and prosperous world.

Introduction

Nigeria has been described as one of the most dangerous places in the world for a woman to give birth.¹ Maternal death rates are 556 women for every 100,000 live births, accounting for one of sub-Saharan Africa's highest maternal mortality rates.² These are women of reproductive ages, 15-49 years, and often younger in communities where early marriage takes place.³ While attended skilled deliveries have gradually risen in the last decade, approximately 60% of all child births happen at home and unattended.⁴ In fact, every 10-13 minutes, one Nigerian woman dies – that is approximately 150 women dying each day – from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.⁵ For every woman who dies, up to fifty women will experience life-long complications and disabilities. This equates to more than five hundred women who will either die or face severe disabilities daily.⁶ Bleeding, infections, hypertension, obstructed labor, and unsafe abortions constitute the main causes of death and disability.⁷ With a population of over 200 million people, where 51.4% of people live in the rural areas, the majority of Nigeria's women reside in rural and semi-urban areas.⁸ The challenge of high maternal morbidity and mortality thus results in untold hardships for them, their children, families, and communities.

Decades of military rule, entrenched corruption, poor investment in development programs, and a broken health system have led to these poor maternal health indices.⁹ A gap therefore exists for the improvement of healthcare delivery at the community level,

a fundamental right to health that so many are denied, to address poor maternal health and strengthen the healthcare system.

An Analysis of Biosocial Factors

Research on non-medical factors affecting maternal mortality in Nigeria identified payment of treatment costs, health facility location, and access to antenatal care as significant.¹⁰ Nigeria's Health Insurance Scheme offers financial coverage to barely 5% of the population, leaving most citizens to pay for healthcare out-of-pocket.^{11,12} Poverty, low educational levels, paucity of information, harmful cultural practices, inaccessible facilities, and poor road networks and transportation limit the accessibility of the antenatal and delivery care which many pregnant women need.¹³ Additionally, harmful cultural factors present barriers to health care through norms which disallow women access to healthcare outside their homes.^{14,15} These gendered domestic power structures, resource allocation dynamics and limited decision-making therefore exert negative impacts on women's health-seeking behavior, health, and wellbeing.¹⁶ A lack of consideration for these factors in the respectful delivery and efficacy of care compromises healthcare quality and the actualization of women's fundamental human rights.¹⁷

Several biosocial theories are thus relevant to an analysis of Nigeria's maternal mortality challenges.

According to the *theory of social suffering*, social violence from political, economic, and institutional powers leads to inequity.¹⁸ The theory is comprised of four interrelated concepts: the origin of suffering from wider social issues; the limitation of free will and potential; the impact of health challenges beyond the individual alone; and lastly, the worsening of social and health challenges by society and the institutions set up to alleviate them.¹⁹

In many Nigerian communities, cultural beliefs and traditions enshrined within value systems have regarded women as lesser beings in the family hierarchy.²⁰ This misogynistic outlook prevents many women from seeking antenatal care or childbirth services unless their husbands or male family members are present to permit it.²¹ This results in late identification of medical conditions associated with high-risk pregnancies, ultimately leading to maternal deaths from bleeding, infection, high blood pressure, obstructed deliveries, and miscarriages.²² For many, simply accruing delayed healthcare is unjust if the wider social issues are not addressed. These notions of social difference in gender like race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality have propagated and perpetuated structural violence across the world. By labelling certain groups as different or “less than,” social institutions developed to alleviate suffering in individuals end up aggravating their anguish.²³ Infamous examples include segregation-era United States of America, apartheid South Africa, and homophobia and violence against homosexuals.²⁴ These social groups therefore endure double burdens of social suffering from health challenges where they exist, and the structural violence directed at them from society.²⁵

Another biosocial theory, the *local moral world theory*, describes values shared by people in a shared space or environment at a particular moment in time, albeit temporarily or permanently, which may conflict with one’s own personal values and beliefs.²⁶ The relevance of this to maternal mortality in Nigeria is illustrated by the concept of the ‘purdah woman’ in Islam and the ‘Hebrew woman’ in Christianity. In many Pentecostal Christian settings in Africa, it is believed that the Bible promises every Christian woman ‘delivery like the Hebrew woman’ – meaning a quick, painless, and intervention-free process. Findings from a study on perceptions surrounding

cesarean (surgical) deliveries in south-eastern Nigerian women support this.²⁷ In both belief systems, women are often discouraged from seeking medical interventions that could be lifesaving. While she may not believe in that concept, she may be conflicted because of the influence of her ‘moral world’. These beliefs and actions then become institutionalized in their socially constructed worlds, are perpetuated within communities, and often continue from generation to generation.²⁸

In the *unintended consequences of purposive action* theory, unanticipated outcomes of an intervention can arise.²⁹ In Nigeria, primary healthcare centers are often poorly located in communities.³⁰ Important factors such as population demographics and transportation logistics are not often considered due to political influences and vested interests, leading to low facility utilization rates. The placement of these health facilities therefore sometimes results in preventable hardships for the intended beneficiaries such as vehicular accidents, robberies and even sexual assaults encountered *en route* such centers. When communities and deployed healthcare workers abandon such facilities, unsupervised or poorly supervised births among local women continue unabated, thereby feeding the vicious cycle of high maternal mortality rates.

Journey from History to the Present

Nigeria first encountered orthodox medicine in 1472 when Portuguese navigators first arrived to its shores.³¹ With the country’s establishment as a British colony in 1861, hospitals and healthcare dispensaries were subsequently built.³² These were, however, mostly located in the urban centers where the colonial administrators worked and resided. The health system was regionalized, and most public hospitals provided free healthcare for colonial government workers and their dependents while church-owned hospitals

provided care for the indigent, creating an imbalance between healthcare in urban towns compared to rural areas.³³ This legacy of colonialism can still be observed in several African countries such as South Africa and Tanzania.^{34,36}

Following the country's independence from British rule in 1960, the healthcare system continued to develop, albeit modeled on the colonial system, with a focus on urban-located hospitals and health facilities.³⁷ This left millions of Nigerians in the rural areas unable to access quality healthcare and thus reliant on traditional care, often within the context of gendered cultural beliefs and norms.

The turbulent 1970s, with fights for equality from marginalized populations in America and across the world, brought the theme of primary health care to the fore worldwide.³⁸ By 1975, attempts at broadening the availability of healthcare to include rural communities commenced with the Basic Health Services Scheme (BHSS), followed by the establishment of fifty-two model primary healthcare centers across Nigeria between 1986 and 1992, and the National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHCDA) in 1992 by former Minister of Health Professor Olukoye Ransome-Kuti.³⁹ These laudable attempts have been severely challenged by poor road networks, inadequate health personnel deployment, insufficient financing, vested interests and widespread corruption.⁴⁰

Successive military governments undermined the objectives of these centers by situating them based on the influence of powerful military officers, rather than on population, need, and access.⁴¹ Many of these facilities were developed to raise the profile of government officials without consideration for effectiveness and value-creation. With the advent of democracy in 1999, the trend continued with ministers, senators, governors, and other political office holders. Thus, even

where foreign and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) sought to provide aid through collaborative health intervention programs, these foundationally challenged facilities were unable to provide the base for implementation.

Cost-free healthcare for only government workers drawn from the colonial era remains an issue today, as it is mainly registered workers in the formal sector who are covered by public health insurance.⁴² Postcolonial power structures maintain these imperial dynamics with high-level government officials and their staff working predominantly in cities with access to health finance protection.⁴³ In addition to the attractions of city life, urbanization has been driven by increasing numbers of young, under-employed Nigerians on a quest for employment opportunities and security because of terrorism and communal clashes in rural areas.⁴⁴

Power Structures and Dynamics Behind Maternal Health in Nigeria

Custodians of the power structures and power dynamics responsible for Nigeria's maternal health include the Nigerian Federal and State Ministries of Health, National Primary Healthcare Development Agency (NPHCDA), the Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Nigeria (SOGON) and national traditional, religious, and political leaders. International power holders have included the World Bank, UNFPA and the World Health Organization (WHO).⁴⁵ These power holders have, however, been predominantly based in the urban centers and healthcare facilities.⁴⁶ Whereas most of the women affected by maternal health challenges are in rural communities served by primary healthcare centers, the decisions and policies regarding their health and wellbeing have been predominantly determined in a top-down fashion by experts and specialists in urban centers and ministries of health. Community

decision makers, especially religious and traditional leaders, have ultimately perpetuated many of the assumptions, cultural norms, religious norms, institutionalized beliefs, and behaviors that have influenced policies and interventions in maternal health.^{47, 48}

Maternal Health in the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has considerably impacted reproductive and perinatal health in multiple ways. First, through a direct effect of the infection itself, and second, because of the changes that have occurred in health care, social policy, and socioeconomic circumstances.⁴⁹

Globally, increased severity of presentation and outcomes in pregnant women with symptomatic COVID-19 and variations in clinical guidelines for labour, delivery, and breastfeeding for COVID-19 positive patients with a likelihood of increased uncertainty and possible harm have been reported. Prenatal care visits decreased, healthcare systems were strained, and potentially harmful policies were implemented with little evidence in high-, middle-, and low-income countries.^{50,51} Several studies revealed reductions in health-facility based deliveries and an increase in rates of admission of pregnant women to intensive care units during the pandemic and substantial numbers of women had inadequate antenatal visits. Lockdowns and fear of contracting COVID-19 led to delays in seeking healthcare, ultimately resulting in complications in nearly half of pregnancies in some settings.⁵² An urban-based study conducted in Nigeria revealed that nearly half of the women studied encountered at least one challenge with accessing reproductive and maternal health services either due to inability to leave their houses owing to lockdown restrictions or unavailable transportation services. Other deterrents included high cost of

transportation, fear of contracting COVID-19, the idea of potentially being in proximity to patients with COVID-19 receiving care in the facility, and the mandatory use of facemasks at health facilities.⁵³ Pre-pandemic research has highlighted quality of care issues, such as poor staff attitude, long waiting times, poor attention to women in labour, and high cost of services in sub-standard facilities as sources of dissatisfaction with modern facility-based maternity care and as reasons why traditional care is often preferred.⁵⁴ The fear and uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 and the state of maternal healthcare services likely heightened these sentiments.

The results are findings of increased maternal stress, maternal morbidity/mortality, and neonatal and infant mortality during the pandemic, most notable in LMICs.⁵⁵⁻⁶⁰ Additionally, with COVID-19's socioeconomic impact, namely job losses, economic disempowerment, and increased domestic violence, the incidence of maternal mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression have spiked in many countries.⁶¹⁻⁶⁶ The reports of maternal deaths are most worrisome given the fact that they largely affect populations who already carry the majority of the global burden of maternal mortality.⁶⁷⁻⁶⁹

These findings are not entirely surprising, especially given that during the widespread Ebola outbreak in West Africa, poor maternal health outcomes were reported.⁷⁰ However, due to the far-reaching socio-economic consequences of the pandemic, the combined effects of undernutrition, lack of vaccination, inadequate breastfeeding, and inability to access healthcare services substantially increased mortality rates among women and children in low-income and middle-income countries (LMICs).⁷¹ Therefore, any progress that had been made in improving the quality of maternal health services prior to the pandemic could be lost for a long time to come.

A Framework to Curb Maternal Deaths

Community Involvement

Engaging and mobilizing communities was critical to addressing the socio-cultural hindrances in communities that were hesitant to the polio vaccine. This strategy can be used to address maternal mortality in Nigeria by building trust, understanding community values, and working with communities to espouse those values in a way that safeguards life. The NPHCDA's recently launched Community Health Influencers and Promoters of Services (CHIPS) initiative aims to facilitate task sharing and improve community health services coordination.⁷² To strengthen service provision, these Community Health Workers (CHWs) should be distributed amongst defined community catchment areas, receive standardized training for identification of risk and management of reproductive health challenges, monitoring and evaluation tools, in addition to supervision and research skills from specialist family physicians and obstetricians and gynecologists.⁷³ This task-shifting model would address the dearth of expert training and supervision of community health workers in rural areas that limits the provision of respectful maternal care in rural Nigeria. Additionally, the unintended consequences of purposive action, such as poor transportation logistics, would be addressed by a network of health workers spread across several catchment areas in the community, and through the implementation of transportation arrangements using remunerated local community members or through the provision of transportation fees to transport women to health facilities, as is done in rural Haiti and Liberia.⁷⁴

Education, Skills Acquisition and Empowerment of Rural Women

The focus of this intervention recognizes that social suffering originates from wider social issues, such as poverty, gender bias, lack of education, and economic opportunities which, if not addressed in the context of maternal mortality, will undermine opportunities for addressing preventable maternal deaths. As structural violence is often worsened by society and institutions set up to alleviate these issues, the involvement of the community in the design and implementation of the intervention would serve to alleviate suffering by taking into cognizance the unique sociocultural barriers and constraints of communities.⁷⁵ Similarly, by empowering women with education and skills that increase their awareness of their health and their agency, they are better positioned to defy dictates of their local moral world, or institutionalized thoughts and actions, to seek out healthcare services to improve their health and wellbeing.

A Revision of the Assessment of Negative Maternal Health Outcomes

The metrics that measure maternal deaths include number of deaths per 100,000 live births (maternal mortality ratios), coverage of specific reproductive healthcare services, and assessment of observed-versus-expected maternal mortality as a function of Socio-demographic Index (SDI), an indicator derived from measures of income per capita, educational attainment, and fertility.⁷⁶ These metrics have not accounted for a majority of the burden of non-fatal health outcomes associated with pregnancy and childbearing which due to further illness or disability up to one year post-childbirth negatively impact the health of the woman, her baby, her other children, and the social and economic standing of her family.^{77,78} For a more robust evaluation of maternal health interventions, disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) could

be used to compare outcomes in women exposed to certain interventions and those unexposed.^{79,80}

Similarly, indicators of social suffering and structural violence such as poverty, paucity of information, cultural practices, inaccessible health facilities, and transportation challenges are not evaluated. Person-centered and open-ended qualitative methods such as focus group discussions, one-on-one interviews and household surveys could provide insights into these indicators, in addition to the subjective perceptions and experiences of women in response to reproductive health interventions.⁸¹ These methods would give a clearer picture of the true burden of maternal health challenges.⁸²

Likely Barriers to this Community-Oriented Empowerment Framework for Addressing Poor Maternal Health Outcomes in Nigeria

The prevailing power dynamics behind maternal mortality in Nigeria could present the first source of a challenge to the framework. Typically, the power holders of maternal health have been top-level government officials, public health specialists, and specialist obstetricians and gynecologists.⁸³ Expanding decision-making to include specialist family physicians, who have hitherto been solely providers of care in the Nigerian health system, could present inter-specialty conflict.⁸⁴ Effective advocacy and dialogue could circumvent this challenge. Secondly, securing international donor funding could prove challenging, due to other competing demands and a trend toward diminishing aid to developing countries.⁸⁵ Convincing proposals that align with funders' goals and show clear metrics to assess outcomes would be crucial to counteract this obstacle. Additionally, public-private partnerships with indigenous private companies can plug funding gaps.^{86,87}

A third challenge could be opposition from spouses, religious, traditional and community leaders who may view the intervention as antithetical to their socio-cultural or religious norms.⁸⁸ Advocacy and engagement of these groups would be helpful.⁸⁹ Fourth, resistance to change may arise from health practitioners and stakeholders who are accustomed to the status quo and may have benefited from corruption, nepotism, and system inefficiencies.⁹⁰ Lastly, generating the necessary political will to support and drive the implementation and scale-up of such empowerment interventions across the country would be challenging. Rigorous management, transparency, and accountability of these interventions with evidence-based reports of achievement would simultaneously counteract corruption and serve as advocacy tools to drive political support.⁹¹

Conclusion

Any worthwhile interventions capable of delivering positive maternal health outcomes in Nigeria must be designed with consideration of the broader economic, geographical, and social factors that affect the access of rural Nigerian women to quality maternal health services, in order to provide culturally appropriate care with community participation. Utilizing a nuanced understanding of the rural woman's unique experiences and problems with existing services would ensure that solutions are derived from a community perspective. This would lead to the provision of services in a respectful and person-centered manner for women and their families along the continuum of care in their reproductive lives and thereafter. This way, their individual values and fundamental human rights are protected and assured.

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ỌNYÌRÌỌNWÚ

By Amarachi Attamah

1
 Ọchìchìrì gbara
 Ebe niile dara juu, n'eweghì mkpọtụ ọbụla
 A nūrụ m oke ụda ogene
 Ọ kulitere akurungwa udu ntị m n'egwu

2
 Site n'ọchìchìrì ahụ, akara ebube pụtara
 Ihe amụma, o jiri ọkụ anyanwụ saa ahụ
 Ọnyìrìọnwụ, n'ụdị ọchìchìrì dī ebube
 Ahụ ya a na-amụke nke ukwu

3
 Ikike ọchìchì, na ìhụnanya buru otu
 Ụwa ahụ dara juu, kwuputara okwu n'oke olu
 Mmemme bidoro ... ụda egwu dī iche iche
 Na olu mbem ka e jiri nabata ebube gī

4
 Site n'isi isi mbido okike ụwa
 Site n'ọchìchìrì miri emi,
 E kere m gī n'ụdị m ka ì kwuputa ka ụkwụ oji
 Ya mere, i kwesighì ichefu onye ì bu

5
 Ì bu ojii... ojii bu ebube
 Ì bu akara ìhụnanya na akara udo
 Ì bukwa ọkụ na-agba ọzara ndị ọjọọ
 Maka na ì na-amịko ìhè ọbụla si gī n'akụkụ
 gafee

6
 E tere m gī ude mma na uhie ma kanya gī uli
 Akara obibi na mgbakọ ebighiebi
 I kuru ume ndụ na I kupu ume ndụ ọzọ
 Eee, e mere m gī ka ì buru ihe omimi

IMMORTALITY

By Amarachi Attamah

1
 There was no light, no sound, no movement
 Only a sea of darkness prevailed
 I heard a sound, like a gong go off
 Prolonging the dance of Anvil and Stirrup

2
 Out of the sea of darkness—a royal emerged
 Spectacular! Bathed in liquid Sun
 Immortal, like shining darkness
 Body, glittering with Melanin

3
 Pre-matter mingled with love. And
 For the first time, Eternal Silence spoke out
 Announcing her presence in celebration
 In this spectacular Grand silhouette of creative
 orchestra

4
 Out of the eternal beginning
 Out of the bottomless womb of
 Blackness, you were made in my image
 And you must never forget who you are

5
 You are darkness and blackness is greatness
 You are love; you are peace
 But you are also chaos, icy cold and red-hot
 magma to evil
 No light passes you unabsorbed

6
 I have encoded in you this chrism, this
 Melanin
 It is sophisticated codes of eternal mathematics
 Mathematics that sparks wisdom, speaks
 mysterious
 The Inhalation and exhalation of divine breath

7

Tupu e kewaputa gi
Irihiri echiche m miri emi daputara ma kpukpo
Buru oke oshimiri, oshimiri ahụ a gho
ebilimmiri
Ebilimmiri ahụ malitere njem ma buru okwu

8

Okwu ahụ a puta ihe n'udi mmadu
Mmadu e jiri uli ebube choo mma
Ma hie ya uhie onyirionwu
A kporo m ya ALKEBULAN

9

Alkebulan bu mbido ebighiebi
I bu okara mmadu, okara mmuo
Kpakpando niile chawaputara n'onu na
mmemme okike gi,
Oku niile gbagoro igwe, see egwurugwu

10

Mmuo gi bu anwu-anwu- onyinye m nyere gi
Nri akpukpo ahụ gi na-eri bu ihe anyanwu
I nwere ike ilo anyanwu ma o masi gi
O bu isi iyi mmanu ebube gi

11

Gaa n'awa niile- elu, ala na mmiri
Kwaputa n'ikike m nyere gi
Jide oji ichichi gi na ofo gi
Ma dube odum niile dika igwe aturu

12

A bu m Okike- mmuo ka mmuo, I bu odi
m n'obi
E ji m ike na mmuo anwu anwu gbaa gi ume
Mee gi ka i chawaputa ebe obula i no
Onyinye obibi ndu niile, a buru nke gi

7

Before your creation began,
First, a droplet fell into a sea of blackness from
My divine mind, the dot turned into ripples
And the ripples set in motion

8

Then Motion turned to matter
Matter took a form
Form became a hue-man
And the human I named ALKEBULAN

9

Alkebulan of eternal beginnings
You are mortal and immortal, you are god
I exploded a billion stars to celebrate your
creation
As firecrackers litter the sky with rainbow splash

10

Gifted with immortal soul
Your mortal skin eats solar fires
You may swallow the sun if you wish
It is your melanin delight

11

Go forth to the earth
Stand sanguinely
Poise like a divine royal
And lead the lions like lambs

12

I am the Great Spirit,
And you are special to me
I fashioned you strong and resilient
And bestowed upon you all gifts of life

13

Ntutu isi gị bụ ebube anyanwụ
Kwụputasịa na nji rọrọ arọ
Dịka ndị agha mgborogwụ ha kwụ jīm-jīm
Garuo ebighiebe-ebighiebi

14

Mana ị b́ara dịrị ka ohu a burụ ọnu
Alaeze gị danyere n'aka ndị ọjọọ
I chefuru onye ị bụ,
Onyinye omimi gị niile e funarị gị

15

Alkebulan, kedu mmụọ gị?
Kedu omimi dī na nji m nyere gị?
Kedu akara ebighiebi m?
A bụ m oke mmụọ mana obi a gbawala m.

16

Bilie! Bilie! – kpọlite mmụọ gị
A na m akpọku ebube gị ọzọ
A ga m akwụsị ụda ọñụ niile, ma n'igwe
ma n'ụwa
Garuo mgbe akwa arịrị a kwụsịrị n'mbilite gị

17

A ga m enye gị mkpara ikike ọzọ
A ga m ete gị mmanụ ebube ọzọ
N'ọb́b́j́a nke ọzọ a, ọ ga-abụ egwu mkpoghachi
Mkpọlite na mbilite agburụ gị ọzọ

13

The hairs on your head are unique solar rays
Standing up straight and black
Like gravity-defying- soldiers
Plunged into the cosmic abode

14

Though you became like a despised slave
You fell to the invaders, your kingdom was
captured
You forgot who you are and
You lost your primordial gifts

15

Alkebulan, where is your soul?
Where is the black dot I gave you?
The precious pearl of my eternal presence
I am the Great Spirit but my heart sinks

16

Rise! Rise up! –I call forth thee
I shall redeem your royalty forever
I have ceased all intergalactic melodies
Until this mourn is over and you rise again

17

I will send forth a divine staff of authority again
To revive the luster of my great shining
darkness
In this second coming, it shall be songs of
awakening
There will be a pan-melanin resurrection



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Ubuntu - “I am because we are”

Documenting the Ebola response opened my eyes to the power of this African philosophy



An African Union volunteer gives a health promotion talk at a community in Liberia

By Adaobi Ezeokoli

Ebola.

With dread we watched as it spread through Liberia, Sierra Leone, and Guinea between 2014 and 2016. It spread into Nigeria, where I worked at the time, causing palpable fear. It was the largest and most complex outbreak since the virus was discovered in 1976. It left over 11,000 people dead.

I mused over what to expect as I packed my bags to join colleagues on a work trip to the three affected countries in late 2015. My firm, a public health consultancy, had been commissioned to evaluate the African Union’s (AU) response. I was to interview volunteers,

take photos, and record videos that would inform our final report.

The AU called for health workers and other specialists to volunteer their services to the three countries. In September 2014, volunteers poured in from across Africa, a rich mix of epidemiologists, clinicians, public health specialists, and communications personnel.

“We wanted to come and help because these are our brothers,” was a common refrain I heard. That led me to reflect on Ubuntu, an African philosophy their words, and work, embodied.

Ubuntu is a Nguni Bantu term meaning “humanity.” It defines a quality that includes the essential human virtues of compassion and humility. It is often translated as “I am because we are.”

When we arrived in Liberia in August 2016, there were daily meetings at the Emergency Operations Centre. The brown-vested AU volunteers came with expertise and technical knowledge. They insisted on harmonization of response activities and leveraged their experience garnered fighting Ebola in Nigeria. They played significant roles in contact tracing and case investigation, epidemiology and surveillance, and capacity building.

They were instrumental in the restoration of clinical services at hospitals that had closed. “We found ourselves in a desperate situation,” a doctor in Margibi, Liberia, told us. “We were really touched people would leave their countries and come here to support us.”

Many came despite their own fears, despite the risks of infection. They told me they felt a deep empathy toward their African brothers, and a shared desire to help.

It proved important to have African experts on the ground, to provide contextual understanding and gain trust. They understood the impact of poverty on how people respond to crisis situations. They understood the impact of culture, tradition, and community. They understood Ubuntu.

The volunteers were deployed for six months or longer. Some told me they had taken leave or resigned from jobs to come. Some were unsure if they would have a job when they returned home. Yet they chose to come and contribute to controlling the Ebola outbreak. They alluded to a sense of shared purpose, to the importance of saving the lives of their brothers. They alluded to Ubuntu.

In their article “Exploring African Philosophy: The Value of Ubuntu in Social Work,” Jacob Mugumbate and Andrew Nyanguru cite Stamlake Samkange and Tommie Marie Samkange’s book, *Hunhuiism or Ubuntuism* (1980), where the latter highlight three maxims of ubuntuism. First “to be human is to affirm one’s humanity by recognizing the humanity

of others.” Second, “when one is faced with a decisive choice between wealth and the preservation of the life of another human being, then one should opt for the preservation of life.” And third: “the king owed his status, including all the powers associated with it, to the will of the people under him.”

I flew home with a deep appreciation of what it meant to have Africans at the frontlines of the fight against Ebola. Their courage, their presence, their commitment, was empowering. They gave me a clearer understanding of what it meant to practice Ubuntu; to recognize the humanity of others and to choose to preserve life against wealth.

My work in public health advocacy since has brought me into spaces where Ubuntu finds expression, from the call for better maternal health outcomes to advocating for citizens’ health rights in Nigeria.

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, we watched with dread as the virus spread across the globe. Health workers were again at the frontlines. We saw courage trump fear, and a shared humanity surface, expressions of Ubuntu.

We saw the opposite in the realms of politics and power. In the disruption the global pandemic offered, my musings increasingly turned to the third maxim of Ubuntu, that those who lead owe their status and power to the will of those they lead. It’s time to remind our leaders that they are because we will them to be. It’s time to restore Ubuntu.

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