

*ARTICLES*

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# **Ghana Social Science Journal**

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# **EPIDEMIOLOGICAL TRANSITIONS AND THE DISEASE BURDEN IN GHANA**

**Nana Nimo Appiah-Agyekum<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

This study uses the epidemiological transitions theory to explain changes in and possible determinants of Ghana's disease burden between the 19th and 21<sup>st</sup> century. Documents and interviews with healthcare practitioners were analysed using the thematic framework approach. Findings suggest that Ghana had undergone four stages of transition driven by population growth, colonisation and urbanisation which had gradually resulted in the doubling of the disease burden. Importantly, findings show that the epidemiological landscape has been in a state of constant transition with transition periods being unequal, short and rapid. These often produced shifts in health conditions and outcomes far beyond the health system's capacity. The study contributes by highlighting the possible origins of the double burden of disease in Ghana while supporting the notion that health transitions are not static linear processes but may vary in outcomes, stages and processes based on unique factors indirectly linked to the healthcare system.

**Keywords:** epidemiological transitions; Ghana; disease burden; communicable diseases; non-communicable diseases

## **Introduction**

Conceptually, the theory of epidemiologic transition focuses on the complex change in patterns of health and disease and on the interactions between these patterns and their demographic, economic and sociologic determinants and consequences (Kuh and Shlomo, 2004). Practically, it describes the gradual process of cataloguing the unique changes in disease burdens and health profiles within the context of ongoing modernization

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and development. Originally postulated by Omran (1971), epidemiological transition accounts for the extraordinary advances in health care made in industrialized countries since the 18th century; and ultimately for the changing health conditions and outcomes as countries go through phases of modernization (Mauck, 2010). While several advancements, including the inclusion of other stages, and critiques have been made to the theory till date (Omran, 2005), it is widely acknowledged that indeed change occurs culminating in the replacement of infectious and communicable diseases with degenerative and man-made diseases.

Even though it was initially developed and applied to explaining health and demographic alterations in developed countries (Caselli and Lopez, 1996; Duncan, Jones, & Moon, 1996), the notion of epidemiological transition has in recent times found its strongest applicability in the developing world where it provides justifiable explanations for the rapidly changing socio-demographic determinants and outcomes of health. Evidence that developed countries have, at one point in time, experienced the health challenges being experienced currently by less developed ones and, with time, developing countries will also experience current challenges of developed countries underscore the relevance of transitions to the developing world (Possas and Marques, 1994; Skeldon, 2014; Teitelbaum, 1975).

Aside being used to explain changes in the disease burden, epidemiological transitions also provide insights into changes in life expectancy and mortality trends over time in developing countries (Defo, 2014). Success in combating health challenges associated with development also appear to dwell strongly on the ability to identify, analyse and address historical antecedents in health systems and conditions, their transitions and the underlying reasons for their occurrence over time (Jones and Moon, 1992; McKeown, 2009). When applied properly therefore, epidemiological transitions provide an invaluable tool in predicting and planning for population health. Kickbusch (2013) for instance estimates dramatic changes in the health needs of developing countries towards that of the developed world as a result of epidemiological transition by the year 2020.

Yet, relatively little has been done on the subject in sub-Saharan Africa and Ghana in particular. Even the few studies (Agyei-Mensah and Aikins, 2010; Meij, De Craen, Agana, Plug, & Westendorp, 2009; Mock, Forjuoh, & Rivara, 1999) conducted on the subject in Ghana appear to have focused on specific areas and health conditions rather than the broad Ghanaian context. A cursory review also reveals a dearth of empirical information on the historical antecedents of existing health conditions within socio-cultural migration and practices in Ghana vis-à-vis socio-economic development. This study therefore explores the subject to bridge the knowledge gap on the subject and further provide insights into the gradual progression from the single burden of disease to the double burden of disease currently being experienced in Ghana.

In addition to providing an assessment of documented evidence and the views of health practitioners on epidemiological transitions, this paper provides a basis for examining and enacting policies to mitigate the health challenges likely to be faced with exacerbated development initiatives. Further, the study gives insights into the factors that have contributed in changing the epidemiological profile in Ghana as well as the causes and effects of epidemiological transitions on local communities. Finally, it attempts to catalogue the historical progression from tropical and infectious diseases to the existing double burden of diseases in Ghana. These will be relevant to students, professionals and policymakers of health in Ghana, the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region and on the global stage.

## **Methodology**

A qualitative approach was used in this study. Sampling was purposive and focused on getting key informants with in-depth experience on the Ghanaian healthcare system, and health beliefs and practices. A two-stage process was used to recruit and select samples from the traditional, spiritual and western (medical) health systems in Ghana. Sampling from these groups were informed by Joseph and Phillips' (1984) notion of the existence of a tripartite health system made up of traditional, spiritual and western health practitioners in Ghana. The criteria for selection was at least an established presence in Ghana, knowledge of the formal and

informal health sector, with experience in practicing for more than 30 years. The first stage involved using convenience sampling to recruit one respondent from each of the categories while the second stage involved the use of snowballing to select four other respondents from each category. Additionally, three health researchers with extensive research experience on the formal and informal Ghanaian health sectors were also purposively sampled making a total of 18 respondents.

Data was collected through in-depth interviews and documentary analysis over a 13-month period. Interviews for this study were semi-structured and conducted with the aid of an interview guide. The guide was neither rigid nor restrictive but flexible enough to allow last-minute modifications and follow-ups on points of interests to either parties during the interview. In line with Silverman (1993), the interview questions were designed to be open-ended to encourage respondents to offer their own definitions and perceptions of particular activities. The guide was pretested and further modified before being validated for the study. Interviews were conducted at respondents' place of work and lasted for an average of two hours. Interviews were recorded with the permission of respondents and later transcribed. Copies of the transcribed data was shown to them for signing off prior to analysis.

Documentary analysis is particularly useful where the history of events or experiences has relevance (Ritchie, 2003), and where the phenomena or active persons involved are no longer available for direct observation and questioning (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995). Consequently, it was used to illuminate occurrences, behaviours, trends and patterns of health in Ghana between the 19th and 21st centuries. The process involved cumulating, sifting through and organizing data from transcripts of interviews, anthropological reports, newspaper articles, diaries and memoirs, research logs, encyclopaedias, books, journal articles, photographs and websites. Archived content on African culture and history spanning centuries at the Africana Section of the Balme Library of the University of Ghana was also a key source of information as were the key works of prominent Ghanaian medical historians and sociologists.

Ethical clearance was obtained and renewed for the study from the Independent Review Board for health research ethics of the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research in Ghana. In addition to informed consent and appropriate permissions from all respondents, disclosure, confidentiality and other requirements of the ethical clearance were strictly adhered to.

Data gathered was analysed qualitatively through the framework approach, a variant of thematic analyses developed by Ritchie and Spencer (1994). Framework involves synthesizing data gathered from original accounts and observations and sorting them into recognizable general categories (Baker and Edwards, 2012). In its thematic nature, framework allowed the study to classify, organise and analyse data according to key themes, concepts and emergent categories. The findings from the analysed data was discussed within the context of relevant literature

## **Findings**

Findings unearthed significant transitions in the epidemiological landscape in Ghana. These had occurred over generations, and reflected a gradual reduction in infectious and tropical diseases in the face of a gradual increase in NCDs related to lifestyle changes linked to Ghana's socio-economic development over time. Even though other factors existed, findings suggest that population growth and migration, urbanization, colonization and subsequent independence, industrialization and commercialization were the key drivers of the epidemiological transition in Ghana.

Specifically, findings categorise the transitions into four distinct periods or stages based on the stage of socioeconomic development and associated health impacts. These were the pre-colonial stage (before 1873), colonial (1874 – 1957), Post-colonial (1958 – 1989) and latter 20th century till date (post 1990). Findings show that the major health conditions had changed through the various stages, each with its unique set of political and socio-economic activities through the journey from indigenization to modernization; and from communal governance through colonial governance to self-governance. Details of the periods/stages and the

associated causes of mortality, disability and morbidity are summarised in table 1 below.

**Table 1: Stages of transition and the key causes of mortality, morbidity and disability**

	<b>Key causes of mortality, morbidity and disability</b>
<b>Pre-colonial</b> [Pre- 1873]	1. Wars
	2. Environmental and climate challenges ex. Drought, famine, floods
	3. Life course health issues ex. Old age
	4. local endemic conditions ex stunting, wasting, skin diseases
	5. Work related injury and accidents ex from farming, fishing, hunting
<b>Colonial</b> [1874 – 1957]	1. Tropical and infectious diseases
	2. Water and sanitation related conditions
	3. Occupational accidents and injuries including Road traffic accidents
	4. Political instability - world wars, struggle for independence
	5. Life course health issues ex. Old age
<b>Post-independence</b> [1958 – 1989]	1. Vaccine-preventable and vector-borne diseases ex polio, measles, yellow fever, Dengue fever, etc.), tuberculosis
	2. Other communicable diseases ex malaria, cholera, diarrhoea, skin diseases
	3. Maternal, reproductive and child health
	4. diabetes, hypertension, stroke, ulcers and other NCDs
	5. Nutrition and sanitation
	1. Communicable diseases
	2. Non-communicable diseases
	3. Maternal, reproductive and child health

<b>Latter 20th century [1990 – 2013]</b>	4. Home, occupational injuries and Road traffic accidents
	5. Emerging public health issues ex Aids, CSM, etc.
	6. Nutrition

Notwithstanding the above, findings show a resurgence of infectious and tropical diseases which were increasing alongside the NCDs that resulted from the transitions. This in effect had created a situation where Ghanaians had to deal with the NCD burden that resulted from the transitions as well as the communicable and infectious disease burden that had resurged thereby doubling the burden of diseases. In addition to the overbearing effects of HIV/AIDS and other Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs), findings identify four (4) main causes of the doubling of the disease burden in the long term.

Firstly, the paper identifies the perennial lack of continuity, direction and political commitment to public health intervention and outcomes towards combating tropical and infectious diseases. While interventions had been introduced at the earlier stages of the transitions, these were not sustained, lacked stakeholder commitment and not holistic therefore eroding the initial gains made in tackling communicable and infectious diseases.

Secondly, the study also identified the medicalization of the health system as another key driver of the double burden. Particularly, findings show the fixation and overconcentration of health professionals and the health system on medically-based curative interventions instead of other preventive and promotive approaches needed to fight infectious and communicable diseases.

Thirdly, the doubling of the disease burden was linked by findings to the breakdown of traditional and indigenous health systems and practices. Findings suggest that taboos, some cultural practices and communal living systems and norms played important roles in regulating personal and communal hygiene, proper water and sanitation practices, prevention and control of infections, and importantly provided health solutions to day-to-day health problems of indigenous and rural communities. In effect, the breakdown of these systems under the auspices of the western-based and

Ghana Health Service sanctioned scientific medical healthcare systems in the face of significant barriers to accessing formal healthcare and managing public health within these areas created an opportunity for the resurgence of the CD burden.

Finally, challenges posed by externalities, changes in population growth, mass movement of people within Ghana and between Ghana and other countries, antimicrobial resistance, poverty, life course outcomes and challenges, changes in societal values, practices and preferences, unplanned urbanization and economic development were beyond the control of health authorities. Findings show that the effects of these challenges on the management of infectious and communicable diseases in Ghana were rapid, widespread and complicated in excess of what the resource-constrained reactive health system could deal with.

## **Discussion**

Findings confirm Plewes and Kinsella (2012) that the epidemiological landscape in Ghana and indeed the SSA region has been in a constant state of transition. However, unlike Horiuchi (1999), transition periods have been unequal, short and rapid often producing shifts in health conditions and outcomes far beyond that which the health system could adjust to. While lending credence to Omran (1971)'s epidemiological transitions theory, the gradual reduction of infectious and tropical diseases over time appears to be caused by factors beyond Omran's prescription. Findings therefore contribute that the pace of change and the corresponding response and ability of the health system to adjust to the change appears to be a key determinant of transitioning. Further, the political environment including colonization, subsequent independence, military regimes and other unstable democratic governments appear to have significant influence on the nature, pace and extent of transitions.

Quite unlike Omran however, this study contributes by confirming that other stages to transition may evolve or exist based on the unique contextual factors within the setting being analysed. Consequently, when findings are juxtaposed with Murray and Bobadilla (1997) and Reinhard et al. (2013), the transitions theory may be seen as a guide to examine the process and underlying factors of transitioning rather than a definite

sequence of phases that each country need to go through. In this light, it becomes possible to accommodate contemporary arguments in support of the existence of other phases either in parallel or in continuance of Omran's initial stages. Within this study in particular, findings uncover four (4) stages just like Olshansky and Ault (1986), Rogers and Hackenberg (1987) and Hazra and Gulliford (2017). However, this study is distinctive in placing emphasis on political governance as a determinant of transitions in Ghana and SSA.

Findings on the resurgence of infectious and communicable diseases that had decreased in the earlier stages of the transitioning challenges the conventional notion of epidemiological transitioning as a linear activity with single outcomes supported by Armelagos and Barnes (1999), Omran (1998) and Omran (1971). By confirming the transitioning into a double burden within the long term, this study pushes the contemporary transition notion of the possibility of several transitions occurring within the same context and time frame or resulting from a single transition process. Thus, consistent with Arora (2005), multiple burdens of disease may be borne by communities in the long run of a transitioning process. In effect, the current double burden of disease that resulted from an initial single burden may well triple or quadruple in the very long term. Similar notions of the triple burden of disease have been raised by Lopez, Mathers, Ezzati, Jamison, & Murray (2006) and Dhillon et al. (2012) where injuries add on to the communicable and Non-communicable disease burdens. In relation, findings suggest with support from Huynen, Vollebregt, Martens, & Benavides (2005) and Sanders, Fuhrer, Johnson, & Riddle (2008) the possibility of a resurgence of health conditions and public health challenges that may have reduced or been made extinct from previous transition stages if conditions that led to its eradication are not sustained in the face of unregulated population movements and climate change.

Several factors driving the doubling of the disease burden in developing countries have been identified across literature over the years. However, within the SSA context, the double burden of disease has been attributed more to health system challenges, poverty and environmental factors (Agyei-Mensah and Aikins, 2010; Boutayeb, 2006; Hotez and Kamath, 2009). In addition to these, findings contribute by identifying with

Mathers, Fat, & Boerma (2008) that the double burden may well be driven by other factors outside the health system or not directly related to health. Externalities and the political economy for instance appears to make a significant difference in the epidemiological landscape when findings are juxtaposed with evidence from Cuba (Frenk et al., 1996) and Maoist China (Hipgrave, 2011) within the same period. Stable, continuous and directed political system and leadership within the communist and socialist economies may have driven China and Cuba towards a quicker transition while successive coup d'états and unstable governments appear to have stalled Ghana and other SSA countries in the fight against tropical and infectious diseases and the transitioning process as a whole.

Additionally, even though communicable diseases are best addressed through preventive health practices and health promotion (Bunton and Macdonald, 1992; Egger, Spark, & Donovan, 2005), there has been a perennial emphasis on curative care and treatment which at best provides a downstream measure constrained by resource availability (LaFond, 2013). Consequently, curative interventions in these resource constrained contexts though adequate in the short term were unsustainable in the long term. Using the fire engine concept, Macdonald (2013) in support discusses how the fight against communicable diseases was lost in the long term because of investments in the reactive curative practices rather than proactive health promotion and disease prevention practices. Similarly, PHC and other interventions aimed at health promotion and disease prevention were eventually medicalised with long-term setback on the control of communicable diseases (Cueto, 2004; Newell, 1988).

Findings on the challenges created by attempts to replace established traditional and indigenous health systems and practices with western health practices confirm Bannerman (1982) and Asante (2012) on the role of local practices in combating health challenges. Aside fostering a sense of ownership of interventions, continuity and commitment to the public health initiatives have been associated with traditional health practices (Ame, 2013; Hoff, 1997; WHO, 2002). Though not without challenges, findings suggest that their ease of access and familiarity with local people and their problems made them an invaluable part of fighting communicable diseases. As in Tabi, Powell, & Hodnicki (2006), findings

also linked traditional leadership and practices to advances in regulating communal behaviour towards positive health outcomes, and good public health and sanitation practices. Consequently, the massive campaigns against their use (Appiah-Kubi, 1993; Tettey-Larbi, Darko, Schandorf, & Appiah, 2013), and the mass education drives towards shifting their market and other activities by the health authorities (Asante and Avornyo, 2013) made them appear inferior, unscientific, primitive and crude in the eyes of the public which in the long run diminished the acceptance and utilization of traditional health systems by local people. Meanwhile, significant resource inadequacies also meant that western health systems which were presented as the credible and evidence-backed alternative (Velimirovic, 1984; Yeboah, 2000) were not available to fill the vacuum created by the absence of traditional practices or meet the increased demands for formal healthcare made by locals. Similarly findings also confirm Asante and Avornyo (2013) and Tsey (1997) that the poor integration of formal and traditional health systems had made both default competitors rather than complementary agencies with negative implications on the fight against communicable diseases.

## **Conclusion**

While the basis of the epidemiological transition theory suggests that as countries develop, NCDs replace CDs as the primary disease burden; this has not been the case in Ghana where health interventions and approaches have remained stagnant within the various phases of the transition. Unlike Omran's three-stage transition process therefore, findings confirm the existence of a fourth stage within Ghana which like other sub-Saharan countries, has been caught in a health quandary where rather than replacing CDs, NCDs have rather added on to the health burden resulting in a doubling of the disease burden.

While the inevitable challenges posed by HIV/AIDS and other EIDs may have been a contributing factor (Plewes and Kinsella, 2012), the crux of this condition, based on this study, can be traced to the concomitant effects of a myriad of factors revolving round rapid changes in population growth, mass movement of people, antimicrobial resistance, poverty, societal change, unplanned urbanization and economic development. The political

environment, and the pace of change as well as the corresponding response and ability of the health system to adjust to the changes were also key factors identified by this study that have not received attention in prior literature. This introduces the notion that health transitions may also be influenced by other factors outside or not directly linked to the healthcare system.

Aside throwing light on the possible origins and causes of the double burden of diseases in Ghana, the study contributes by supporting the contemporary notion that health transitions are not static linear processes but may vary in outcomes, number of stages and process of transitioning based on several context-specific factors. The study also contributes by highlighting the essence of epidemiological transitions as a practical tool for predicting and planning not only for changes in health needs and outcomes of a population but also for the possible re-emergence of eradicated or declining diseases. For health policymakers, practitioners and healthcare providers, the study underscores the importance of preventive and promotive health strategies over the current fixation with curative treatment, and also for the development of an integrated model that combines traditional with western health systems. This is especially important considering the acute shortage of resources available not only for treatment but also to increase access to formal healthcare especially in rural and hard-to-reach communities.

Finally, the study underscores the need for further studies into the double burden of diseases to be able to predict with reasonable certainty and plan for impending shifts in the epidemiological landscape in Ghana. Such studies must also focus on attracting attention towards a balanced, cost-effective and evidence-based approach of managing both communicable and non-communicable disease burdens in resource constrained environments.

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# **CHILD MARRIAGE IN GHANA: WHO CARES?**

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## **Abstract**

Child marriage is one of the major social problems that have attracted attention in recent times. The practice denies children the opportunity to develop their human capital potentials to participate fully in society, and also constitutes a violation of the rights of children to freely and fully consent to the choice of a spouse. Consequently, many institutions and organizations have rolled out several initiatives and interventions to help fight against the practice. This study aimed at mapping out institutions responding to the menace of child marriage in Ghana and examining the effectiveness and challenges of their initiatives and interventions. The researchers used purposive and snowballing sampling techniques to select eleven institutions working in the area of child marriage and engaged them in in-depth interviews to gather relevant information for the study. The findings show that, many institutions are variously, directly and indirectly, responding to the practice of child marriage in the country. These institutions offer variety of initiatives which can technically be classified as preventive, protective, promotive and transformative interventions. One major weakness identified from the various initiatives is the lack of a specific national policy direction to support and coordinate the initiatives and interventions.

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## **Introduction**

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF, 2006) describes child marriage as any marital union that involves people under 18 years. This definition is in line with the UN Convention on the Right of the Child's definition of a child as any individual below the age of 18 years unless a state decides to set the age of being an adult lower. Child marriage is among the socio-cultural practices that have attracted some serious attention in recent times because of the negative consequences associated with it. The practice denies children the opportunity to develop their human capital potentials, which is necessary to enable them to participate fully in the socio-economic and political development of human society and enjoy the fruits thereof. This leads to perpetuation of poverty and marginalisation in the families of child brides. Girls Not Bride (2015) and Ahmed (2015) have attributed the harmfulness of child marriage largely to the fact that the girls are married at the age when they are not physically and psychologically ready to pick up the responsibility of marriage, childbearing and parenting. Child marriage also violates the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, which maintains that marriage should be "entered only with free and full consent of the intended spouses".

Most child marriages are carried out against the will of the children involved. The source maintained that because girls, more than boys, are the common victims of child marriages, the practice has an effect on the girls' education, opportunities in life as well as a life-long consequence on the nation (Girls Not Brides, 2015). Walker, (2013), asserted that for each additional year that a girl delays in marriage, her likelihood of being literate increases by 5.6 per cent and the possibility of her completing secondary school rises by 6.5 per cent. According to her, research findings show that child marriage damages the mental, physical wellbeing, and life chances available to young girls.

Considering the negative consequences of child marriage, and the fact that the practice continues in some societies one may wonder what specific measures are put in place to curb it. In terms of legal instruments many global, regional and national legal instruments exist to support the fight against child marriage. They include the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UN-CRC, 1989), African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC, 1990), Children’s Act of Ghana, (Act 560, 1998) and Section 28 of Chapter Five of the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana. For example, Section 2 of Article 21 of the ACRWC states:

Child marriage and the betrothal of girls and boys shall be prohibited and effective action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify the minimum age of marriage to be 18 years and make registration of all marriages in an official registry compulsory.

Section 14 (1) of Children’s Act of Ghana, (Act 560, 1998) states, “No person shall force a child (a) to be betrothed; (b) to be the subject of a dowry transaction; or (c) to be married.”

Beyond the legal instruments some institutions have also demonstrated their interest in helping to save children from child marriage in a number of countries. In the case of Ghana, although there have been various initiatives to prevent child marriage in the country, there is a lacuna in literature regarding the specific interventions/services, the institutions involved in addressing the problem as well as the various strategies they employ. The point of interest in this article is to explore the institutional response to child marriage practice in Ghana by examining their initiatives and strategies. The article explores this by answering the following questions: Which formalized bodies have initiated programs to address the problem of child marriage in Ghana? What specifically are these bodies doing? How are they doing and/or executing what they are doing? The ultimate goal is to provide a global outlook of institutional response to the practice of child marriage in Ghana.

## **Institutional Responses to Child Marriage**

Due to the negative consequences of child marriage on children and society at large, many institutions and organizations, both government and non-governmental, in many countries have rolled out several and varied interventions to help fight against the practice. The International Center for Research on Women (ICRW, 2015) recorded the female secondary school stipend for girls who enrol in school in Bangladesh as one major state response to child marriage. This intervention is supposed to serve as an incentive to motivate the girls to remain in school, which according to the source has yielded some positive outcomes. In two villages where a study was conducted by ICRW, it was discovered that the intervention has helped in increasing the age at first marriage and reducing child marriage at a significant rate. Similarly, Save the Children in Egypt runs a programme - Ishraq - which aims at improving the educational and social opportunities for adolescent girls in rural areas. The programme is an integrated package comprising literacy, sports and life skills, and it is implemented by multiple stakeholders in each community including teachers, parents, community leaders and young girls and boys. This approach was first to help create a favourable environment for young girls to recognise the importance of education and, second, to reduce gender inequality which had been established as a cause of gender-based violence, including forced marriages or child marriages (SaveTheChildren, n.d.)

In Malawi, as part of their effort to reduce child marriage, USAID funded a “safe school program” for five years (2003-2008) in the country. The program targeted upper primary and lower secondary school going age pupils ranging in age from (10 to 14 years). The main objective of the program was to reduce gender-based violence with special attention to school related violence in order to create an enabling and attractive environment for girls not only to enrol and remain in school but also achieve improved educational outcomes. Just like the Ishraq initiative in Egypt, the USAID program also engaged multiple stakeholders in the implementation. They included teachers, parents, students, community members and other government officials from health, education, security services and social welfare. Training manuals, which contained standard of ethics and responsibilities of the stakeholders, as well as a reporting

system for code violations were provided for teachers, community counsellors and the students. This program amongst others helped to reduce teenage pregnancy, which was a factor that forced girls into early marriages (DevTech Systems, 2007). The World Bank also funded a cash transfer initiative in Malawi called the Zomba Cash Transfer program, which provided both unconditional and conditional cash transfers to families with female students aged between 13 to 22 years old for a period of two years. After an evaluation, it was realised that the unconditional transfer was more effective than the conditional one since it delayed child marriage by 44 per cent and child bearing by 27 per cent. This was because decisions about marrying a young girl off in the region is influenced by poverty (Hinds, 2015).

USAID also supports another intervention activity in Ethiopia to end child marriage, which they do in partnership with Justice for All Prison Fellowship – an NGO. USAID in conjunction with the NGO works with educators to form girls’ clubs in targeted schools in the Amhara Region where child marriage is known to be common. The main activities of the partnership are to create awareness and coordination between members of the community, law enforcement officials, leaders of religious sects and parents to change their perceptions about the practice of child marriage in the area. As part of the programme, anybody - students, teachers, community members - who learn of child marriage being arranged but are afraid to openly protest or report, could write the name of the victim and the family on paper and put it in a “secret box” for action to be taken by the programme. As of December 2013, about 1,500 child marriages have been cancelled through this secret reporting. The literature discussed above shows the diverse and varied fronts from which various institutions have responded to the practice of child marriage in some countries, particularly in Africa. These include initiatives to indirectly increase age at first marriage and child bearing particularly through formal education, capacity building and empowerment aimed at gender equality, and public sensitization and education. It is also noted from the literature that the multifaceted nature of the problem of child marriage is such that it is almost impossible to deal with it from one single perspective or discipline hence the multi-dimensional approach through multiple stakeholders has

been the latest approach. This makes it even more difficult for the efforts of particular institutions' initiatives to be recognised, especially where there seems not to be any national policy direction to the response nor a single platform to facilitate the interactions among the institutions.

## **Research Method**

The data for this study was part of a larger study commissioned by World Vision Ghana and carried out by the Centre for Social Policy Studies, University of Ghana. In-depth interview and mapping methods were used to gather relevant information from the institutions involved in the fight against child marriage. Issues regarding their activities, strategies and their knowledge of other institutions working on child marriage were investigated. Eleven institutions which were known to be involved in child marriage activities were purposively selected and interviewed on their activities and strategies in the area of child marriage. The selected institutions were then asked to indicate any other institutions that they knew were also involved in child marriage activities for the purpose of mapping out a national outlook of institutions involved in child marriage. It is important to mention that there was no follow up to interview the institutions mentioned by the eleven in the snowballing. The study captured both the state and non-state institutions for the purpose of understanding the issues from the perspectives of the two sectors.

The roles of the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection and interventions of other related state agencies in the context of Ghana's attempts to address child marriage concerns were of particular interest to the study. The eleven institutions that were interviewed are the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP); Ghana Health Service (GHS) of the Ministry of Health; Domestic Violence Victim Support Unit (DOVVSU) of the Ghana Police Service; Girl Child Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service (GES) and Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), for state institutions. The non-state institutions interviewed comprised UNICEF - Ghana, Ark Foundation, Gender and Human Rights Documentation Centre, ActionAid Ghana, Muslim Family Counselling Service and World Vision Ghana. It is worth noting that information gathered from the

institutions shows that they were not established for the sole purpose of preventing or responding directly to the practice of child marriage. Rather child marriage was either implicit in their larger mandate or they had to expand their original scope to incorporate child marriage when it became a topical issue in the country.

## **Results**

### **Who cares about child marriage in Ghana?**

The first question that this study sought to answer was, who cares about child marriage in Ghana? Or which formalised bodies are doing something about child marriage in Ghana? The evidence gathered suggests that a sizable number of institutions are concerned about the practice of child marriage. However, fighting the practice gained importance later in the operations of many of the institutions interviewed but not as a core mandate of their operations from the beginning. That notwithstanding, considering how widespread child marriage is and its devastating effects, multiple actors comprising national and international, state and non-state are actively involved in the fight against its perpetuation in different parts of the country and from varied perspectives. The institutions captured in the study are classified and presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1: Institutions fighting against child marriage**

<b>State Actors</b>	<b>Non-State Actors (Local)</b>	<b>Non-State Actors (International)</b>
Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP)	Ark Foundation	UNICEF
Ghana Education Service (GES)	Child Right International	ActionAid Ghana
National Commission for Civic Education (NCCE)	SEND GHANA	LAWA
Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ)	STAR Ghana	BiG Lottery UK

Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU)	Muslim Women Leaders Association	DANIDA
Department of Social Welfare (DSW)	Ghana Association of Women's Welfare	USAID
Ministry of Justice	Muslim Chiefs Association	UNFPA
Ghana AIDS Commission	Muslim Family Counselling Services	World Vision
Lands Commission	Ghana Red Cross Society	Plan International
Ministry of Interior	Muslim Youth Leaders Association	FIDA
Ministry of Health	Gender & Human Rights Centre	Commonwealth Human Rights Secretariat
Attorney General's Office		Network for Human Rights Partnership
National Commission on Women and Development (NCWD)		

The institutions/actors in Table 1 above also speak to the multifaceted nature of the problem of child marriage (i.e. cultural, social, religious, economic/poverty, inequality or power relations etc.) This means that fighting against it needs a multi-dimensional perspective. Almost all the state institutions (Ministries, Departments and Agencies - MDAs) have roles to play as the participating institutions mentioned many of them. For example, the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) needs to provide policy direction to the fight, but relevant departments and agencies should accordingly implement and enforce the policy, who would in turn need resources from the Finance Ministry. The ministries of Interior and, Justice and Attorney General's Department must also prosecute cases of child marriage, and the process continues. It is also clear that a number of international actors such as UNICEF, UNFPA, DANIDA, USAID, World Vision, ActionAid etc. are also

contributing to the fight against child marriage in the country. At the local front a couple of civil society and faith-based organizations (i.e. CSOs and FBOs) are also responding to the issue of child marriage. It is important to note the dominance of Muslim groups in the FBOs. This does not suggest that child marriage is an Islamic phenomenon, but the incidence appears to be higher in the Muslim community than among other groups in the country. The next section discusses what these institutions are doing about child marriage.

## **Institutions and the Fight Against Child Marriage**

The second question that guided the design and execution of this study was, what specifically are the actors doing? And the response to the question is presented according to state and non-state actors.

### **State Institutions**

The importance of state institutions' participation in the fight against child marriage is in no doubt, particularly in terms of providing policy direction and a platform for other stakeholder institutions to operate. The five state institutions interviewed are the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP), Girl Child Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit of the Ghana Police Service, Commission for Human Rights and Administrative Justice, and Ghana Health Service. These institutions have implicit in their mandate protection for children including prevention of child marriage.

The MoGCSP has as its general mandate to initiate and formulate policies to promote gender mainstreaming across all sectors with the aim to achieving gender equality and empowerment of women and facilitating the survival, development and growth of children. The respondent from the Ministry puts it as:

We have the state mandate to ensure the protection and welfare of children, men, women and all vulnerable groups; particularly under the umbrella of social protection through policy formulation. And in gender, we seek to

promote gender equality and empowerment of vulnerable sexes in the country.

However as at the time of the study, the ministry had not formulated any specific policy on child marriage. They were in the process of coming out with a form of strategic framework and national platform to regulate and direct the course of activities of all institutions working in the area of child marriage. The respondent indicated:

The ministry in 2014 set up a coordinating unit to address child marriage in collaboration with key partners - So the role of this unit or secretariat is to coordinate response and prevention of cases of child marriage. We are also developing a framework, it may not be a legal framework but a guiding document which we are calling the strategic framework that would guide us as a country on what we define, on a clearer definition of child marriage, on how we will respond as different stakeholders both state and non-state institutions and give us targets because we do have indicators and all of that on how we proceed in our response to ending child marriage.

In 1997, the Ghana Education Service (GES) established the Girls Education Unit to promote gender parity in education. The unit has the responsibility to facilitate the process of formulating policy on girls' education, set up functioning guidance and counselling services in schools among others. Ten years after its establishment the unit is yet to produce a policy on girls' education which should also protect girls in school from being married, or create an environment for girls who get pregnant or give birth while in school to continue and complete their education. The respondent from the unit had this to say:

We don't have a policy for girl child education in Ghana - we started developing one since 1997. We are still trying to come up with one. We only have these frameworks, the conventions, the constitution etc. that support child

education, of which girls are part. So, we try to use that. Currently we are trying to come up and UNICEF is trying to support us. It is only that this year they have not advanced the funds to continue but it is in progress and they themselves are interested in it so we will definitely come up with something.

That notwithstanding, the unit has been actively involved in public sensitization and education on child marriage, rescue and counselling of victims of child marriage, and advocacy. They have decentralized structures and officers throughout the administrative districts and regions of the country who among other things respond to child marriage issues as and when they come. As the Director of the Unit intimated:

When we do the sensitisation, we deal with the girls - our work is more of educating and sensitising the girls and the public - so we do community education, sensitisation and we try to empower the girls. We have girls' education offices in all the 216 district directorates in the country. We have regional girls' education officers in the ten regions. So, this is the headquarters [place of the interview], where we coordinate activities, so when children are married off, immediately they call, we give instructions. For us, we want the girls to remain in school. When they deliver, we do a lot of activities like counselling; when they are pregnant, we encourage them to be in school. You know we are in education, so the media people are there to support us, so we report to them, and we make sure we follow up and monitor the situation.

Unlike the two institutions above which are largely policy formulation oriented, the remaining three, Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and Ghana Health Service (GHS) mainly provide services to victims of child marriage among others. The DOVVSU was established by the Police Administration in 1998 in response to the increasing number

of abuse cases and violence against women and children. The purpose of the unit is to create an environment that provides timely and equitable response to victims (women, children and men) of domestic abuse and for that matter to prevent, protect, apprehend and prosecute perpetrators of domestic violence and child abuse. The respondent from DOVVSU outlined some of their activities as, arresting, investigating and prosecuting perpetrators of domestic violence. They also embark on public education, sensitization and awareness creation. She intimated:

What we are doing in the area of child marriage is to arrest alleged perpetrators of child marriage and investigate the cases. After investigation then we prosecute the case in court, and you know the court is the overall decider. They will decide whether this person will go to prison or not. We also go to the market, schools, churches/mosques, and communities, to educate and sensitise the public on domestic violence, including child marriage. We have officers in all our eleven DOVVSU regions. We have regional coordinators even in some of the districts too, who are supposed to do the public education and sensitisation. We also use stickers and the mass media to create the awareness and educate people on what constitute domestic violence, including child marriage. I have been going to the FM stations. We write letters to the market queen mother that maybe Wednesday, we want to come there for this program, so the queen will organize the women so that we will go there and talk to them.

The Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice was established under the 1992 Constitution of Ghana by the CHRAJ Act, 1993 (Act 456) with the responsibility to ensuring that the human and civil rights of citizens are protected and provides support to vulnerable children and women. The commission was established to among other things serve as the national human rights institution of Ghana which makes provision for the protection and promotion of the rights of children. In admitting to the general mandate of protecting and supporting the vulnerable groups in

Ghana, the respondent from the commission intimated that the commission does not have any specific intervention or project on child marriage beyond cases of such nature that may be reported to them. They however respond to invitations to partner any institution working on child marriage and which needs their services. His views are captured as:

We do not have specific project or intervention on child marriage because CHRAJ's work is complaint-driven. We deal with issues about children's rights in general, which is one of our mandates - If a child is given out to marriage against permissible legal age, it's a violation - but if you say child marriage, we don't have specific intervention for it. We look at all these things concerning children as part of the Children's Act. And so, anything concerning the child, including enforcement of the declaration of forced marriage. We are saying that CHRAJ is not an implementer of public policies, we monitor. We are a social protection agency because human rights are about protecting the socially vulnerable group. So, we are looking at this with other established institutions.

### **Ghana Health Service**

The Ghana Health Service (GHS) is another state institution that plays direct and indirect roles in the fight against child marriage. The agency (GHS) was established in 1996 under Ghana Health Reform Act 525 to provide and prudently manage comprehensive and accessible health service with special emphasis on primary health care in the country in accordance with relevant national policies. With regard to child marriage the agency provides reproductive health services to young people in various forms. These roles were emphasised by the respondent we engaged in the interview when she said:

Yes, we work on child marriage. The whole essence of the adolescent sexual health programmes is to prevent child marriage and even if we don't, to prevent teenage pregnancy or unwanted pregnancy. Also, in our policies,

we want to prevent harmful traditional practices and our advocacy around that area includes child marriage, which concerns sexual reproductive health. If we prevent teenage pregnancy, which is one major cause of child marriage then we are by extension preventing child marriage. As a programme, we are doing a lot of things for the in-school and out-of-school children.

The respondent goes further to spell out some of their activities and strategies that contribute to the fight against child marriage and the challenges confronting them as:

With the in-school children, we are running adolescent reproductive health clubs for them. Each club has a mentor who is a nurse/doctor who volunteers to run the programme with the school health coordinators and the guidance coordinator. And for the out-of-school children, we do outreaches and it has been challenging because as a country we don't have a structured programme that meets the out-of-school in their numbers. Apart from that, we build capacity of our service providers in order to contribute to the prevention of child marriage by preventing teenage pregnancy. We just came back from training of some of our service providers and the theme was on preventing child marriage through sexual reproductive health services and this is something we intend to extend.

Thus, the contribution of the agency to fight child marriage includes provision of reproductive health services, empowerment and advocacy, public education, and capacity building for other bodies in the fight against child marriage.

### **Non-State Actors**

Apart from the state actors a number of non-state actors also provide varied services in the fight against child marriage in the country. Six of such actors, namely, Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation

Centre, ActionAid Ghana, UNICEF, Ark Foundation, Muslim Family Counselling Services, and World Vision were interviewed for the study. Most of these institutions provide similar interventions through similar strategies.

The Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (GSHRDC) is into research and publication on gender and human rights, leadership and empowerment training for females, rescue of victims of child marriage, community sensitization, training of peer educators, education on legal instruments on gender for public officials, and material supports for girl child education. They work through peer educators, formation of girls' clubs and community/institutional leaders. The official interviewed from the organization had this to say:

We've been in existence for almost 20 years ... as human/woman's rights organization. We do research on topical issues relating to violence against women ... linking it to gender and vulnerability of women. We do publications from our research outcomes, and also use it for our training programmes. We've worked on women in leadership, a project that trained women to take up leadership roles. And currently we've also worked on projects that try to enhance the children in school, using stakeholders to upgrade the quality of education and normally we do advocacy.

On child marriage specifically and training programmes they offer young girls, she noted:

Child marriage is real, and most of the projects that we've done, we encounter them and some of the girls were even rescued through our interventions. We did a project on early and forced marriage in Kintampo, Jemaah, etc. [in Brong Ahafo Region] where we went to train girls on child rights and educated them on negative aspects of child marriage. Fortunately, in one of the schools we worked,

one child (victim) was rescued. The family really married her off and through our intervention they went and brought her back.

They also work through public officials at the local government level through capacity building and awareness creation so that they can initiate interventions at their respective levels to deal with child marriage and other issues relating to gender inequalities. She intimated that:

When we train public officials, such as the district assembly, we make them know their roles and responsibilities towards children, particularly the girl child. In one of such meetings with district assembly and community unit committee officials, when I asked whether they knew that there should be a setup of such so, so, and so committees in the community to take care of the needs of children in your area they said no.’ They are not aware and they are not doing it.

The focus of operation of ActionAid Ghana is not very different from that of GSHRDC apart from research and publication being part of core mandates of GSHRDC. ActionAid Ghana is involved in girl child education, sensitisation and empowerment, community education and rescue of victims of child marriage. The strategies they use include formation of girls’ clubs, stakeholder partnership – leaders of Faith Based Organization, youth groups and opinion leaders. On sensitisation of the girl child, the respondent said:

What we have been doing generally, is sensitising communities on child protection and about child marriage and its effects. We’ve also been working with the girls in particular to build their confidence and self-esteem. We also worked on children’s rights with the girls. So, what we do specifically with those girls to achieve these goals are that - we have Girls’ Clubs in all the communities that we

actually operate in - So we take them through all the children's rights and child protection method.

On partnership and community sensitisation, the organisations work through different stakeholders to achieve its aim as noted by the respondent:

We also work with the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and all - we work with them from the perspective of good governance, and we also try to let them take on board child protection issues in their communities. Once they are parents, they engage other parents when things are not going on well with their children. We also have the obligation to mobilize the youth to actually lead the voice against child marriage. So, we are currently mobilizing the youth to build their capacity against child marriage, to get them to lead the campaign, to talk to each other and engage others. And also get the policies we've talked about.

The respondent however pointed to some challenges they have with some partnership arrangements in dealing with child marriage when she said:

...I had an issue at Dodowa. A child had been forced into marriage. The community structure works with peer educators. When they arranged the marriage, they quickly informed us. We quickly asked them to go and report to the Social Welfare officer at Dodowa. They went and reported. The officer said he didn't have transportation fare to go to Asutsuare to rescue the girl. My colleague [from ActionAid] had to go and pick the officer before he went. Now, we met the family and we met the community and they had already married the girl. There was the need to pick up the girl back to the mother. As I talk to you, it's about a month and the officer has not got back again. He has no transportation fare.

UNICEF is another organisation interviewed regarding their interest in child marriage. An official interviewed from the organisation mentioned that UNICEF has been supporting interventions on child marriage in five strategic areas. One of them is to help the government to strengthen its legal and policy framework around child marriage. She noted in more elaborate form as:

UNICEF is a UN agency mandated to look at the whole being of the child and protecting their rights in totality. The child needs to be healthy, alive and go to school. One area of our mandate is child protection which has to do with the safety, dignity, rights and the way a child is raised. When it comes to the protection of children, it could be physical, social, emotional, abuse, violent, assault and neglect affecting children. So, we are looking into issues that are affecting the protection of children.

But she was quick to add that:

UNICEF as you might be aware as a UN-based agency does not implement direct interventions like the NGOs and governments do. We provide technical support to countries and relevant institutions to carry out their mandates – we also build governments and institutions/organizations capacities.

The respondent added that, UNICEF has been supporting the Ministry of Gender, Children and Social Protection (MoGCSP) since 2014 to develop a national strategic framework for child marriage in Ghana. The Fund is also supporting the child marriage coordinating unit at the ministry to create a platform where NGOs and development partners' activities on child marriage could be mapped out and systematically coordinated.

The Ark Foundation is another non-state institution involved in the fight against child marriage. Like the ones mentioned above they are also involved in rescuing, counselling and providing medical services for

victims of child marriage. The institution also provides legal services and shelter, material and financial support to girls, especially victims of child marriage and abused women. They are involved in awareness creation and sensitisation of the public among others. Below is how an official from the organisation puts their indirect involvement in the fight against child marriage:

I can't say that we have directly done anything on child marriage. However, our services are such that, because we work to protect and promote the rights of women and children, specifically abused women and children, of which victims of child marriages fall under, we still cover child marriage. There are people we have rescued from child marriage. When such victims call on us, we ensure that we rescue them and take them through proper counselling. Those who need psychological support and special assistance are referred appropriately. And for those victims who need shelter we provide until it is safe for them to return home or their cases are dispensed off. We cater for their lodging, we cater for their counselling and those who have been affected that much and require medical attention, we refer them to clinical psychologists. Some have to be put back in school to ensure that they don't really lose on education while they are with us at the shelter. We also do public sensitization and education.

On strategy she indicated that:

We use participatory approach, i.e. our kind of campaign is more of participatory. For example, if we do a poster campaign on child marriage, we can ask people to paste the posters overnight and, in the morning, we station people around where the posters are pasted just to listen to the conversations around the poster. So, by the time we engage the community we have gotten their perceptions and how they think about the issues on the poster. And when the

questions start coming, we try to involve them because sometimes, their own people answer the questions better. We have now come to the point of using stories of those who have gone through child marriage and have become poor, those who escaped from it and had come out successful for parents and communities to compare to make their own judgments.

The challenges confronting the organization include socio-cultural barriers to the effectiveness of the legal processes as she narrates one of such cases:

We had a particular case of sex abuse of a girl to handle last month. And the victim after going through all the legal processes, counselling, and all the big forces helping her, she was given shelter but she refused. The reason was that her parents were apprehensive about keeping her in the shelter. They decided to discontinue the case in spite of the free legal services we offered.

Muslim Family Counselling Services is an organization which largely concentrates its activities in Muslim dominated communities and involved in public education, sensitisation and advocacy on girls' reproductive health in general and child marriage in particular. The organisation rescues victims of child marriage and builds the capacity of the girl child to manage her reproductive decisions. They collaborate with group/opinion leaders such as youth clubs, women and Muslim leaders, to achieve their mandates in the communities. In an interview with the Director of the organisation, he intimated that:

We count on our sensitisation that we do at the community level. We advocate against issues relating to the practice of early marriage. The way we do it is to educate chiefs, Imams, women organization and the youth so that we can work through them This is much what we do and then the young ones too, we open workshop for them which of

course we don't have a support to be able to make it a constant. The challenge is that things like these are expensive and demanding, and we have very limited capacity to pursue it.

They have succeeded in preventing some child marriages from happening when he said:

There have been cases when we have worked through some Zongo/Muslim chiefs to stop some child marriages from happening. Information was given and then we authorized the marriage to be stopped and the issue was reported to the police and of course, the marriage was stopped. So, we have been doing sensitisation, education and rescue of victims in Zongo or Muslim communities where this has been taking place.

## **Discussion**

The negative impact of the practice of child marriage and the need to stop it seem to have been recognized by many countries across the globe, especially in the developing countries. This is largely demonstrated by the various institutions or organisations (state and non-state) that have not only shown interest but initiated actions to respond to the practice. The current study in Ghana interviewed eleven institutions who also mentioned over thirty other institutions that they know were involved in the fight against child marriage in the country. One interesting dimension of the fight against child marriage in Ghana has to do with the multi-dimensional perspective with which the institutions approach the problem with both short-term and long-term initiatives. These are designed to bring about mental and attitudinal revolution of community members, empowerment and capacity development of the girl child, as well as management of current victims of child marriage. The importance of formal education and awareness creation as key initiatives to end child marriage is reflected strongly among the institutions responding to the practice in Ghana.

Some of these institutions operate at state levels to formulate, implement and enforce policies, programmes and specific projects. For instance, although the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection does not have existing policy on child marriage, the Ministry is very conscious of this responsibility and is making the necessary effort to collaborate with relevant bodies to develop one. The Ministry has currently created a desk specifically for child marriage issues, as well as a common platform for all institutions fighting child marriage to interact to share ideas and experiences in the field to enhance their operations.

The establishment of a special unit (Girl Child Education Unit) under the Ministry of Education is a clear indication of the importance placed on education as a means of ending child marriage in the long term by increasing age at first marriage and child bearing and human capital capacity. The unit is also involved in public sensitisation and education, and rescuing victims of child marriage. The unit has not been able to perform effectively as it should due to its failure to formulate specific girl child education policy since its establishment in 1997, to facilitate and coordinate the education of girls in the country. The Director of the unit admitted in the interview as its major setback in their operation. However, the unit is currently collaborating with relevant bodies such as UNICEF and DANIDA to formulate specific policy on girl child education to encourage girls to enrol and remain in school not only to prolong their age at marriage but to also empower them socially and economically to make choices for themselves and participate actively in society.

Apart from the state institutions whose preoccupation is largely policy formulation, there are other state institutions such as Domestic Violence Victims Support Unit (DOVVSU), Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ) and Ghana Health Service (GHS) that mainly provide services to victims of child marriage among others. GHS for instance provide adolescent reproductive health services to young people in different forms and by so doing prevent teenage pregnancy, which is one major cause of child marriage, while CHRAJ and DOVVSU provide opportunity for child brides to seek redress against violation of their rights and prosecuting perpetrators of child marriage.

Non-state actors, both international and local also play important role in the fight against child marriage in Ghana. UNICEF provides significant technical, funding, capacity building and various forms of support to many institutions in the fight against child marriage in Ghana. The Ark Foundation is involved in advocacy, sensitization, legal services, support for girls' education, rescue of victims and shelter services. The Gender Studies and Human Rights Documentation Centre (GSHRDC) focuses on leadership and empowerment training for females, rescue of victims of child marriage, community sensitisation, training of peer educators, and material supports for girl child education. That is, awareness creation, sensitisation, advocacy, empowerment, management of victims and girls' education are common initiatives with almost all the institutions fighting child marriage in Ghana, as are common in many countries battling with the practice. One critical point to note is that most of these initiatives are short term funded projects. Therefore, sustainability of the activities for long term impact is questionable, particularly because there is no single coordinating body for the initiatives and their sustainability agenda.

It is instructive to note that the institutions largely work in partnership with other relevant stakeholders as strategies to make the expected impact. This institutional and community level partnership is found to be a common strategy in many initiatives across countries as it is also in Ghana. The UNICEF for example works through institutions such as the Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, ACTIONAID Ghana, and many other state and non-state institutions, who also partner with some community level stakeholders to implement and enforce its child marriage interventions. The Muslim Family Counselling Services collaborates with group/opinion leaders such as youth clubs, women and Muslim leaders, to achieve their mandates in the communities. Others also form girls' clubs and boys' clubs, parents and teachers' associations and many other community mobilisation options as strategies to implement and enforce their initiative.

## **Conclusion**

The article sought to explore which institutions are responding to the practice of child marriage in Ghana, what initiatives they have in place and the strategies to carry through the initiatives. It emerged from the reviewed literature that several institutions and organisations, both state and non-state, such as Save the children, USAID, Ishraq, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, World Vision, Girls Not Brides, The World -Bank etc. have taken up the mantle of dealing with child marriage in many countries such as Malawi, Ethiopia, Egypt and Bangladesh. They offer variety of initiatives which are implicitly preventive, protective, promotive and transformative. They include community sensitization and education, support for girls' formal education and cash transfers. They partner at the macro institutional levels as well as community structures and process to carry through their initiatives in communities. The pattern appears to be similar in the case of Ghana. There are a number of institutions who attempt to variously respond to the issue of child marriage, including UNICEF, Ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection, Ministries of Education, Health, Ghana Police Service etc., NGOs and CSO such as World Vision, ACTIONAID Ghana, Ark Foundation, Gender and Human Rights Documentation Centre, Muslim Family Counselling Services etc.

Their initiatives can also be classified as preventive, protective, promotive and transformative. These include community sensitisation and empowerment training for girls, reproductive health services, support for girls' education, as well as rescue and management of victims of child marriage. They also partner at both macro institutional and micro community levels to execute their initiatives. One thing that is not helping the fight against child marriage in Ghana is lack of policy direction. Although the Department of Children under MOGCSP and the Girl Child Education Unit of the Ministry of Education admitted some responsibilities to provide some policy direction to the other stakeholders, they have not been able to provide specific policies on child marriage and girls' education. International institutions such as UNICEF and DANIDA are supporting these institutions to formulate the policies and create a platform for institutions in child marriage to interact and also facilitate the coordination role of the ministry. It is also important to mention that none

of the institutions was specifically set up to respond to child marriage. Some have child marriage as implicitly captured in their mandate while others had to expand their scope of operation to cover child marriage when they considered it to be a topical issue in child/social protection. Institutional partnership and community mobilisation (structures and processes) are considered across the institutions and countries as key strategies in responding to child marriage.

## Policy Recommendations

The findings so far show that there is a lot of interest by institutions in the fight against child marriage in the country. However, the absence of a national policy to direct the course of the fight is not helping matters, leading to duplications of interventions and lack of coordination and monitoring of the efforts made so far. We therefore recommend that the ministry responsible (MoGCSP) should take advantage of the high interest shown by the various institutions and facilitate a process of formulating a multi-sectoral policy as a national policy framework to guide the campaign and interventions against child marriage. It is important to emphasise the multi-sectoral policy framework because of the multifaceted nature of the phenomenon. It is also observed from the findings that most of the initiatives and interventions rolled out by the institutions are largely elitist in nature developed from the perspectives of the institutions more than that of the target communities. Such approaches are likely to have problems with buy-in from community members to enhance ownership sustainability. In this light, we recommend that more emphasis must be put on interventions that empower communities and build their capacities to initiate and implement actions that they can easily identify with.

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# **NARRATIVES OF PRIDE AND REGRET AMONG OLDER PERSONS IN GHANA**

**Paul Alhassan Issahaku<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

This paper contributes to scholarship on aging by exploring narratives of pride and regret among older persons in Ghana. Although there is emerging literature on older persons in Ghana, no recent research has provided a forum for older persons to talk about what they are proud of and/or regret. A narrative inquiry approach was used to explore what older persons in Ghana are proud of and what they regret in their lives. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 23 persons aged between 60 and 80 years and the data analyzed following narrative analysis procedures. Two overarching themes and four subthemes were identified in the narratives of pride and regret. ‘A sense of fulfilment’ emerged as the overarching theme from the narratives of pride whose subthemes were ‘contribution to society’ and ‘personal accomplishment’. Again, ‘a sense of disappointment’ emerged as the overarching theme from the narratives of regret whose subthemes were ‘mistakes of youth’ and ‘unfortunate experiences’. These findings and their implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** pride and regret; contribution to society; mistakes of youth; personal accomplishment; older persons in Ghana

## **Introduction**

By 2050, Africa’s population of older persons is expected to rise from fifty million to two hundred million (Help Age International, 2008). Population ageing has shown a similar trend in Ghana where, in absolute terms, the number of persons aged 60 years and above increased from less than 300, 000 in 1960 to over 1.6 million in 2010 (Ghana Statistical Service – GSS,

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2012) and is projected to reach 6.3 million in 2050 (GSS,2013). Local and international scholars and policy analysts have taken keen interest in understanding the epidemiological (Ainsworth & Dayton, 2003; Ayernor, 2012; Debpuur, Welaga, Wak, & Hodgson, 2010; Ferreira & Makoni, 2002; Levy, Slade, & Kasl, 2002; Mba, 2006; Okamoto & Tanaka, 2004; Omariba, 2010; World Health Organization – WHO, 2005, 2014) and social-psychological (Drah, 2014; Fried et al., 2004; Frieson, 2016; Glass et al., 2004; Gomez & Seemons, 2017; Gruenewald, Karlamangla, Greendale, Singer, & Seeman, 2007; Krause & Shaw, 2000; Oppong, 2006; Sagner, 2002; Tawiah, 2011; van der Geest, 2004) characteristics of older persons as well as the general implications of demographic ageing (Aboderin, 2004; Kinsela, 2001; Kpessa-Whyte, 2018; Kuuire, Tenkorang, Rishworth, Luginaah, & Yawson, 2017; Kwankye, 2013; Lloyd-Sherlock, 2002; Peterson, 1999; Strydom, 2008).

The purpose of this study is to provide narrative accounts of what older people in Ghana are proud of and what they regret in their lives. Although there is increasing literature on aging and older persons in Ghana (see de-Graft Aikins et al., 2016 for a review), there is no recent scholarship that elucidates issues of pride and regret among older Ghanaians. This type of research will shape practices under Ghana's policy on ageing which aims to support older people 'age with security and dignity' (Government of Ghana, 2010).

## **Issues of Pride and Regret among Older Persons**

There is virtually no recent Ghanaian research that explores the question of what older persons are proud of and/or regret in their lives. The focus of much of the existing literature is on the health problems of older persons (Aganiba, Owusu, Steiner-Aseidu, & Dittoh, 2015; Ayernor, 2012; Debpuur et al., 2010; Duda et al., 2011; Kuuire et al., 2017; Mba, 2006; Minicuci et al., 2014; World Health Organization – WHO, 2014) and the implications for the healthcare system in Ghana. The available literature has highlighted the prevalence of non-communicable diseases among older persons (Ayernor, 2012; Duda et al., 2011; Mba, 2006; Minicuci et al., 2014; WHO, 2014) and indicated how the self-assessed health status of the oldest old in Ghana is relatively poorer (Debpuur et al., 2010). The

study by Drah (2014) which investigated the caregiving roles of older women in the Manya Krobo Traditional Area (MKTA) of Ghana is a significant addition to the literature. Drah's (2014) work has highlighted the contribution of older women (Queen Mothers) to the upbringing of orphaned children; they go to great lengths to provide foster-parenting for these children. Perhaps these women are proud of their foster-parenting duties and, perhaps there are certain things they regret about their lives. However, this question has not been illuminated in the literature.

Similarly, there is no recent empirical research on what older people are proud of and/or regret in the international literature. International research has discussed the caregiving roles of older persons as grandparents (Attar-Schwartz, Tan, Buchanan, Flouri & Griggs, 2009; Devine & Earle, 2011; Mason, May, & Clarke, 2007; Patrick & Tomezewski, 2007). Other studies have shown the contribution of older persons to their communities through volunteer (Bradley, 1999) and advocacy (Charpentier, Queniart & Jacques, 2008; Trentham & Neysmith, 2017) activities. Perhaps grandparent duties as well as volunteer and advocacy work are issues of pride among older persons and, perhaps they also regret some things they have or have not done in their lives. What is clear, however, is that the question of what they are proud of and/or regret in their lives has not been directly posed to older people in the existing literature. In both the Ghanaian and international literature no forum has been provided for older persons to talk about what they are proud of and what they regret in life. The current study is meant to bridge this knowledge gap. Using data from Ghana as an entry point, the study answers the question: what are older persons proud of and what do they regret in their lives?

## **Study Approach**

This study employs the narrative research approach to explore what older persons are proud of and what they regret in their lives. Narrative research is described as a hybrid research genre because it integrates “systematic analysis of narrated experience with literary deconstruction and hermeneutic analysis of meaning” (Josselson, 2011: 224). Congruent with the life course perspective (Elder, 1995; Giele & Elder, 1998), the narrative framework holds that people make sense of their lives and the

world around them in relation to other people and events in their social world (their societies, cultures and families) and capture this relationality in their narrative accounts (Josselson, 2011; Sarbin, 1986). People's narratives about a certain phenomenon are contextual, temporal, unique to the narrator, considerate of the intended audiences, and subject to change over time as new events influence these narratives (Josselson, 2011; Ricoeur, 1988). In that case, one's narration today may not be consistent with their future narrative, even though they are speaking to the same subject matter. The power and relevance of the narrative analytic approach lies in its joint interpretive purchase. As Josselson (2011: 225) has noted, "narrative research is an interpretive enterprise consisting of the joint subjectivities of researcher and participant...brought to bear on textual material" that is produced in the research process and enables the exploration of knowledge and experience as captured in the data. This principle enables researchers to bring their self-awareness and reflexivity into the data analysis process. Located in the 'hermeneutics of faith' and of 'suspicion' traditions (Chase, 1996; Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Josselson, 2011), the analysis empowers the researcher to "both re-present the participant's narrative and also take interpretive authority for going beyond...its literal and conscious meanings" (Josselson, 2011: 226).

Following Spence's (1982) lead, where the focus of narrative inquiry is on people's constructed accounts but not on factual records, narrative research "respects the relativity and multiplicity of truth" in accounts about a particular topic (Josselson, 2011: 225). This stance means that the researcher is not looking for a singular truth about the research question(s) in any one participant's narrative but for bits and pieces of the truth across participants' accounts which can be woven together to create a bricolage. Thus, in data analysis, the narrative approach allows the researcher to follow and weave together similarities, differences, and contradictions in participants' narratives and then reflect on the whole picture, a process referred to as the 'categorical' and 'content' modes of analysis (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). As outlined by Josselson (2011: 228), the analysis process unfolds as follows: first, read the overall interview transcript to familiarise with the structure and content of the narrative, looking for a general theme or themes. Second, re-read the transcript to

identify the different dimensions of the account through within and across transcript comparing and contrasting. Third, continue to engage with the data to identify interconnected themes that create “a coherent unity”, a step that helps with data reduction into major meaning categories for presentation. Lastly, put the findings “into conversation with the larger theoretical [and empirical] literature...” by engaging in interpretation and conclusion drawing.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

Participants for this study were 23 persons aged 60 years and above who were recruited through snowball or the referral sampling. The study was open to voluntary participants and did not require a random sample for purposes of generalization. To initiate sampling and recruitment, the investigator used personal connections to contact prospective participants through home visits to solicit their involvement. During the solicitation and verbal informed consent process, the need for participants to be referral agents was discussed and agreed on. This proved to be a very helpful strategy as it meant that after the initial interviews, participants became referral agents to peers who were then contacted for participation. It was mutually agreed that the researcher keep referral agents anonymous when contacting those they had made referrals to. It was this arrangement that produced the sample of 23 participants; five older persons were recruited and interviewed in the Madina-Adenta area of Accra and 18 were recruited and interviewed within the Tamale Metropolis of northern Ghana. Before field work began, a sample of sixty participants had been targeted for the study. However, data collection stopped after the 23<sup>rd</sup> participant for purposes of fatigue and data saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Of the 23 participants, nine were widows and the rest were married men except one man who has never married. Participants ranged in age from 60 to 80 years. Eight participants had post-secondary education and the rest had some or no formal education. Among participants were retired nurses and teachers, petty traders, farmers, and an agricultural extension officer. One participant was the chief of a village near Tamale and two others were members of his council.

## **Data Collection**

Although initial contacts for the study were made in May 2018, actual field work occurred in June-July 2018. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with participants and data were captured on an audio recorder. The interviews explored a set of questions. However, the focus of this paper is on participants' narratives about what they are proud of and what they regret in their lives. Except for four participants who responded to the interviews in Dagbani, all others were conducted in English. However, during the interviews, the other participants occasionally used Dagbani or Twi expressions to emphasize a point. Twi is widely spoken in Southern Ghana whereas Dagbani is widely spoken in Northern Ghana. The main questions of the English interview guide were interpreted for the four participants who were not interviewed in English. Interviews were audio-taped, with participants' consent, and short notes were taken to serve a supplemental function.

The importance of recording the interviews was discussed with participants and, so, there was no objection to having their voices captured on audio. Some even suggested that their voices could be played on radio or television for the listening public. Interviews took an average of 45 minutes, but a few lasted about an hour. Venues for the interviews were at participants' discretion and they chose a variety of locations. All five interviews in Accra were conducted in agency offices away from participants' homes, while all, except three, interviews in the Tamale area were held in participant homes. Alongside data collection was transcription which converted the audio information to English text and generated a complete set of 23 transcripts that constituted the research data. The study was cleared by the Interdisciplinary Committee on Ethics in Human Research (ICEHR) of Memorial University of Newfoundland. Participants gave verbal informed consent and each participant received the equivalent of CAD \$10 as appreciation.

## **Data Analysis**

Data analysis followed the steps outlined by Josselson (2011). I also referred to the guidelines described by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). First, I read each of the 23 transcripts pretty quickly to familiarize

with its content and to register flashes of meaning or themes in my mind. Following the initial reading, I went through each transcript again, this time, carefully and more intently, taking note of key messages, similarities and differences in the narratives, and capturing these in my notepad which were later tabulated on computer. Further reading and reflection led to organization of the data by merging or differentiating themes and creating categories of meaning which gave participants' narratives a sense of coherence and integration. These established categories of meaning constituted the emerging findings and the final step was to present and discuss them in relation to the existing literature.

Initial reading and re-reading of participants' accounts of what they are proud of and what they regret identified five meaning units for pride and three meaning clusters for regrets. The five preliminary themes of pride included: investment in own children; personal accomplishment; having trained others to succeed; hard work ethic; and leadership abilities. The three initial themes of regret were: disobedience; unfair experience; and wrong decisions. Through the effort to further reduce the data (Miles et al., 2014) and/or provide 'coherent unity' to the data (Josselson, 2011), some of these themes were merged and others differentiated. The five themes on pride were reduced to two. On the one hand, investment in own children, having trained others to succeed, and leadership abilities were combined to create the theme 'contribution to society'. The reason for this is that investing in their own children, training others, and providing leadership are all contributions these individuals have made to the society. On the other hand, hard work ethic and personal accomplishment were combined into a different theme; 'personal accomplishment'. This was reasonable because participants' accounts of the effect of their hard work ethic cohered with their accounts of personal accomplishments.

Generally, the two themes on pride suggest that participants have 'a sense of fulfilment' in their lives; they are proud of a fulfilled life. Similarly, the three themes on regret were reduced to two. The 'disobedience' and 'wrong decisions' themes were merged to create the theme 'mistakes of youth' while 'unfair experience' was differentiated as a theme; 'unfortunate experience'. The narratives of disobedience and wrong

decisions suggested that participants disobeyed and made wrong decisions during their youth-to-adult years out of youthful lack of wisdom while accounts of unfair experiences more appropriately illustrated ‘unfortunate experiences’. In general, the themes on regret suggest that participants have ‘a sense of disappointment’ in their lives; they are disappointed for their own mistakes and for negative experiences they had no control over. In the findings section, themes on pride are presented first, followed by theme on regret.

## Findings

The general theme of ‘*a sense of fulfilment*’ captures the two sub-themes emerging from the data on what participants are proud of. These are the themes of ‘contribution to society’ and ‘personal accomplishments’.

**Contribution to society:** Participants narrated accounts of what they are proud of in terms of their contribution to society. Not only have participants invested in their own children, they have trained other people who are successful in the society and have also provided leadership in various ways. On investment in children, a female participant (FP) began her narrative as follows: “Ah, for me, what I’m proud of is my children. My children, as for them, all of them are respectful. They don’t quarrel”.

Other narratives about children include the following:

Oh, yes. By all means there is something to be proud of. Why won’t I be proud? Look at my children, my grandchildren and my great grandchildren, I am proud of that. Haa! My children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren; all my children, two of my children are pastors, one is in Kumasi and the other is here in Tamale. Then one child is in Accra, my last born, she is female. Even your wife [referring to the researcher] knows her. Her husband is also a pastor and they live in Ashaiman [a suburb of Accra]. So I thank God for all this. When I look at my children, grandchildren and great grandchildren I feel fulfilled (FP).

When I was growing up my only desire was to educate my children. That was my priority because I realized that education is the key. Although I may not get to that point, but I wished all my children get there. And, gladly to say that I'm almost achieving that. And I believe that even if, my maker calls me today I will laugh and then thank my maker. Because I know, where they have reached, if I'm not there they can manage to finish their education. That is my pride. I keep telling them that if I did not build a house for you, know that the money has gone into your education. At least, some of them have gone higher up in education and that kind of thing. So, I think erm, I'm very proud about that (male participant – MP).

In addition to the above, the following narratives illustrate participants' pride of contribution to society:

Urm, my pride lies in being able to build a society to be a formidable society [group of young people] and they have grown up to know the essence of giving, or the essence of providing assistance to other people too. That's my pride, you see, that I'm able to build them. I was a small boy and I knew my teachers and so forth. Now somebody also is respecting and greeting me and so forth. And I know there are so many of them. Some of them are officers of the security forces, urm, doctors, you see it. When I go to the hospital I am treated free of charge (MP).

Yes, I'm very proud. I'm very proud. I'm proud because I loved my job [teaching] and I did it with so much zeal. Students I disciplined, Tamale High School students I disciplined, both boys and girls, when I meet them now they often retort 'oh master, we didn't know that you were helping us. Had it not been because of you, we would have gone wayward'. They said that after secondary school they became aware of the guidance as they entered the

university. Oh, my brother, I am telling you, when I just get up and move this way and that way I meet my former students (MP).

Urm, socially or religiously, when we grew up as children we were, we had so many Christians in this community, they were very many. But as at now, those of us who are Christians are very few. And what I can boast of is I have been able to handle the Christian community at the Cathedral here since time immemorial. And now I'm proud of my Christian community at the Cathedral here. When I look at them, the youth, I feel satisfied. And then my family here, I have a younger brother who is [comes] after me, he has 3 wives with 18 children and two of his wives are here and he is somewhere with one wife, and I was thinking that if I misbehave and this guy passes away my load to carry will be too much. So my brother, before God and man, I support him to be able to live longer than me and I also support the family here. That is what I have really invested in and then what really makes me proud (MP).

A male participant who was formerly a district chief executive (DCE) had the following to say:

Yeah, I'm proud that people like you [referring to the researcher] were my former students. You, my students are so many, in the thousands, from the district. In every community, they will surround me; there are teachers, there are nurses, all kinds of workers. Yes, they are many; those who were supported to go to polytechnic, teacher training college or nurses' college or to the universities, they acknowledge it, yeah. So wherever I appear, I feel comfortable. Yes, I feel comfortable.

**Personal Accomplishments:** Beside contribution to society, participants were proud of personal accomplishments. The following narratives illustrate the pride of personal accomplishments:

I am very proud that I avoided some of the lures of wayward social lifestyles...I became a widow very early. But I took very good care of my life, ahaaa. I fear God and I worked hard to bring up my children, without anybody's support. So, my only thinking is God. After God, my children. Arhaaa, after my children then my life and whatever, the good support I will give to my children. That's it, I don't think much. And am always happy in my spirit, am always happy (FP).

In my life, I was proud the time I was working. Urm, I was at Somanya, Cocoa Processing Company. That time, I was proud with my work life. I was proud that I got work to do. I was proud about the opportunity that the company gave me and where I was, I was a marketing officer. Yes. I launched the cocoa drink. They put the kiosks at vantage points where people...were sent cocoa powder to prepare cocoa bread and cocoa cake to add to the drink. So many kiosks! I launched them. So I was monitoring them, going up and down from kiosk to kiosk, watching them, how they sell, how they talk to the people, how they receive customers...I feel proud about that. Through that I got promotion. Hahaha. You see now? (FP).

Yes, those days, I will say that the way we were brought up and, I personally, I thought that my parents didn't like me. You know, they made me to stay with people and I was doing slavery work. Yes, because my father was taken to Nsawam [a maximum security prison] on detention because he belonged to the opposition party and my mother never went to school, but she was an entrepreneur, very hardworking. But my father went, some time, came, and

went again. They came for him and the third time he said if he doesn't run away to somewhere and they come for him again, what is happening there, when he goes we may not see him again. So he took off. And, I had to fend for my education. So I will go to sell people's oranges at Suame Magazine [a marketplace in the city of Kumasi] for commission to take care of myself. I did this before I completed school...So even at the tender age I knew how to fend for myself. And this has made me also to make my children, even though they were with me, to go through that kind of training, that now all the men that have taken my children as wives are proud of them (FP).

Going on further, this female participant narrated how she is proud that she established a school to help children:

Because I saw how children were suffering during the revolutionary time at Sakasaka [a neighborhood in central Tamale], I was teaching there; no books, nothing, and worse of all, the revolutionary leader, Rawlings, came and said we should use kokonte [cassava powder] as chalk. There was no chalk to write on the blackboard; we can't get kokonte to eat, how then do I use that thing to write on the blackboard as chalk. So I thought of having my own school and try to help people. So those things, the hardships, made me to be more experienced and had more wisdom and also sympathy for people, for others.

Other narratives of personal accomplishments included being disciplined and hardworking and being able to build houses of their own. The following account is illustrative of these:

Yes. Where I'm sitting am proud of, it's my own work, because my husband died before I would be able to put up this apartment I'm living in. And I have been able to put up something small for my mother before she died. And I'm

still proud that am still taking care of my elder sister and my cousins who are in the village still struggling. Because I was lucky to be educated, they were not educated. So that one I'm proud of it. Ahaa even as I am on my scanty allowance but am still proud because I can still help them out. If there is something they need today they call me, if I don't have the money but at least I can get some 50 Ghana for them and they will solve the problem (FP).

Two other accounts corroborating the above are as follows:

You see, sometimes there are some people when they are growing up, they don't look at what their peers are doing so they can do same. For this reason, in fact, this does not apply to me, but this has been the cause of many people's regret. For example, there are people who, growing up with others in the same home and they are all farmers, some of them know that they have to look for their own homes one day, so they plan towards it. But others do not know this or do not give it a thought. So such people have problems. But I have not fallen victim to this. While growing up, I knew this and worked towards it. I looked at what others did and emulated them. That is why I have this home. So, for many older people, their regret is the lack of a house of their own. The reason is that such people did not watch what others were doing in order to emulate their example. But in life you have to emulate other people's good efforts. There are some workers who spend everything from their monthly salary and will not think of saving to build a house. Some of them wait until they collect their pension in lump sum to do this. You use it to start and before long it is finished but the building is incomplete. That means you have lost everything. This was the foresight some of us had and today we have our own places now that I am on pension. Failure to do this has been the regret of many people (MP).

Well, in the first place, I should say I in person have been blessed with a good mother who used to counsel us, teach us and she was able to educate us. You see, and from her guidance, erh, I have been able to keep that and to live that ideal and that has really helped. So, I don't regret at all and am very, very thankful to God. Now, if I look back and see my classmates, erh, I look younger than them, in the first place. When people see me they say 'no, you look, you are still strong, no at this age we don't believe that you are sixty'. This is what people see in me and I appreciate that. Now, this house, erh, I put it up. My sisters and my old lady [mother] they are all here and I'm still with them and they appreciate that. That apart, I have some other projects that I'm still working on. Now, with that I am not just thinking about me in person, otherwise this [house] would have been enough for me. I'm looking at those behind [younger family members], whether I live longer or not. So if I look at that I'm very, very happy. So I don't regret at all. Yes, erh, before I retired that used to be my advice to those entering into the profession [Nursing]. I used to tell them: 'the very day that you are employed and you take your first salary you should think of retirement. Because you are starting and you are taking money, you are happy, there will be a day that they will say 'no, you don't have a salary again'. So what happens? And that has made people, at least, to even die earlier; because they will be living in government buildings or rented houses and they just throw out their belongings [upon retirement] (MP).

One more account of sense of fulfilment which should be presented here is from a participant who is an Alhaji. According to him:

Yes, there is something I am proud of. All my parents and grandparents were traditionalists, according to the customs of the Dagombas. But today, by the grace of God, I am an Alhaji [meaning he has gone on pilgrimage to Mecca as a

Muslim]. Our fathers didn't have money, not so? And as I am Alhaji it is not the government which sent me to Mecca. It has been through my own effort. And, as I was working in formal employment and now on retirement, at the end of each month, I can get up to three million [300 Ghana Cedis in pension payment]. With the three million I buy a bag of maize which will take me up to the next payday. So, if I don't look for anybody's trouble I can afford to attend funerals and naming ceremonies. But there are others who didn't start this way and so don't have what I have.

**A Sense of Disappointment:** Similar to the theme of 'fulfilment', the overarching theme of 'sense of disappointment' captures the themes of 'mistakes of youth' and 'unfortunate experiences' which emerged from data on what participants regret in their lives. These narratives of disappointment are presented here.

**Mistakes of youth:** a number of participants provided narratives of regret which suggest that they have regretted the mistakes they have made in their youth-to-adult years as they now have to live with the consequences. Not only do they regret wrong-headed attitudes of disobedience, they have made wrong decisions out of youthful lack of circumspection. Narratives of disappointment in youthful attitudes of disobedience are exemplified by the following:

Yes, there is something to regret. About this issue, based on my experience, I will say, as a child if you grow up with your father and mother, whatever they caution you against, you should be careful about it. You should not make your own set of rules. And this is for your own good. So, the instruction: "Be careful" was usually used to train children; "Do not do this" was used in training children. But in the present generation you can no longer come out to say something like that and it will be accepted. Even within your own household you may say this and nobody pays

heed or only a few will accept it. I regret my disobedience (MP).

Yes, yes. In fact, regret. One thing that I regret in my life is that my father, after I completed secondary school, he had the opportunity to send me to teacher training college but I refused and said, ‘no, no, no. I will never be a teacher. What will I be a teacher for? Teacher? To be a teacher? No, no, no. I will never be a teacher’. He gave me a letter to Tamale Training College and on the way I tore the letter and threw it away. I thought it was better I go to university. And when I came here [Accra] my first appointment was teaching, as a pupil teacher self. You see it. Then I said, ‘ah, look at the foolish thing I have done. If I had been made a trained teacher I would have been getting government salary, very big money, but I’m coming here to get anything scanty’. Any proprietor would just come and call you and just give you something and you will be working a lot for him and he will just give you something. You will be like “monkey dey work and baboon dey chop” [one labours whilst another person reaps the benefits]. You see. And that thing, I regret it seriously (MP).

Other accounts of mistakes of youth are in the form of wrong decisions regarding marriage and sexual activity, making some investments, and the kind of friends participants made. The following narratives illustrate these mistakes:

Okay, what I regret about my life is, the man I married, I shouldn’t have married that man. Because the man didn’t handle me well. And, the life the man led previously was so bad that he was poisoned by a woman. And he died early. So, I didn’t get any helper who would help me to take good care of these kids. So, I shouldn’t have married that man. I didn’t know that would happen. So, I regret marrying that man and becoming lonely from the age of 30.

You see, and I have stayed lonely up till this time. So, I regretted marrying that man...(FP).

Yes...That is, I will say, in my marriage. I wanted to be a geologist but because I had nobody to take care of me, I had to fend for myself, even when I had the tertiary admission. So, a time came I thought, and my father wanted me to be a Reverend Sister, I thought that marriage could help me to take care of my siblings. So, I hurried, and the first man disappointed me greatly. And, actually, I felt that I took a wrong decision. And this made me even to stay for 9 good years [of divorce] and when I saw that I could not, I went in for a second man and that even nearly took me to my grave. And the 3<sup>rd</sup> man, the same thing. So, after that I told myself 'if I had known I should not have done this, I should have stayed even without children'. Because the intension of having somebody by me so that even if I am working I can use my money to support my siblings, it never worked. So, after all that, I was struggling with my three children and I was again struggling with my siblings who were all with me here (FP).

Corroborating the accounts above, a male participant had the following to say:

Okay, when, when, during our youthful days, in fact, this time when I sit down and I look back on what we were doing, some, I have to regret, in fact, because we were very, very sexually active. And you know, when you are an athlete in school some girls will even approach you, befriend you themselves and then we were not, I was not leaving them alone. But this time I look back and (puffs) I regretted for having done that. Yes, because those girls I didn't marry them, hmmm.

Other mistakes of youth which participants regret are illustrated in the following accounts:

Hmm, let me see. You see, when I completed teacher training college after secondary school I joined a group; I'm telling you the part I remember and I regret. I joined some friends when I was posted to a village or should call it a town, Fumbisi, because I didn't know there. So, I went and urm, right from there I fell into a group which I thought I could communicate with them. But before I realized, we were involved in drinking [alcohol] and doing unnecessary things. I moved up to Sandema town itself, it was worse. And instead of me trying to, you know, go further in education, I was a village champion. Before I realized, before I realized, I realized that my schoolmates were in higher positions. So I had to leave that area to come to Tamale. When I came I met a lot of my schoolmates. All of them that: 'ah, my friend, where are you?' I said I'm teaching and they asked: 'are you the principal or what? You brilliant child like this, are you wasting?' And that made me, I quickly went to university. When I completed I continued with my career [as a teacher]. I would have been a director [of education]. But because of those unnecessary delays and this thing, I was just left with some three years to be a director when I had to retire. So, when I think of that I regret. So, I will tell the youth, 'you see, know the peer group you move with and don't sleep over your intentions [ambitions], pursue them as time allows' (MP).

Hmm! Regrets! Regrets are plenty. But certain times you have to let go. I did not like help, if it is now that I am more enlightened, I will have send my cousins to school, because they had no one to pay for them to go to school. But because I was also struggling to make ends meet, I didn't have the means so I thought it was too much for me to say

they should also go to school because the burden would become mine. So my regrets now is because at the end of the day, look at the boy, you saw a boy sitting there, he is a cousin's son. He is at the nurses' training college and when they are in need they still come back to you who has started to work, who had the opportunity to go to school and they didn't have. So, these are the regrets, I in particular, I'm telling people that they should correct those mistakes so that it doesn't come. So, in case I am not there they will still fall back to my children because they will always be a liability to you and your family...But as time goes on we have seen that the mistakes we have made are bringing us back. So, now, anybody, all my people, I tell them, 'go to school up to the level you can get to, if you can't be an academic, you can get handiwork to do' so that you don't become liability to anybody (FP).

***Unfortunate Experiences:*** the other side of the sense of disappointment among participants was captured in accounts of unfortunate or unfair experiences they have had in their lives, including neglect, false accusation, bereavement, and unfair treatment at the workplace. Participants viewed these experiences as unfortunate and regrettable because they have been affected negatively as a result. The following two accounts are examples of these unfortunate experiences:

The time my husband neglected my children and I, any time I remember this I feel sad. I will be asking why this thing had to happen to me. I bring these children to the world, only one person, and my money is not sufficient. Then we are suffering. These children's school fees, I can't get money to pay their school fees. That one I regret; why should I bring these children to the world to come and suffer? That was when I decided to become a Christian so that if anything at all I will consult my Osofo [pastor] or the elders, and I joined a prayer group so that if anything, I

go to church. The Osofo will talk to me, he will advise me, and he will console me (FP).

Hmmm! In my own family background, my father died and left a lot of property. And the men, we are not many and then it looks as if I'm the only one in Ghana who is very resourceful. And having left that property, I gathered the family together thinking that I can spearhead the project so that it will be in the name of all of us. But at the end I had the shock of my life. The women, you know, thought that probably I am trying to do that on my behalf. Yeah, that thing has haunted me for so many years. It has been the pain of my life. It's a 3-storey building, I footed the bill of drawing and everything, when the first phase is completed then the trouble erupted. It has been a very great setback in my life. As of today the men are on one side, the women are on the other side, that kind of struggle. It's a very big setback. The way I thought, the way we all sat down, the way we all tried to build something, it did not happen. That is a big regret. All my family, I have been telling them all the time. It's a sad thing whenever I mention the scale of it. Going into the family, you know, bringing people together, in our own set up is not easy like that. Those people you have even spent money and taken care of may even turn against you, because the lazy ones don't want to work. They think that it is easier to make money out of it [the family property] so they will not see eye-to-eye with you. But I did not read into it early until, you know, I put myself into it. It's a big setback for me (MP).

Two other accounts of unfortunate experiences to be cited here are as follows:

I don't regret much. It's only my late son I regret. Had it been he was alive my condition will be better. Had it been

he had a child for me it would have been better. But he didn't have. That's what I regret (FP).

## **Discussion**

This study explored narratives of pride and regret among older persons in Ghana. The study was designed as a narrative inquiry (Bruner, 1990; Josselson, 2011; Spence, 1982), drawing from the life course perspective on aging (Elder, 1995; Giele & Elder, 1998). Narrative research is an attempt to understand human experience as narrated by those who have lived it (Josselson, 2011; Sarbin, 1986). Therefore, this approach provided participants a forum to narrate stories of what they are proud of and what they regret as older people. Further, as Josselson (2011) has noted, the narrative approach allows researchers to present accounts as narrated by participants but also to interpret these narratives for readers, drawing from the theoretical and empirical literature. According to Josselson (2011: 225), "Meaning [understanding] is generated by the linkages the participant makes between aspects of the life he or she is living and by the explicit linkages the researcher makes between this understanding and interpretation..." Going by these guiding principles, the discussion is an attempt to interpret participants' narratives of pride and regret as presented above. Narratives of what participants are proud of coalesced under the capturing theme of 'sense of fulfilment' whose subthemes are 'contribution to society' and 'personal accomplishment', whereas narratives of regret were captured by the overarching theme of 'sense of disappointment' which encompassed the themes of 'mistakes of youth' and 'unfortunate experience'.

A key dimension of the sense of fulfilment in participants' narratives is their contributions to building society. Participants described their contributions to include investment in children, teaching/training young people to become successful in life, and providing good leadership. Investing in children by ensuring they are disciplined, well-educated, and grow into responsible adults is a significant contribution to society and, perhaps something to be proud of universally. Children are considered the future of every society and it takes parents'/guardians' investment of time, money and material resources to ensure they become responsible people

in the future (Baumrind, 1966; Boakye-Boateng, 2010; Hardman, 2001; Montgomery, 2009; United Nations, 1989). Globally, the call for investment in children is at the heart of child welfare/protection policy (Government of Ghana, 2015; Jones, LaLiberte, & Piescher, 2015; United Nations Children's Fund, 2009). The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (United Nations, 1989), the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 1990), and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (European Commission, 2000) all call for investment in children.

Similarly, formal education and functional training are indispensable in modern society (Bloom, 2002; Poku, Aawaar, & Worae, 2013; World Education Forum, 2000). Therefore, a dedicated service that has ensured the success of one's students or apprentices is something to be proud of. The significance of this service is better imagined when one reflects on the key factors necessary for any educational system to realize its lofty goals. The benefits of education highlighted in the literature (Black, Daniel, & Smith, 2005; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Deming & Dynarski, 2009; Flores-Lagunes & Light, 2010; Goldberg & Smith, 2008; Heckman, Lochner, & Todd, 2006) all take for granted that teachers will do their work with dedication. Thus, it is a thing of pride for some of the participants to have played such a role in society. Further, for the leadership roles they have played in society, some participants have reason to be proud. The importance of leadership lies in the fact that effective leaders plan for a better future through "adaptive and constructive change" while also working to "produce and manage periods of stability" (Firth-Cozens & Mowbray, 2001: ii3) in the community. From the narratives, one can infer that participants have demonstrated transformational leadership (Bass, 1985, 1990; Masi & Cooke, 2000) by revitalizing communities, creating something new, or going beyond expectations. Statements such as 'I can boast that I have led a vibrant Christian community here at the Cathedral' and 'I am proud that when I was a DCE I provided support and inspiration to many young people who are successful in life today' are indicative of transformational leadership.

Not only do participants feel fulfilled for their contribution to society, they take pride in what they have achieved, compared to others, by dint of self-discipline and hard work. As captured in the narratives, personal accomplishments include being able to build and own a home, making it through school under adverse circumstances, setting up their own organizations, and becoming an Alhaji, among others. Going on pilgrimage to Mecca placed one in a position of high respect in the Muslim community and one understands how working to complete school in poverty is a pride when you juxtapose this against the literature on dropout among low-income students (Abrams & Haney, 2004; Alexander, Entwisle, Kabbani, 2001; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2007; Freudenberg & Ruglis, 2007).

Further, owning a home is definitely something to be proud of. The “home provides not only shelter as a basic need but also serves as a reference point, a marker of identity, and a stabilizing agent in an otherwise chaotic life” (Issahaku, 2014: 134). Goldberg (1993: 199) has described the home as “a place of peace, of shelter from terror, doubt, division, a geography of relative self-determination and sanctity”. The home is probably a cultural universal since “it is deep in the race for a man to want his roof and walls and fire place” (Frank Capra, cited in Goldberg, 1993: 199). Thus it can be argued that, globally, the ability to own a home is no mean personal accomplishment, more so when one does this through personal savings rather than through a long-term mortgage. The pride of owning a home among participants is justified when one juxtaposes this finding against the fact that over 70% of older Ghanaians do not own a home/house (GSS, 2012). The GSS (2012: xiv) defines a home/house as “a structurally separate and independent place of abode such that a person or group of persons can isolate themselves from the hazards of climate such as storms and the sun”.

Juxtaposed against participants’ sense of fulfilment is the narrative of disappointment. Participants are disappointed in mistakes they made and experiences they have had whose consequences have been regrettable. Regrettable mistakes of youth in participant narratives include attitudes of disobedience, hasty or wrong decisions, and neglectful behavior.

Although disobedience has been conceptualized as both pro-social and antisocial (Passini & Morselli, 2009, 2010; Pozzi, Fattori, Bocchiaro, & Alfieri, 2014), participants hold the view that, from hindsight, their disobedience was antisocial and regrettable. The propensity of young people to make wrong choices or engage in risky and antisocial behaviors has been highlighted in the literature ((Drevets & Raichle, 1998; Steinberg, 2004, 2007). The reason for these mistakes of youth, according to Steinberg (2007: 56), is that “psychosocial capacities that improve decision making and moderate risk taking – such as impulse control, emotion regulation, delay of gratification, and resistance to peer influence” are not well-developed among adolescents. Therefore, “psychosocial immaturity in these respects during adolescence may undermine what otherwise might be competent decision making”. Similarly, Drevets and Raichle (1998) have noted that, in adolescents, the cognitive network that modulates behaviour and decision making is weaker compared to the socioemotional network which is responsible for arousal behavior. In an apparent corroboration of the literature, one participant had this to say:

Yes, you know, a young man is a mad person. He is a fool. If you use youthful exuberance to do things, when you are old there are some of them you remember and get scared. Why won't you be frightened; you will see that 'this thing that I did was not supposed to have been done'. But you went into it headstrong with your uncontrolled energy. When you are old and gain understanding you will realize that some of what you did was of no benefit (MP).

The other aspect of participants' disappointment narrative consists of some unfair or unfortunate experiences they have had. Some of these unfortunate experiences in participants' lives include having been abandoned or neglected by a spouse, having been denied promotion on the job, having been falsely accused and blackmailed, and bereavement. The painful consequences of spousal neglect (perhaps leading to divorce or separation), especially when one is left to struggle with young children, has been underscored in the literature (Afifi, Cox, & Enns, 2006; Amato,

2000; Clark & Hamplova, 2013; Gurmu & Etana, 2013; Ntoimo & Odimegwu, 2014; Peden, Rayens, Hall, & Grant, 2004). Spousal abandonment portends the trauma of disappointment and economic adversity (Davies, Avison, & McAlpine, 1997; McLanahan, 1994; Simon & Marcussen, 1999). Similarly, although job promotion does not necessarily produce healthy outcomes (Anderson & Marmot, 2011; Boyce & Oswald, 2012; Johnston & Wang-Sheng, 2013), the injustice of denied job promotion is regrettable since promotion comes with increased social status. Further, being misjudged and falsely accused or blackmailed is truly an unfortunate experience (Block, Kinsella, & Hoppe, 2000; Block & McGee, 2011), especially when it is coming from close relations. Blackmail or false accusation has been described both as “an enigma” (Block & McGee, 2011: 24) and a “paradox” (Block et al., 2000: 593). The unfairness of blackmail in the context of this paper is that false accusations are often easily “conflated with the truth in the court of social conviction” (Issahaku, 2016: 81). For all of these reasons, it is understandable why participants regard these experiences as regrettable and disappointing.

## **Conclusion and Implications**

In drawing conclusions from the study, it is important to be aware of its limitations. As a qualitative study using a non-random sample, the findings are not generalizable. In addition, the relatively small sample of 23 participants suggests that the findings are not representative of the narratives of pride and regret of all older persons in Ghana. Further, as a narrative inquiry, the findings are accounts as narrated by participants rather than a factual/objective record of people’s experiences. Therefore, the findings cannot be subjected to true and/or false assessments.

These limitations, nonetheless, one can draw important conclusions from and identify relevant implications of the findings since the study adhered to the dictates of narrative research (Josselson, 2011). One conclusion from the study is that, to some degree, older people in Ghana have a sense of fulfilment which arises from their contributions to building society and from their personal accomplishments. Some older persons have contributed to society by investing in the future of their children, training

young people to become successful in life, and providing transformational leadership in their communities. Other older people have demonstrated unique personal accomplishment by working hard to own a home, showing resilience to complete school under difficult family circumstances, and working their way up the social ladder of respectability in their communities, among others.

Another conclusion from the study is that, to an extent, older persons have a sense of disappointment resulting from mistakes they made during the youth years and from unfortunate experiences in their lives. Some older persons are disappointed in their youthful disobedience and ill-informed decisions, while others regret experiences such as spousal abandonment, false accusation, early bereavement, and unfair treatment on the job, among others.

Based on these conclusions, the study makes a unique contribution to the literature on aging in Ghana and has some implications for practice. The feeling of fulfilment in contributing to society suggests that under normal circumstances, people enjoy their parenting, professional, and leadership responsibilities and should be encouraged in discharging these responsibilities. First, a comprehensive socioeconomic policy that reduces poverty and resource deprivation across Ghana would encourage and strengthen parents to invest in their children for a better future. Again, a well-thought out educational policy which ensures adequate school infrastructure as well as teaching-learning materials and a good pay would motivate professionals to do their work well and take pride in seeing their students succeed in life. Additionally, since owning a home is a pride of personal accomplishment, there is need for a policy that enables every Ghanaian to own a home as they grow older. The absence of such a policy or its non-implementation (Issahaku, 2014), accounts for the current situation where over 70% of older Ghanaians do not own a home (GSS, 2012).

Among other considerations, a policy that supports Ghanaians to own homes would facilitate “access to and acquisition of title of residential land; and moderate the cost of developing housing units” by subsidizing

the costs of essential building materials (Issahaku, 2014: 139). Lastly, to address the disappointment of mistakes of youth and unfortunate experiences, there is need for a public education program targeted at young people about the importance of identifying and working with mentors, critically analyzing the pros and cons of actions, and consulting with trustful adults when making significant life decisions.

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# **GLOBAL POLITICAL CAMPAIGN COMMUNICATION: FRAMING ANALYSIS OF ELIZABETH WARREN AND JOHN MAHAMA'S PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARY ANNOUNCEMENT VIDEOS**

**Godwin Etse Sikanku<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

This study offers a critical comparative examination of the presidential exploration announcement video of Elizabeth Warren (United States) and John Mahama's (Ghana) declaration of intent video during the presidential primaries of two leading democracies in Africa and North America in 2018. Ghana has often been touted as an exemplar of democracy in Africa while the United States is viewed as a paragon of western and global democratic practice. The present comparative analysis makes important contributions to national and international democratic studies by analysing the campaign communication of two major candidates in the presidential primaries of their respective parties in both countries. This international comparative framework expands the field of campaign communication research, presents potential lessons, while testing the scope of theoretical and practical applications. The research is grounded within the widely applied concept of communication framing and the functional theory of political communication. Textual analysis was used as the major methodological approach. Three major frames were identified in former President Mahama's video announcement: (a) "One Ghana agenda & infrastructural continuity, (b) "righting wrongs and ending suffering" and (c) "shared prosperity". The study also revealed four frames from Elizabeth Warren's video: (a) "Inspiration, American values and heritage", (b) "life story", (c) "economic justice", (d) "Fighter and Wall Street Sherriff".

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**Keywords:** Political communication, framing, primaries, presidential elections, video

## **Introduction**

Presidential primaries are an essential and interesting aspect of many democracies. The primaries are the process through which political parties elect their candidates to stand for general elections (Bartels, 1988). The nominating process may be different across different countries, jurisdictions or democracies but no matter the form they take, primaries are fundamentally important for several reasons. First, they give voters and party members the opportunity to directly participate in the democratic process by electing the candidate to represent them in the general elections (Sikanku, 2018). Secondly they serve as a source of feedback for the candidates. Thirdly primaries enable citizens to learn more about the candidates and policy issues being advocated (Tedesco, 2001). Primaries also help political parties to recruit new voters, strengthen party loyalty as well as project the party's image, values and policies. Overall the presidential primaries help to strengthen the pillars of democracy in many countries (Miller, Andsager & Riechert, 1988; Benoi, Pier, Brazeal, McHale & Klyukovski, 2002).

America is one of the world's leading democracies with many countries worldwide taking inspiration from their long history of democratic practice. Ghana, though still developing, has garnered attention worldwide as one of the leading democracies in Africa. Primary campaign and elections have become one of the key features of Ghana's democratic system. The two countries have strong bilateral relations and maintain a similar election calendar spanning every four years. While Ghana's elections are held in December within the term limits (every four years), the United States of America holds its election in November usually in the same year for both countries. This presents interesting grounds for analysis from the two different democracies across different continents. The main purpose of this research is to investigate how two candidates aspiring for the presidential nominations of their various parties in Ghana and the

United States framed and constructed their introductory messages to the public.

The research examines the first video by Elizabeth Warren announcing her intention to seek the presidential nomination of the Democratic Party for the position of President and the video circulated by Ghana's John Dramani Mahama also declaring his intent to seek the presidential flagbearership of the National Democratic Congress. To be specific the study has three major objectives: (a) to unearth the major frames used by John Mahama and Elizabeth Warren in their respective videos (b) to ascertain the use of major elements of the functional theory of political communication and (c) to examine the nature of non-verbal cues present in their videos.

Literature suggests that communication occupies a central position during political campaigns (Holbert, Benoit, Hansen & Wen, 2002; Kenamer & Chafee, 1982). According to Trent, Fredenberg and Denton, communication is the "epistemological base of political campaigns" (2011: xi). Communication serves as one of the major methods or means through which campaigns conduct their activities. So much of what is done through campaigns hinges on messaging and communication. In other words, it is through the campaigns that we learn about the candidates, policies and participate in the campaign process. Studying the communicative aspects of campaigns including how messages are constructed or how they are framed and delivered is therefore critical to understanding how campaigns are conducted. This is especially rich and significant when done in a comparative manner. For Trent et al., examining the campaign communication "as a means of examining elective politics contributes appreciably to our knowledge of the electoral process" (2011:xi).

### ***John Mahama***

John Dramani Mahama is a former president of Ghana. He was sworn into office on January 7, 2013 and left office after losing the December 2016 presidential elections in Ghana. John Mahama is therefore a one term president. This means, under Ghana's two-term presidential rule, he still

has the chance to become president for one more term. It is under this context that he is seeking the presidency for the second time. This is the first time in Ghana a former president is standing for the position again after losing office.

Prior to his first term presidency, he held the position of vice president from 2008 under the administration of Professor John Evans Atta Mills. After President Mills died in office, John Mahama held the position of president briefly until he won the December 2012 elections. As a career politician President Mahama has a long history in Ghana's politics. Career. He has held several party and national positions spanning several decades. These positions include, minister of state, deputy minister, three-term Member of Parliament for Bole Bamboi constituency, minority spokesperson for communication, and Director of Communications.

The former president was born on 29<sup>th</sup> November 1958 in Damango, Ghana. He has a first degree in history and a post graduate diploma in communications from the University of Ghana. He also received a post graduate diploma in social psychology from the Institute of Social Sciences. His pre-politics experience includes stints at PLAN International Ghana Country Office and the Japanese Embassy in Ghana where he was an officer of information, culture and research. As the Minister of Communications under Rawlings Administration John Mahama chaired the National Communications authority.

### ***Elizabeth Warren***

Elizabeth Warren is a United States Senator from Massachusetts. She was the first to officially announce her interest in seeking the Democratic nomination for president through an announcement video. She was born on June 22 1949. Warren has had a long career in academia with teaching appointments in schools such as the University of Pennsylvania and Harvard University. At Harvard was the Leo Gottlieb Professor of Law at the Harvard Law School. She attended the University of Houston and Rutgers School of Law.

She is credited for her substantial role in the formation of the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB). Elizabeth Warren describes herself as a consumer advocate. Senator Warren's lifework straddles research and policy forays focusing on consumer protection, economic justice and social welfare. She has seen her profile rise due to her academic, advocacy and political work. She was a keynote speaker at the 2016 Democratic National Convention. She was made Vice Chair of the Democratic National Caucus after the 2016 elections. Under President Obama, Elizabeth Warren worked as the Assistant to the President and Special Advisor to the Secretary of Treasury on the consumer agency she helped set up (CFPB).

She first run for the Senate in 2012 against Republican Scott Brown occupied the seat after the death of Ted Kennedy. She won the race with 53.7% of the votes. Professor Warren became the first woman to be elected to the U.S Senate from the state of Massachusetts. After being elected to the Senate in the 2018 mid-term elections, Warren announced her interests in seeking the Democratic nomination in a video emailed to supporters on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018.

## **Political Campaigns in Ghana and the United States**

Political campaigns are an ever-present feature of democratic systems worldwide (Brians & Wattenberg, 1996). In both developed and developing democracies, the process for seeking the presidential candidature of a political party constitutes one of the central aspects of presidential elections (Benoit, 2007). Many parties are now adopting systems that allow for party members to have a larger say in electing their nominees. Ghana and the United States are two countries from different continents with steeped democratic practices.

In the United States, the primaries and caucuses officially kick in early in the year of the presidential election with the candidate being officially coroneted during the party conventions usually in the summer (June/July) of the election year. However the process leading up to the first caucuses and primaries in Iowa and New Hampshire respectively could start the year before or even earlier. For instance by January 2019, some candidates

seeking the Democratic nomination for president had already made official statements regarding their plans ahead of the primaries and conventions and the general election in 2020. The first caucuses are held in the state of Iowa, while the first in the nation primary is held in New Hampshire. After that several states get the chance to participate in the primaries depending on the calendar of the parties and the state of the race. Throughout the period of the primary season right from the start, candidates campaign and engage in efforts to persuade voters to vote for them. Communication and messaging is thus an important part of the primaries.

The primary process in Ghana also normally begins with candidates announcing their interest through various formats and channels (Sikanku, 2018). While some candidates do this through video announcements, other formats such as media interviews, speeches, social media are also employed. The party has a timeline where nomination forms are filled, candidates are vetted, campaigning continues and a candidate is elected at a party convention usually called the national delegates congress. Depending on the political party and the nature of the rules, the voting in the primaries can be open to members of the political party or selected delegates. During the 2016 presidential primaries for the National Democratic Congress in Ghana, the party opened up the voting process for all members of the party. However most times the flagbearer is elected through delegates elected at the district, regional and national level. Once the party opens up the nomination process candidates engage in all sorts of campaigning in order to perpetuate their personalities and policies. Here again the media and communication are central to the primary campaign.

In a continuously interconnected and globalized world, where technology and new media continue to shape social, cultural and political life, most candidates are learning new and innovative ways of conducting their campaigns from developed or dominant democracies like the United States (Chafee, Zhao & Leshner, 1994; Tewksbury, 2006). It has also been established that the primary and general elections in the US, tend to garner global attention. This research furthers political communication research by comparing the primary campaign announcement video of a US

candidate and a Ghanaian presidential aspirant. While election campaigns have been examined within national contexts, there is little research on primary campaigns and even fewer studies have done this from a cross-national or comparative perspective. This underscores the significance of this research

To be sure, research on presidential primary campaigns is also important because as Trent et al “ as candidates seek all possible arenas of political talk during the primary stage of the campaign, voters can see on a first-hand basis just how candidates handle themselves verbally and non-verbally. The information they receive aids in determining or readjusting their opinions. According to scholars such as Patterson, the first and early images and perceptions that voters form about the candidates can be crucial because they tend to last throughout the campaign. First impressions do count, after all in presidential campaigns too. This further illuminates the relevance of this research because the data being analysed constitutes the very first campaign communication roll out by the candidates in seeking the nomination for their parties from two different democracies.

## **Framing Theory**

One of the best known theories employed in the academic study of communication messages is framing. Robert Entman (1993), defined framing as the process of selecting “some aspect of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in a way that can promote a certain definition, interpretation, moral evaluation or treatment recommendation” (p. 52). Thus framing is employed by both the media and politicians in their communication, articles and messages. During campaigns for instance, political actors are constantly presenting messages in order to frame themselves and policies.

Framing is concerned with how communication messages portray issues, events or personalities (Hertog & McLeod, 2001; Gitlin, 1981; Downs, 2002; Entman, 1991). In this research, media frames refer to how political candidates select some aspect of “reality” and use it to build their identities, the selection and emphasis of certain aspects of their identities and the various ways in which such messages are constructed (Entman,

1993; Esser & D'Angelo, 2002, Sikanku 2013). In framing certain devices help in the construction of framed messages and identities. These devices include key words, quotes, metaphors, historical references, ideologies, catchphrases, graphics, descriptions, contexts and visual images (Gamson, 1989; Dimitrova, Kaid, Williams & Trammell, 2005; Gamson & Modigliani, 1989). This is relevant to the current study because it will help to unearth the key frames messages and narratives contained in the campaign launch videos by John Mahama and Elizabeth Warren.

In political campaigns one of the important ways through which politicians set themselves apart is through well-crafted communication events and messages that seek to shape public attitudes about their persona and what they stand for. Carragee and Roefs (2004:17) alludes to this when he asserts that "...frames construct particular meaning concerning issues by their pattern of emphasis, interpretation and exclusion". Bateson (2006) also applied the concept of framing to non-verbal messages through his explication of how actions, cues and other non-verbal behaviour can signify meaning within the political, social and cultural space. Thus by using certain non-verbal cues such as background images, gestures and other body movements. Taken from a broad perspective framing is a relevant concept that helps to understand the construction and presentation of self, image and policies in communication and media messages. The concept will be combined with another key theory in political communication (functional theory of political communication) to help analysed the messages contained in the campaign videos being examined.

## **Functional Theory of Political Communication**

Research in political communication has often used the functional theory of political communication analyse campaign messages and communication products (Benoit & Harthcock, 1999, Sikanku, Boadi, Aziz & Fordjour, 2019). The theory sets out certain functions of communication during campaigns: acclaims, attacks and defences. Messages can also be evaluated on policy (past deeds, general goals, future plans) and character (personal qualities, leadership abilities and ideals) components. The underlying assumption of the theory is that campaign messages are functional in nature with the key goal of shaping voter

perceptions of candidates and persuading them to garner votes (Cho & Benoit, 2005, Borah, 2016).

In arriving at the core category of functions of campaign messages, the theory lays forth certain assumptions: first that in elections voters make comparative decisions as they decide who to vote for, second that candidates standing for office try to distinguish themselves from their opponents positively, third that generally campaign messages offer candidates the chance to offer contrasting views of themselves, fourth candidates persuade the audience through acclaiming, attacking and defending and finally that campaign discourse can broadly be categorized into policy and character messages (Cho & Benoit, 2006, Benoit, 2014a, Benoit, 2014b).

Acclaims are statements that project the candidate in a positive light in order to enhance their image in the minds of voters. This includes stating achievements or accomplishments of the candidates (Benoit & Hartcock, 1999). This is normally considered the safest choice. Attacks are used to making the opposing candidate less desirable for voters by highlighting their weaknesses. This can be either on a policy issue or character issue. Defence statements are used when candidates want to respond to attacks, restore their image or address a perceived weakness and general control damage the candidate may have suffered (Fordjour, 2014, Sikanku, Boadi, Aziz & Fordjour). This theory is thus appropriate for the examination of campaign messages in the current study. While past research has examined campaign communication within various countries, the study hopes to expand research in political communication and language studies by applying an established and widely used theory within a comparative context.

## **Methodology**

This study employed textual analysis to analyse the data on campaign communication for two leading candidates from two different democracies. Ghana is often recognized for its trail blazing credentials in Africa's democratic march and the United States is seen a paragon of global democracy. Textual analysis is a key methodological approach used

to analyse language, discourse and most forms of communication to find out the major frames or underlying themes and how the text or speech is working to construct identities or establish narratives (Sikanku, 2013, Lindlof, 2002, Sikanku, Boadi, Aziz & Fordjour, 2019). According to Fairclough texts can be seen as “social events” performed through speech or writing. Most scholars perceive textual analysis as a methodological tool to help researchers understand how people makes sense of the world (Fairclough, 2003; Sikanku & Amoakohene, 2014).

This is relevant for this study because politicians are constantly constructing reality and projecting their interoperations of the society to the masses (Pauly, 1991). Such a method will therefore help to understand how political actors are painting reality, projecting images, shaping perceptions, producing meanings and expressing standpoints or propositions. The analysis of the video will also be observed for any meaningful non-verbal features. For instance what kinetic (gesture, body movement, and physical activity) or non-verbal actions are both candidates using to frame themselves, their policies, ideologies and messages? According to McKee (2003) “whenever we produce an interpretation of something's meaning—a book, television programme, film, magazine, T-shirt or kilt, piece of furniture or ornament ± we treat it as a text. A text is something that we make meaning from” (p.4). The analysis that follows will therefore employ such an approach to interpret and understand the various elements of the campaign announcement video by both John Mahama and Senator Elizabeth Warren to help analyse their social construction of reality.

This research can be placed within the context of an exploratory study interested in comparing democratic campaigns between two countries that are often viewed as leading democracies in their various continents. Moreover there is no denying the leading role American democracy has played worldwide. This research presents an important opportunity to compare political campaign communication or messaging because such exercises can enhance understandings of campaigns within countries while illuminating any similarities and differences to enhance democratic practice. There is definitely something to be gained from such analysis

from theoretical, academic and practical standpoints. According to Dimitrova and Stromback (2005) “...comparative studies more than single-nation studies have the potential to provide an antidote to naive universalism, to enhance the understanding of one’s own country by placing its familiar characteristics against those of other systems” (p.400).

## **Results**

### **Functional Analysis of John Mahama’s Presidential Primary Announcement Video**

As delineated in the functional theory of political communication, acclaim is usually the most applied function by political actors (Brazeal & Benoit, 2001, Benoit, 2007). Consistent with this, an analysis of John Mahama campaign video found that acclaims were used more than any other function by John Mahama. The theory states that acclaims are the functions with the most benefits and least negative connotations. Politicians therefore use this function mostly use acclaims in order to portray themselves in a positive and palatable manner to the voters. In introducing himself John Mahama spoke about his previous work in government emphasizing that the work that was started in his administration was aimed at “positioning Ghana as a true middle-income country by modernizing our dilapidated social and economic infrastructure”.

John Mahama is acclaiming his previous work in government by asserting his contributions to Ghana’s middle –income aspirations. This is related to Ghana’s economic aspect of national development. John Mahama’s projection of his previous work and economic capabilities is by way of providing the social and economic infrastructure to support the economic system compared to Elizabeth Warren who believes that addressing income inequalities within the economy, fighting for economic justice and providing a level playing field will help to address the economic problems citizens face in her country.

In the next form of acclaim John Mahama articulates his desire to seek the presidency again as a response to popular support, religious duty and personal introspection.

I've taken into consideration the groundswell of support, the never-ending calls and encouragement from a large section of our party Elders, members of our party, supporters and Ghanaians from diverse backgrounds. I have prayed diligently about task ahead. And I believe I owe a duty to God and my country to take our great party back into government.

This can be viewed as an act of acclaim because Mahama tries to portray himself as the people's person, a man of reflection and religious devotion. Thus he brings to fore a critical aspect of Ghanaian political campaigns—the attempt by candidates to foreground religious cues as a possible way to connect with the audience within the public sphere. There is very little of any such religious frames present in Elizabeth Warren's video announcement.

However in the same statement where John Mahama talks about responding to popular calls and engaging in prayers, he admits in the same breath that he might have committed certain errors in his previous term which he hopes to correct if given the chance again. The former president makes what can be classified as both a defence and attack statement when he says he hopes to bring his party back into power to “to right the wrongs of the past and put an end to the cries of the people under the current dispensation.” It's an attack statement because there is implicit attribution of blame on the current administration's governance which Ghanaians need to be rescued from due to their “cries”. It appears then, that the former president while admitting his own errors from the past attempt to guise or reduce the effect of his admission by using noticeably strong and emotional language to describe the current administration from whose hands Ghanaians need to be saved.

There are other examples of acclaims. John Mahama's statement that "the 2020 election presents our party the NDC with a great opportunity to offer yet again visionary leadership..." shows that Mahama is laying claim to the mantle of visionary leadership. This acclaim is apparent to readers or listeners because of the preceding words "'offer yet again" meaning it is a claim that the former president is making in relation to his previous leadership efforts.

## **Framing Analysis: John Mahama's Announcement Video**

### **One Ghana Agenda: Continuity and Infrastructural Development**

While the statements in the announcement videos can be analysed using the functional theory of political communication, another common way to assess political statements is through the approach of framing (Sikanku & Amoakohene, 2014). Political information such as these can be analysed to ascertain the dominant frames. The first frame that is observed is that of continuity and infrastructural development. John Mahama, is basically making the case that a vote for him will enable him to continue with the infrastructural development he started during his time in office. He lays the foundation for this by employing a subtle, almost unnoticeable statement on the current "socio-economic" state of the country and the fact that he sees a "clear path" for his chances. The former president then says his goal is to help position Ghana as a "true middle-income country by modernizing our dilapidated social and economic infrastructure". In the same sentence he talks about "gradually inculcating in the Ghanaian a sense of patriotism, self-belief and commitment to a one Ghana agenda". There is no further explanation as to how he hopes to achieve it or any elaboration on the "one Ghana agenda". Certainly, one would wonder the semantic difference between the "Better Ghana" agenda of the Mills administration during which was Vice president and the current proposal for a one Ghana agenda.

## **Righting Wrongs and Ending Suffering**

Embedded in John Mahama's announcement video is the idea that his aspiration for the presidency is both a response to the "groundswell of support, the never ending calls and encouragement from a large section of our party". John Mahama is framing his comeback as a clamour from the masses. He also uses religious cues to frame his comeback as a spiritual and divine duty saying "I have prayed diligently about the task ahead. And I believe I owe a duty to God and my country..." This association with religion is not surprising as religion and spirituality has been a common aspect of Ghanaian cultural and political life. It is also consistent with the concept of framing where scholars posit that speech or communication is often constructed in such a way as to resonate with previously embedded cultural, social or religious attitudes already embedded in the minds of audiences (Goffman, 1974; Entman, 1991). Frames become powerful tools of political communication when political actors establish a link between already embedded or establish cultural, religious or social cues and values and the messages they communicate. However the religious reference is broad and not as specific as it may have been probably in a democracy like the United States where specific issues with religious connotations such as abortion, marriage and family values are closely tied to Christian religious beliefs.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of this frame is his admission that being president again will enable him to "right the wrongs of the past..." Certainly this is an admission of failings and wrong doing during his first term in government although there are no specifics. This is a big deal particularly because politicians are not always likely to admit fault. In fact, it is quite a prominent gesture particularly in African politics, where the idea of an all-powerful "big man" politician hardly leads them to such periods of supplication, however subtle.

In establishing this frame, there is once again a subtle attack when the former president says he is seeking to be president again in order to put "an end to the cries of the people under the current dispensations." We would also have to acknowledge the references to "party elders". This is because from a contextual perspective, the limited involvement of

mainstream, grassroots and establishment party elders was one of the recurrent themes that came up in public discussions and analysis regarding his party (the NDC'S) loss in the 2016 general elections. It was therefore important that the former president name-checked this constituency as he announced his candidature.

### **Shared Prosperity**

John Mahama framed his ideological position as grounded in “shared prosperity”. There are no further details to this but the former president speaks on “visionary leadership driven by commitment to create opportunities for all...” In framing analysis, the use of key words or phrases is one means through which frames determined. The use of the key words “collective”, “shared” and the repetitive use of “all”, are key to deciphering or constructing his frame of collectivism or ‘shared prosperity’ (Entman, 1993). However it must be said that the use of the phrases, labels and ideological position is without any key source or reasons for motivating such positioning or grounding. There are also no further elaborations or further details on this ideological framework. In addition there is a reference to being a “servant leader but here again, there are no further elaborations or enough data to analyse this labelling into details.

## **Framing Analysis: Elizabeth Warren’s Announcement Video**

### **Economic Justice**

Elizabeth Warren couched her policy frame in terms of economic justice characterising economic conditions in America as unequally divided. The introductory sentences in any communication material is extremely significant as it foregrounds or puts forth the most significant assertions or ideological viewpoints. Right from the beginning of the video Senator Warren states: “In our country if you work hard and play by the rules you ought to be able to take care of yourself and the people you love. That’s a fundamental promise of America. A promise that should be true for every.”

As a former University Professor and leading scholar on America's economy, Warren's decision to weave her presidential campaign around this theme is not surprising. Warren ensconces this frame around the idea of America's promise stating that many families have slipped "into disaster, calling it "terrifying". Here he is clearly using fear appeals to rouse the economically disadvantaged. To a greater extent than John Mahama, Elizabeth Warren does not shy away from using such strong and emotive words stating that "America's middle class in under attack.... Our government's supposed to work for all of us. But instead it has become a tool for the wealthy. And well-connected. The whole scam is propped up by an echo chamber. Fear and hate designed to distract and divide us race people who will do or say anything to hang on to power."

Against this background, the data above provides enough grounds to decipher a frame of economic equality and justice among Americans. From an ideological viewpoint, Elizabeth Warren's statement are definitely populist in nature with economic fairness serving as the main issue around which such a frame is constructed.

## **Life Story**

Elizabeth Warren's announcement video is also dominated by a personal narrative made up of her family story and history. As with most American speeches or communication messages, there are references to her father's middle-class status and her mother's low income job earnings. Attention is also paid to how they worked hard to provide her with an education and her path from such modest beginnings to a senate career:

After my older brothers joined the military and I was still just a kid my daddy had a heart attack and couldn't work. My mom found a minimum wage job at Sears and that job saved our house and our family. My daddy ended up as a janitor but he raised a daughter who got to be a public school teacher. A law professor and a senator. We got a real opportunity to build something. Working families today face a lot tougher path as my family did.

The presidential announcement stage of a campaign is an important time to frame and construct one's political identity. Warren seizes this opportunity to frame her political persona by showing how her personal upbringing, education and experiences will help her to address what she considers to be a fundamental problem in America: economic inequality. In the data analysed, it is clear that Warren is not just introducing herself or announcing her ambitions but quickly takes the opportunity to construct her identity with the hope of connecting to voters by identifying with them. The most significant interpretation of this frame is that as people see themselves in her story and in her construction of America's social (discrimination) and economic (hardship/inequality) reality they tend to identify, warm up or be sometimes energized by the candidate and her message. Major support for this aforementioned frame construction is seen in the example below: "And families of color face a path that is steeper and rockier a path made even harder by the impact of generations of discrimination. I've spent my career getting to the bottom of why America's Promise works for some families but others who work just as hard. Slip through the cracks into disaster. What I found is terrifying."

### **Wall Street Sheriff and Fighter**

Elizabeth Warren projects herself, under this frame, as a fighter against a constituency she considers partly responsible for economic disparity and inequalities—Wall Street. One of several voiceovers in her video reads: Elizabeth Warren apparently not afraid to tangle with Wall Street with Warren is heading into the lion's den. Warren goes to Washington. We created America's first consumer watchdog to hold the big banks account.

For a long time Elizabeth Warren has researched and worked in the area of economy inequality and consumer protection. She was instrumental in the creation of the consumer protection bureau under Barack Obama. In this frame Warren is representing herself as a core protagonist for consumers and the economically disadvantaged. Within the context of a presidential primary we can make a few observations. That the economic considerations will be a major site for political contestation particularly within the Democratic Party. Due in part, to the Democratic Party's loss in the 2016 election and also a desire to appeal to the populist elements of

the party, it is not surprising that Warren adopts such an economically populist and aggressive tone in order to appeal to primary voters. She does this energetically, forcefully and aggressively taking on the image of a fighter or perhaps a “fighting economic populist” stating that: “to be able to work hard play by the same set of and take care of the people we love. That's the America I'm fighting for. And that's why today I'm launching an exploratory committee for president. But the outcome of this election.”

## **Inspiration and American Values**

There's a pattern of inspiration and a nod towards American values in Elizabeth Warren's campaign launch video:

We can make our democracy works for all of us. We can make our economy work for all of us. We can rebuild America's middle class but this time we gotta build it for everyone no matter where you live in America. And no matter where your family came from in the world you deserve a path to opportunity because no matter what our differences most of us want the same thing.

Charisma, rousing rhetoric and highlighting historical America values has been a long held trope or narrative in American politics. These cultural and symbolic artefacts of communication allows Warren to tap into underlying aspects of American political culture while connecting emotionally with voters away from the policy, facts and figures. Warren further achieves this through the use of parallelism as a rhetorical strategy to connect to voters on an emotional level: “To protect the promise of America. And here's what. If we organize together if we fight together if we persist together. We can win. We can and we will.”

In political communication language is significant in the sense that it used to achieve certain ideological, cultural and political ends. Politicians use words and rhetorical devices to establish mythological, emotional and psychological templates to connect with voter sentiments beliefs, feelings and attitudes. Warrens repetitive use of the word “us”, her reference to

“the promise of America”, and use of “together” all help to establish some connection with voter sentiments on different levels.

## **Functional Analysis of Elizabeth Warren’s Video Acclaims**

Similar to John Mahama’s video Elizabeth Warren’s exploratory launch video contains mostly acclaims and attacks but with no defence statement. Elizabeth makes claims about how her career and upbringing are well suited to address America’s economic crisis:

I've spent my career getting to the bottom of why America's Promise works for some families but others who work just as hard. Slip through the cracks into disaster. What I found is terrifying. After Wall Street crashed our economy in 2008 I left the classroom to go to Washington and confront the broken system head on. Elizabeth Warren apparently not afraid to tangle with Wall Street with Warren is heading into the lion's den. Warren goes to Washington.

Warren deftly brings up what she sees as fundamentally wrong with America’s economy and then at the same time presents herself as being rightly suited to solve the situation. Few would disagree with the fact that in many respects the campaign announcement video us an early opportunity to begin constructing one’s identity in the most preferred manner. Most of these images might last long with voters. The campaign announcement video is therefore an important and critical part of the primary stage because it can have far reaching consequences. It is therefore not surprising that Elizabeth Warren presents herself in a forceful manner as the best placed candidate to address the economic needs of Americans. An important aspect of presidential campaigns is the self-image that one presents to the audience. Acclaims grant candidates the opportunity to do this as we see again in this example below:

We created America's first consumer watchdog to hold the big banks accountable... I never thought I'd

run for office not in a million years. But when Republican senators tried to sabotage the reforms have run me out of town. I went back to Massachusetts and ran against one of them. And I beat it.

Yet again in this example candidate Warren is presenting herself as a reformer, reminding voters of her role in forming the consumer watchdog protection agency, the role played by Republic Senators, in her view, by obstructing or sabotaging the process and her personal efforts in being part of the political system by running for office and winning. To a large extent, these acclaims by Elizabeth Warren also demonstrate the nature of American political campaigns and political culture. The importance of directly and forcefully stating one's achievements is quite striking here compared the Ghanaian political and cultural system where such upfront assertions may be deemed too direct, aggressive or pointed.

## **Attack**

Whereas politicians normally attack opponents, as we saw in the John Mahama video, one striking thing about Elizabeth Warren's video is that her attacks are focused on corporations, the financial system and politics or politicians in general. Warren thus tries to appeal to the independent voter by not sounding too partisan. This approach also allows her to amass some amount of authenticity as it's quite different from the normal political attacks.

These aren't cracks that families are falling into their traps. America's middle class is under attack. How do we get here? Billionaires and big corporations decided they wanted more of the pie. And they enlisted politicians to cut them a fatter slice that crippled unions. So no one could stop to turn the base loose.

In the examples that follow, we see further support of attacks by Warren, not necessarily on political opponents but on "corruption", "politicians"

and “big insurance companies”. She thus succeeds in engaging in a balancing act where she is able to register the angst and antipathy of voters while not sounding overly partisan. It leaves Warren as practical, authentic and relatable. Here is another example:

Today corruption is poisoning our democracy. Politicians look the other way. While big insurance companies deny patients lifesaving coverage while big banks rip off consumers and while big oil companies destroy this planet. Our government's supposed to work for all of us. But instead it has become a tool for the wealthy.

### **Analysis of Non-Verbal Cues**

According to scholars non-verbal or stylistic elements are a major part of political communication. They contribute to shaping the message or information that politicians tend to convey to their audiences. An analysis of these elements help to present a more complete picture or big picture of any communication product or message. The literature identifies non-verbal elements as constituting elements such as the background or setting, kinesics (gesture, body movement, and physical activity), appearance and tone of the speech. According to Trent, Friedenberg and Denton (2011) non-verbal or stylistic aspects of communication include “...aspects of communication—including physical behaviour, sound of the voice, body shape and movement, appearance, clothing, and choice of settings—that operate as symbols to create meanings we infer from the transaction” (p.70).

Along these lines, certain non-verbal indicator were identified to aid in the analysis. They include the following: (a) physical behaviour, (b) demeanour (c) appearance (d) setting and (e) structure/format. The table below further explains these indicators. The non-verbal cues will be analysed according to these elements.

### **Analysis of John Mahama’s Non-verbal Cues**

In terms of physical behaviour, former President Mahama was confident and relaxed. He sat throughout the video and had appropriate gestures with

his hands. Though Mahama looked relaxed the fact that he sat behind a desk and later throughout the video projected a laissez faire approach. It didn't make him look energetic. The presence of a desk and use of the computer can sometimes be a barrier symbolically. It could paint an image of formality, authority, power or bureaucracy. Perhaps that was the point of the video to show the former president as serious and competent within an official scene.

He wasn't overly exuberant, goofy and jittery. Given his long experience in politics, it is not surprising that Mahama appears quite comfortable with the medium. In terms of demeanour he is calm, has an even disposition and well in control of his emotions. He doesn't look angry. There is some serenity, peacefulness and steadiness about him in the video. The third non-verbal cue has to do with appearance. The former president chose to wear a traditional Ghanaian shirt. This was his signature attire when he was president. The attire symbolized nationalism and patriotism through his showcasing of a made in Ghana shirt. To the extent that framing involves how one presents or represents himself, we can say that the use of a locally made attire readily connects him to lots of Ghanaians and the common man because it evokes feelings of nationalism. The setting is composed of a large flag of Ghana and Mahama's portrait. The flag, clearly, is indicative of a love for Ghana or patriotism. The background could have worked perfectly with just the flag. In terms of the overall structure or format of the video, it wasn't long and overly boring. It went straight to the point and the NDC anthem was sure to evoke some emotional feelings among party members. However former President John Mahama could have interested the video with scenes showing him in action. He could have employed the use of more graphics instead of him sitting behind the desk the entire time. A tabular representation of the analytical instrument used for analysing the non-verbal cues is presented below:

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Description</b>
Physical Behaviour/kinesics: gestures, body movement, eye gaze	This includes, positioning, hand, body movement, mannerisms
Demeanour, tone, temperament, mood, delivery	The facial appearance of the person, general mood or temperament of the candidate (For example: well composed/presidential, dull/laid back; forceful, energetic, persuasive, compelling?). What do all of this signify?
Appearance/Clothing	Physical attire won by the candidate and what it is signified.
Choice of settings/background	The scene or set up of the video and what it conveyed. Any signs or symbols present should be considered
Discourse practice: structure and workability of language/rhetorical strategies	Overall format and presentation and its workability. Choice of words and language used.

In terms of the structural presentation, a few other things were noticeable. First was the foregrounding party over national elements. The video begins with the NDC logo and the NDC anthem playing at the background. The privileging of the NDC symbols and music is worth noting. Here, the party signifiers are privileged over national symbols. These symbols serve a functional role in terms of connecting with partisan supporters. In the partisan world these elements help to frame the candidate as a party chieftain which is important particularly in a presidential primary. The words “The Mahama Declaration” are written on the background once John Mahama makes his first appearance in the video. The explanation that renders itself most plausible at this point will be that in a party primary the candidate considered the target audience—which was the NDC party members—as his major focus.

## **Analysis of Elizabeth Warren’s Non-Verbal Cues**

An analysis of Elizabeth Warren’s video shows quite clearly a distinct difference in terms of their non-verbal cues compared to former president Mahama’s video. Warren’s physical behaviour, body movements or kinesics are substantial evidence of appropriate and effective application of non-verbal communication. She gets it right by standing instead sitting. This makes her energetic and engaging. It renders her body movement less boring and presenting her as agile. It’s a departure from former President Mahama’s video where he sits throughout his video presentation. While Warren is excitable, Mahama’s physical behaviour is a bit muted.

Elizabeth Warren’s second scene has her performing some motherly duties; specifically she is bathing a child. That’s vastly different from sitting behind a desk. It portrays Warren as warm, caring and as someone who engages in everyday homely tasks. Her physical behaviour tends to reflect or affect her demeanour. She is pleasant, relatable and well measured. In addition Warren is seen as active, passionate and immediately engages the audience with the video. Her appearance therefor matches her message of economic equality for the everyday person and her general demeanour. The fact that she is not wearing a suit or anything formal adds to this presentation of herself as quite “ordinary”.

Elizabeth Warren’s most poignant non-verbal cues has to do with her settings or background: a kitchen with cabinets, microwave and utensils in the scenes. She stands in a kitchen which portrays a homely scenario and representative of a working class home. The video is interspersed with gentle music or sound tracks. She intersperses her video with stand ups, voice overs, sounds on tape or soundbites and pictures to represent her message instead of using just her image throughout the video. It’s an effective piece of videography. Where she needs to be angry we see it in her expressions especially when she says “these aren’t cracks that families are falling into, these are traps...America’s middle class is under attack.” The anger and seriousness is seen in her face and so it works very effectively to convey her message or the depth of the situation she’s describing.

## Conclusion

This research makes important contributions to the field of comparative political communications research. The research had three objectives: to ascertain the functions of political communication present in the campaign announcement videos of John Mahama and Elizabeth Warren, the frames employed in the video and finally to analyse the usage of non-verbal cues. One of the core findings of this research is that acclaims was the most used function of political communication by John Mahama. He made claims which sought to portray him in a positive light when he spoke about his achievements of his administration particularly in terms of infrastructure. He also touted himself as a visionary leader. Three major frames were identified in former President Mahama's video announcement: *One Ghana agenda & infrastructural continuity*, *"righting wrongs and ending suffering"* and *"shared prosperity"*. This shows a president who is staking his claim to presidency on his previous record, admission of certain pitfalls during his previous term, a view that the administration of Akufo-Addo was not delivering and finally that his next term would be one inclusive rather than limited prosperity.

Non-verbal cues were examined along the following indicators: They include the following: (a) physical behaviour, (b) demeanour (c) appearance (d) setting and (e) structure/format. In terms of physical behaviour John Mahama was more laid back, sat throughout the video and used gesticulations, particularly his hand quite a bit. Elizabeth Warren, stood for most part of the video and gesticulated quite a bit too. In terms of demeanour, John Mahama was less gussy and energetic, he looked a bit relaxed. Elizabeth Warren was energetic, forceful and brazen in her video. John Mahama, looked formal in his appearance, wearing traditional Ghanaian clothing. Elizabeth Warren looked less formal and more pumped up in her video. The settings were also palpably different. While John Mahama sat in an office setting with a desk, laptop, bookshelf and Ghanaian flag present, Elizabeth Warren's setting conveyed a humane less formal setting of a kitchen linking it to her economic theme of kitchen table issues. The structure or format of both videos presented some differences too. Elizabeth Warren's video employed the use of graphs, moving video from the past and present, a lot more voice over clips and

moving footage. John Mahama's video was very placid and the structure was just quite narrow. It should John Mahama sitting and delivering his message.

Comparative and international research always presents useful lessons in terms of political and international communication (Sikanku, 2016; Sikanku 2013). John Mahama could have appeared less formal and more relatable. He could have privileged national symbols even more than he did. He could also make his video more compelling exciting by interspersing it with biographical footage. He could also employ the use of more graphics and moving images. Elizabeth Warren could also learn by including some kind of party symbols since this the video is to appeal to primary voters. In terms of culture as well, because traditional clothing is very popular in Ghana, it gave John Mahama a means to demonstrate his symbolism through traditional wear, something that was missing from Elizabeth Warren's video in terms of her wardrobe. Warren was also more engaging and energized. She also hit a home run with the background or setting of a kitchen environment which was a powerful technique in framing her as humane and relatable than the official, formal and top-down power gulf dynamic as we saw in John Mahama's video.

Overall, this research has broadened our understanding of international comparative political communication by analysing campaign videos from leading candidates within two leading democracies from different continents. It helps us understand the framing mechanics, the functional role of political communication and the non-verbal cues that underpin the process of communication in an every changing world of politics within the international democratic space.

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# **HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW OF THE EUROPEAN PARTITION OF WEST AFRICA**

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## **Abstract**

This paper reviews the historiography of the European partition of West Africa. The partition of Africa began in 1879 with French military officers in the Western Sudan. In their motivations, the French and other European governments were largely influenced by economic interests. The trade depression of the late nineteenth century in Europe enhanced the value of African markets for European exports. In addition, the depression adversely affected the terms of trade for African products, as their prices increased at a lesser margin than the prices of imported goods. This led to trade competition and rivalry between European merchants in West Africa, and disputes between the European merchants and African producers and traders. European merchants therefore engaged their chambers of commerce in Europe, who lobbied for government protection by way of annexations in West Africa. While African cooperation accelerated the pace of the European occupation, resistance prolonged the process.

**Keywords:** European imperialism, West Africa, trade rivalry, chamber of commerce, African influence.

## **Introduction**

The European partition of West Africa took place in the period 1870-1914, and it involved the European powers of Britain, France, Germany, Spain, and Portugal, but Britain and France played the major role in the process. This paper reviews the historiography of the partition. The study is based on the discussion of the interrelations between expansionist phenomena at the respective centres of empire, at the peripheries, and African challenges. Within this underlying theme, the study addresses the

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following issues: the timing of the partition, Anglo-French diplomacy, military imperialism, the commercial factor, attraction of the West African interior, and African influence.

## **Timing of the Partition**

Since the fifteenth century European powers had been involved in West Africa. At what time did they officially begin annexing territories in the region? This has been a subject of wide discussion among scholars. According Newbury and Kanya-Forstner (1969), France launched the partition of West Africa in 1879 when it overcame its traditional reluctance to assume the financial and the military burden of colonial expansion. Two government officials were instrumental in the change of policy, and they were influenced largely by the wealth of the Western Sudan and their determination to tap it for France. These officials were Charles de Freycinet, Minister of Public Works and later Prime Minister in 1879 and Admiral Jean Jauréguiberry, Minister of Marines. Through their efforts the government accepted the responsibility of building the Senegal-Niger railway line.

While Freycinet committed the technical and financial resources of his government toward the peaceful extension of French trade and influence by the railway, Jauréguiberry entertained the secret idea of establishing French political influence in the interior by military means, in order to pre-empt an imagined British threat. In the end Jauréguiberry's plans prevailed. The French government later expressed reservations on undertaking the railway projects but Jauréguiberry had already appropriated parts of the funds to construct a series of military forts in the interior. In September 1880 the Admiral placed the Sudan under military command. The activities of Freycinet and Jauréguiberry, according to Newbury and Kanya-Forstner, inaugurated a new era of French expansion not only in West Africa, but the continent at large; "by accepting the political and military implications of an advance to the Niger and by entrusting the execution of his policies to military agents, Jauréguiberry had raised the curtain on the era of imperialism in West Africa." (Newbury and Kanya-Forstner 1969: 264) This interpretation constitutes a corrective to J.D. Hargreaves (1963), who asserts that French official policy underwent no change in the 1870s. Also, King Leopold II of Belgium was advancing in the Congo later in 1879, but

Sanderson (1974:11) observes that Leopold's thrust at the time was merely to ensure commercial and informal influence.

The work of Newbury and Kanya-Forstner contributes remarkably to the timing of the West African partition, especially when it is viewed in conjunction with other findings by Hargreaves, and Newbury. In a separate work, Newbury (1962: 500-501) has demonstrated the relevance of trade protection and tariff issues on the West African coast to the partitioning of the region. He notes that from the 1870s onwards, European administrations on the coast represented different zones in which customs duties, meant to protect revenue and trade, were deliberately skewed against the products of rival powers. These protectionist policies engendered friction among the powers. For example, French traders importing goods into the region through British zones would pay higher customs duties than their British counterparts, especially in the border zones. The same principle applied for British traders working in French areas of influence, and for British and French traders operating in German zones. Newbury argues that the partition of West Africa began in the late 1870s and early 1880s, and protectionist policies played a part in it. Hargreaves (1963: chapter VI) has also shown instances of Anglo-French trade rivalry in specific areas of West Africa in the 1870s and 1880s. Policy-makers sought to contain these frictions by comprehensive agreements such as "Anglo-French Treaty" at various times. But the agreements often broke down, and were largely unsuccessful.

It is agreed among historians that British expansion in West Africa prior to 1895 was limited by a remarkable reluctance by Whitehall to bear the financial cost, and exert itself in areas considered to be of least strategic importance. By 1895, however, British policy on West Africa underwent a transformation and consequently assumed much vigour. The transformation in British policy after 1895 was largely the work of the new Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain. In order to check French incursions into spheres of British influence in West Africa, Chamberlain introduced a tougher policy in dealing with the French, both diplomatically and militarily. In this attitude he was also influenced by his larger aim of promoting the concept of colonial development and welfare: the idea of the state assuming a dominant role in the exploitation of the colonies' economic potentials by

the method of their formal acquisition and development. Kanya-Forstner (1971: 415) agrees with Robinson and Gallagher (1972) that although Chamberlain's doctrine was not revolutionary, his method of attaining that objective constitutes a radical departure from traditional approach. Instead of relying on local revenues and the expectation of short-term gains to finance colonial development, Chamberlain advocated government loans as investment for long-term benefits. And he demonstrated the willingness to employ the military to ensure security for the investments. Kanya-Forstner likened Chamberlain's doctrine and his activities in northern Nigeria to those of Jauréguiberry and Freycinet in the interior of Senegal in the late-1870s and early-1880s. "In their essentials and their consequences, the two doctrines were the same; the only major difference between them was one of timing", argued Kanya-Forstner (1971: 420).

## **Anglo-French Diplomacy**

As already noted, colonial expansion in West Africa was characterized by frequent diplomatic dealings among the European powers, especially between Britain and France, the major players. The works of Hargreaves (1963; 1971; 1974; 1985) discuss the role of Anglo-French diplomacy in the West African partition. According to Hargreaves (1971: 281) the relationship between the two powers in West Africa during the late-nineteenth century constitutes a kind of balancing act which was performed with eyes riveting on the larger national interests of each country. Both Britain and France demonstrated the readiness to settle local disputes by comprehensive agreements, since they regarded those disputes as subordinate to the European balance of power. Between 1894 and 1898 however, imperialist opinion in Europe soured Anglo-French relations, and consequently hampered comprehensive dealings on West African interests. This in turn led to the two powers rushing for territories in West Africa. Thus public opinion, manifesting in the media, in Parliament, and in colonialist pressure groups was the major factor in the partitioning of West Africa. In the case of France this assertion has been qualified; Newbury and Kanya-Forstner (1969: 273) point out that French public opinion had been largely indifferent to the cause of colonial expansion, although it was aroused occasionally to influence specific cases of French imperialism.

In the view of Robinson and Gallagher (1972: 271) French expansion in West Africa can be explained largely in the context of the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. The co-authors assert that prior to 1882 a kind of understanding existed between France and Britain against being drawn into tropical Africa by their merchants and military officers. But the events of 1882 ruptured that rapport, as the French and the Germans seized the opportunity to break the traditional agreement. Henceforth, the two hostile powers began threatening British interests elsewhere in Africa, albeit with different aims. The French sought to dislodge the British out of Egypt because the occupation threatened the French interest of securing the southern shores of the Mediterranean under their domination. Newbury and Kanya-Forstner disagree with the assertion of Robinson and Gallagher. The critics argue that the occupation of Egypt had an insignificant effect on French expansion in West Africa, although it affected Anglo-French relations in general. For Newbury and Kanya-Forstner (1969: 271), Jauréguiberry's protectorate policy did not aim at driving the British out of Egypt; its purpose was to protect French trade in West Africa.

## **Military Imperialism**

Imperialist policies enunciated at the centres of empires did not translate automatically to the outposts. They combined with peripheral forces to produce territorial annexations. These forces include pressure from commercial interest groups, and the activities of European soldiers. Anglo-French rivalry played an important role in the exertions of Chamberlain, as well as Freycinet and Jauréguiberry. Once this mutual antagonism subsided, policy-makers in both countries demonstrated the tendency to respond accordingly, but not the military personnel on the spot who often launched their own initiatives in flagrant disregard of government instructions. Kanya-Forstner (1971) has shown how the *officiers soudanais* took their own offensive against Sekou Ahmadu's and Samori Toure's empires; similarly, Muffett (1964) notes that Lugard's campaign against Kano and Sokoto in 1902-1903 was unauthorized. The men on the spot owed their strength of insubordination to several factors. They constituted a reliable source of information for policy-makers; in France politicians were generally reluctant to criticize the sacrosanct military establishment; in both France and Britain they had connections in high places; until their military plans went awry they

were patriots, far removed from public criticism; and more important, they were invested from the very outset with sweeping powers to deal with local situations as they deemed fit. (Kanya-Forstner 1989: 128-129)

Indeed, the men on the spot and the policy-makers agreed on the primary objective of expansion, being the maintenance of political supremacy on the frontiers of empire. They were also united in the means to obtain that goal; the military personnel as well as their superiors recognised the necessity of the use of force in their ventures. They only quarrelled over the pace, the extent, and the timing of military expansion; on these secondary issues, the men on the spot held sway, and they were influenced by specific ambitions and military strategies. (Kanya-Forstner 1971: 426) Some of these influence somewhat distinguished French officers from their British counterparts, and accordingly the character of British military imperialism from that of the French.

Kanya-Forstner (1971: 429) points out that the British officers lacked the professional standing of their French counterparts. While the *officiers soudanais* were lured to the Western Sudan by opportunities of rapid and brilliant careers, British officers were attracted by economic interests, sport and adventure. Furthermore, British and French officers differed in their notions on the nature of African opposition they expected to face in West Africa. The French marines envisaged an unaccommodating attitude from the Islamic states of the Western Sudan, and were therefore determined to meet it with uncompromising stance. The British officers were rather less concerned in their thoughts with the Islamic menace. However, French and British officers entertained similar ambitions in many respects; they expressed concern with ensuring military security and maintaining European prestige in their domains. As Hargreaves (1963: 32) puts it, the French officers were influenced by “arrogant distaste for their African opponents.” They were also preoccupied with something more important; “like their policy-makers they considered the imposition of unchallenged political control essential for economic development and for security from foreign rivals... In the end military imperialism was but the imperialism of the official mind writ large”, observed Kanya Forstner (1971: 433).

## **Commercial Factor**

As the renowned historian Hopkins (1973: 164) aptly observed: “Trade first brought the Europeans to Africa in the fifteenth century, and trade remained the basis of their relations with the continent from then onwards.” Hopkins’ statement is especially relevant to West Africa, and therefore points to the significance of the commercial factor in the West African partition. According to Hopkins (1973: 148-161) West Africa’s foreign trade was affected by a crisis in the late-nineteenth century, after several decades of satisfactory performance. Falling commodity prices worsened the problems of West African producers in adjusting to the structural change in trade, involving a transition from slave commerce to trade in ‘legitimate’ goods. Rivalry and competition developed between the African producers and merchants on the one hand, and traditional rulers on the other hand. This bred tension and strife in the African interior.

European merchants on the West African coast who were similarly hit by the adverse barter terms of trade and reduced profits, also fought among themselves. As the trade depression continued, Hopkins argues, trade malpractices developed, as African and European traders sought to alleviate their worsening conditions. The malpractices included adulteration of goods, perpetrated by both African producers and European merchants, and withholding of supplies by the former. Under these circumstances, European merchants resorted to the aid of their governments for the establishment of law and order in the West African interior. Their demands, as Hopkins has attempted to show, were taken up and strengthened in the metropolis by their respective Chambers of Commerce.

Hopkins (1973: 159-161) however notes that the crisis of legitimate commerce in West Africa was only one factor in the partition of the West African interior; it conjoined with another factor to produce European expansion in the region during the 1890s: European rivalry and competition, particularly trade competition between British and French firms. When French firms were bought off the Niger in 1884 the French realized the futility of challenging British supremacy commercially. With the entry of the German government to protect its traders on the west coast France decided

to adopt a more aggressive policy. Henceforth, French expansion into the interior depended on marines rather than on traders.

Newbury (1988: 56) offers some qualifications to Hopkins' findings. According to Newbury the trade depression of the late-nineteenth century really occurred in the period between 1884 and 1888, not in 1873 as Hopkins opined. The depression did severely affect those markets of palm oil and kernel, which were already racked by falling prices. But the depression hardly affected the exports of European manufactures to West Africa. In Newbury's opinion, the crisis in legitimate commerce alone constitutes a limited factor in explaining the West African partition. Its significance, he agrees with Hopkins, lay in the context of the prevailing international competition. Similar to Newbury, recent research by Frankema, Williamson and Woltjer (2018: 250) indicates that the decline in terms of trade for African commodities occurred after 1885, and the decline rather reflected high increase in the cost of imported goods and less increase in export prices.

Other research findings summarized by Law (1995) have indicated that African entrepreneurs initially experienced challenges in adjusting to legitimate commerce, but soon trade developed and flourished and African entrepreneurs including rulers adapted. In some coastal areas such as Old Calabar, the ruling elite continued to dominate the economy including the developing trade in legitimate products. Also, many ruling elites employed the slaves in the local economy. Asante, for example, sold gold to European traders at the coast and increased the export of kola nuts to the interior of West Africa. Dahomey would engage simultaneously in the slave trade and production of palm oil. The commercial transition did involve introduction of small-scale producers but they were largely dominated by the ruling elites. This monopoly, European commercial interests would not tolerate.

In the case of Portugal and Spain, Smith (1988: 216-219) has demonstrated that they were severely affected by the trade depression of the late nineteenth century and therefore sought protectionism at home and external markets in Africa. In Portugal, the *Banco Nacional Ultramarine* was a vested interest, providing credit for the development of plantations in Sao Thome and Cape Verde islands, and Angola; the bank also served as commodity broker for

coffee exports to Portugal. Shipping entrepreneurs clamoured for colonial monopoly, as Portugal lacked an industrial base for the production of steamers and coal, and therefore suffered international competition due to their inadequacy in transitioning from sail to steam by 1880. In 1881 the *Empresa Nacional de Navegacao* won a government contract excluding foreign shipping to West African ports under Portuguese influence. Spanish colonies in West Africa included Fernando Po and Rio Muni, and Smith (1988: 226) notes that the Spanish textile industry and shipping entrepreneurs were powerful economic groups in Spanish colonization of West Africa.

Hopkins (1973: 159), Sanderson (1974; 1985) and Mommsen (1988) have shown that Bismarck's annexations of Togo and Cameroons in July-August 1885 were precipitated by the desire to offer protection for German traders, after the British government declined Bismarck's request for British protection for a German trader in South West Africa. Otherwise, Mommsen (1988: 153) notes that Bismarck's "map of Africa was in Europe", meaning Bismarck's colonial policy was based on diverting France and Britain away from Europe where Germany's hegemony had emerged. Hopkins' interpretation of "crisis in legitimate commerce" points to the influence of commercial pressure in European expansion during the late-nineteenth century. Hargreaves (1960: 100-107) rightly notes that European merchants in Africa somewhat engaged their governments into the continent, but the precise definition of their role is often an elusive task for the historian. This task involved dealing with such issues as merchants' demands, government attitude towards merchants, and political or sociological conditions prevailing in the metropolis. Nevertheless, Hargreaves demonstrates how the demands of French merchants especially C. A. Verminck found a sympathetic ear in Maurice Rouvier, who would head the Ministry of Commerce in 1881. Rouvier consequently championed a more vigorous anti-British policy for the entire West African coast in the early 1880s.

According to Robinson and Gallagher (1972: 389-391), British merchants in West Africa were unsuccessful at lobbying their government for expansion, as the British government viewed the trade and revenue of its establishments in West Africa between 1890 and 1895 as too inadequate to warrant

territorial annexation on their behalf. In addition, British traders disappointed their government by failing to take trade inland. In the Niger, however, the activities of the Royal Niger Company were very promising, and therefore enticed government backing by way of a commercial charter.

Newbury and Kanya-Forstner (1969: 274) outline the efforts of French commercial interests at lobbying their government for protection and support in the second half of the nineteenth century. The commercial interests included Bordeaux merchants and the firms of *Maurel et Prom*, *Verminck* and *C.F.A.E.* These companies were backed by the local Senegalese administration, especially by Governor Louis-Alexandre Brière d'Isle. According to Newbury and Kanya-Forstner, the merchant group did not constitute a monolithic community, however; they differed among themselves over issues such as government taxation, and the funding of local administration. Furthermore government support, if forthcoming, was calculated to serve the national interest which is often distinguished from private concerns.

In Hopkins' opinion (1973: 155), commercial interest groups on the frontiers and in the metropolis lobbied their governments for more active policies when their trading interests were jeopardized. This practice represented a radical departure from the heretofore policy of resisting governmental expansion, which was associated with greater control and increased taxes. More important, the merchants in West Africa also demonstrated an unusual readiness to accept higher taxation to finance their requests during the late nineteenth century. Hopkins expressed his inability to demonstrate from inadequate data the exact relationship between commercial pressure and annexationist decisions reached during the period. However, (Hopkins 1973: 161) asserts that "governments were subjected to considerable and increasing pressures" which achieved varying success in different European countries.

Newbury (1988: 50-52) disputes Hopkins' contention that West African merchants unanimously displayed the willingness to accept administrative interventions and its costs. Newbury argues that the various problems of trade such as the fall in commodity prices, interior anarchy and European

rivalry did not have similar effects on all sectors of the West African coast. Moreover merchants and traders were far from constituting a homogenous commercial community. As Newbury points out, different strategies were adopted by the merchant community to combat the problems, only some of which coincided with imperial annexation. Newbury (1988: 37) also questioned the strength of commercial pressure for governmental expansion; he notes that, “detailed analysis of chambers of commerce records indicates that merchants were consulted, frequently petitioned, and held views about African markets but were not necessarily instrumental in forcing decisions about partition.”

Newbury’s findings are relevant to Laffey’s work on French imperialism. Laffey (1974: 89) attempts to explain the motive of French municipal imperialism in the late-nineteenth century, and he asserts that the chambers of commerce of such municipalities as Bordeaux, Marseille and Lyons took their economic interests to the colonial plane in the nineteenth century. Laffey argues that the Chambers were consistent and powerful supporters of French expansion overseas. And they did so out of economic considerations. Laffey however fails to establish a strong link between the influence of the chambers of commerce and official expansionist decisions reached on Africa, be it general or specific.

According to Ratcliffe (1979) the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, which represented the interests of Lancaster merchants, became actively involved in West African affairs in the 1890s. The Chamber was influenced by the lobby of its members who were trading on the West African coast, and the chamber became concerned by the threat of rising French competition and French tariff policy. Ratcliffe argues that the objective of Manchester’s political pressure was not for territorial annexation but for the promotion of free trade through a more vigorous policy. Ratcliffe does not explain how the Chamber influenced the government, be it successful or not.

W.G. Hynes’ comprehensive study complements the work of Ratcliffe. Hynes (1979) argues that by the mid-1880s Liverpool and Manchester Chambers of Commerce, influenced by British merchants in West Africa, began to lobby their government for expansion into the entire coastline of

West Africa, including both areas under the influence of other European powers, and those unoccupied. In the early 1890s mercantile pressure reached a head, and its demands extended from the coast to the West African interior. Hynes demonstrates a connexion between the intensification of mercantile pressure on the government, and the appearance of short periods of crises in the British economy during the 1880s and 1890s. He argues that British merchants were convinced that overproduction was primarily responsible for the bouts of trade recession, hence their concentration on Africa as a potential source of market. This was the underlying reason for mercantile pressure. In the 1880s the fear of French protection in West Africa influenced the merchant lobby. This factor was compounded in the 1890s by the “failure of plans for commercial union of the mother country and the settlement colonies, and Manchester’s continued anxiety over the condition of the [important] Indian market”, argued Hynes (1979: 138).

Hynes (1979: 116) also notes that the merchant lobby was aimed at securing government protection for free trade “if necessary by the extension of British rule.” In demonstrating the effect of commercial pressure on the British government, Hynes draws a parallel between government annexations in certain parts of West Africa in the 1880s and metropolitan commercial support of local interest in those specific areas. Hynes (1979: 138) opines that in the early 1890s, “the extension of British rule in the Gold Coast and the areas that later became Nigeria followed strong mercantile pressures for intervention.” The works of Hargreaves, Hopkins, Newbury, Laffey, Ratcliffe and Hynes shed light on the commercial factor in the West African partition. Their weaknesses reflect the general problem confronting the historian in quantifying the influence of pressure groups.

A variant of the commercial factor, Brooks (1975), Martin Klein (1968), and Hargreaves (1974) argue that the need for the control of groundnut production also played a part in the French occupation of the West African coast. George Brooks, in particular, explores the development of groundnut cultivation on the upper Guinea coast: Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and Senegal. He argues that a rapidly growing demand for groundnut in France, and favourable changes in French tariff greatly benefited French and Senegalese traders in competition with their British and Sierra Leone rivals.

The French traders would entrench their position on the upper Guinea coast by the 1860s, leading to colonial occupation. Thus Brooks (1975: 54) suggests a connection between the French trading position and colonial annexation in the region.

## West African Interior

Why did the French government decide to occupy the West African interior? For Robinson and Gallagher (1962: 609), the French army, unprepared for any serious annexation “came to grips with a reviving and recalcitrant Islam. In subjugating it, the paper empire had to be occupied.” Fieldhouse (1973: 318) argues for economic reasons:

In fact the scheme [of Western Sudan] had little connection with the practical needs of the French business world. Its economic rationale was a visionary belief in the commercial potential of large-scale communications. This was economic imperialism of a sort, but it had little in common with the imperialism of the European merchant or manufacturer.

According to Kanya-Forstner (1972), economic motives lay behind the French expansion in the Western Sudan, and they were based on a myth of the fabulous wealth of the region, hence the motives were mythical. For Kanya-Forstner, the French realized by 1898 that the Western Sudan was not rich as they expected. This argument goes contrary to the evidence. In fact, in 1898 Eugene Etienne (*the Notre Dame des Coloniaux*) and his colleagues in the *parti colonial* were busy advocating the extension of the French frontiers to Lake Chad. Moreover, Persell (1983: 21-27) notes that the Comité de l’Afrique Française and Union Colonial had realized by 1898 that they had not paid much attention to the development of French possessions in West Africa. As Kanya-Forstner (1969b: 264) himself has observed, as late as 1914 Leroy-Beaulieu was still referring to the Western Sudan as one of the richest in Africa. For Sanderson (1974: 12), there is nothing mythical about the French thrust into the Western Sudan; clearly, it is an economic drive.

Stengers (1968: 290-291) notes economic factors behind the French occupation of the West African interior in the late-nineteenth century; he argues:

The fundamental point which must be kept in mind is the following: from the moment that economic penetration of the black continent began, there had been the strongest temptation for each country to keep for itself advantages of one kind or another in the regions which were opened up. The march towards the interior was to be almost necessarily synonymous, in many cases, with the acquisition of economic privileges.

Hargreaves too alludes to economic factors in French expansion in the region. In a comparison of French colonial policy in North Africa to that in tropical Africa, he notes the Mediterranean as an area of strategic importance in European diplomacy, and the issue of prestige had been involved in French policies towards the region. For tropical Africa, Hargreaves (1974: 53) notes that prestige has never been important; expansion was rather motivated by the prospect of economic gain and some vague “civilising mission.”

Those who argue for economic motives behind the drive for the Western Sudan have a more convincing interpretation. The supposed wealth of the interior largely influenced French expansionist moves in the Western Sudan. With the publication of Leo Africanus’ *History and Description of Africa* in the sixteenth century arose the ideas of the riches of the Sudan, and the market potential of the population of Timbuktu. These ideas got fixed in the imaginations of the French, among others; in the 1850s Heinrich Barth who was working for the British government collected detailed information on the polities of the Sudan, and confirmed the existence of trade opportunities in the populous region (Barth 1965; Curtin 1972). Since the occupation of Saint-Louis in the seventeenth century, the attraction of the Sudanese wealth had influenced French thinking, and by 1870, the creation of a commercial empire based on Timbuktu and embracing both Algeria and Senegal was a recognised objective of policy. In the 1890s Lake Chad was substituted for

Timbuktu as the linchpin of the projected north-west African empire (Persell 1983: 24-25).

Other explanations include the works of Boniface I. Obichere (1971) and Claire Hirshfield (1979). According to Obichere (1971: 100), considerations of national prestige and European rivalry influenced the French occupation of Dahomey in 1893; the French feared that Britain or Germany would steal a march on them in Dahomey, but their primary motive was economic, and it derived from the need to prevent the disruption of trade from the interior to French posts on the coast. This factor, Obichere argues, underlies French and British activities in other parts of the West African interior (1971: 246-250). Britain and France pursued similar objectives in the long-run, but their initial policies differed. As Obichere points out, Britain was comfortable with its informal influence, and entertained no designs whatsoever on extending its Lagos and Gold Coast possessions into the interior, until it was jostled into action by the French and German penetration; the French having already embarked on the realization of the *rendezvous de Tchad*, the establishment of empire on a contiguous stretch of territory to the frontiers of Lake Chad. In the face of the French and German threats Britain's objectives turned towards the protection of its hinterland interests, and maintaining supremacy on the lower Niger, argued Obichere.

Obichere's economic argument for the French occupation of Dahomey lacks strength; he fails to demonstrate how Dahomey's activities interrupted the flow of French trade from the interior to the coast. Contrary to his assertion, Hargreaves (1985: 145) has shown that King Behanzi of Dahomey encouraged the French to trade in Cotonou, although he resented the imposition of French tariff there. Behanzi also refrained from invading Porto Novo, although he eagerly sought to capture the French-backed rebel, Tofa. These local sources of dispute dogged Franco-Dahomean relations but Hargreaves has shown that the French decision to invade Dahomey in 1892 was largely influenced by public opinion.

Claire Hirshfield disputes Obichere's contention that economic interests primarily motivated British and French exertions into the middle-Niger region. According to Hirshfield (1979), France agreed in 1898 to equalize its

customs duties in West Africa with those of Britain; by this gesture France has shown that economic interest was not the major concern in its activities. This argument lacks persuasion. Surely, equalization of tariffs was bound to create free trade but this settlement merely constitutes a part of the comprehensive deal reached between France and Britain, after the two countries barely avoided war with each other at Fashoda, as Sanderson (1971) noted. Moreover, Persell (1983: 4) has persuasively demonstrated that the Comité de l'Afrique Française which decisively influenced French policy in the interior of West Africa was, after the mid-1890s, primarily motivated by economic interests.

Also, Hirshfield argues that British policy on the interior of West Africa was influenced more by the strategic importance of the upper Nile than by commercial interests on the Niger. This contention is not supported. British interest in the upper Nile would somehow affect its activities in West Africa during the period, yet British policy also bore the stamp of Chamberlain's doctrine of tropical estates. Hirshfield has not shown why the one is more important than the other.

## **African Influence**

It is agreed that European occupation of Africa was influenced considerably by the activities of the African inhabitants. European policy-makers and their agents on the spot had to reckon with African circumstances. Such activities, in the view of some scholars, were the real cause of European annexations in the continent. According to Robinson and Gallagher (1962: 609) French annexations in the middle Niger, the southern Ivory Coast and the western Sudan were necessitated by Africa's internal crises: "a series of involuntary imbroglios with the fighting Muslim theocracies of these regions."

Several correctives have been offered to Robinson's and Gallagher's interpretation. One of them (Kanya-Forstner 1969b: 269-270) notes that the response of Samori and Ahmadu to French expansion was not primarily determined by religious ideology; Samori Toure and Sekou Ahmadu depended largely on military strength and internal cohesion in their resistance. Besides, Ahmadu and Samori indeed demonstrated the readiness to come to terms with the French but their overtures were spurned. It was

only then that they resorted to arms. Thus their resistance followed rather than effected French expansion. Non-Muslim rulers such as King Behanzi of Dahomey are similarly noted to have sought negotiated settlements with the French. Behanzi was indeed given to demonstrating ambivalent attitudes towards the French, often promising peace and war as he chose, but his desire for peace was as genuine as that of his less fiery predecessor, argued Hargreaves (1969: 214-215). However, African resistance, either through war or diplomacy, affected the course, timing and nature of European partition of West Africa. For instance, the French had to abandon their trans-Sahara railway scheme as a result of insecurity engendered by Muslim rebellion in Southern Algeria in the 1860s and 1880s; Ahmadu and his followers were not brought to heel until 1887; and Samori earned fame by checking French expansion for almost two decades, 1879-1898 (Kanya-Forstner 1969b: 269-270).

While certain African activities, indeed, accelerated the pace of European expansion, others delayed it. Francis Agbodeka's study of African resistance on the Gold Coast illustrates the varying effects of protest on British expansion. Agbodeka (1971: 159-160) argues that Fante attempts at governing themselves was enough to threaten the British to abandon their policy of retrenchment and adopt territorial expansion. Similarly the protests of the Anlo, Akyem and Krepi against creeping British imperialism met with a brutal and an accelerated pace of British expansion in those areas. In the 1880s the Asante government largely succeeded in controlling secessionist movements in its state. These separatist agitations were often supported by the British, but Asante's activities did not provoke further British mischief until the 1890s. After 1894, however, British policy aimed at securing control of the trade in the interior of the Gold Coast. And this necessitated the control of Asante which dominated that trade, noted Lewin (1978: 191-192). In 1896 the British embarked on a military expedition to Kumasi, having been frightened by the prospect of Asante's cooperation with the French, and more important, by the Asantehene's overtures for alliance with Samori who was resisting French expansion. In that year Asante fell under military occupation. In 1900 Asante took to arms in response to British demand for the symbol of its sovereignty, *sika dua*. Resistance failed and the state was annexed.

According to Hargreaves (1969: 202-210), Lat Dior of Cayor accepted modernization in the form of commercial groundnut production in the 1870s, but he frustrated Governor Louis Faidherbe's effort to have him replaced by a docile leader, and rather cooperated with Faidherbe's successors who offered him more generous terms. In 1886, however, Lat Dior resorted to arms in the conviction that the construction of a railway through his territory threatened his independence. Similarly, the French collaborated with traditional authorities in the Futa Djallon when their control of the Guinea coast was precarious. Upon the consolidation of power the French proceeded to break the territory into cantons. They signed treaties with Samori, acceding to his demands, but their intentions were to forestall British designs, and to ensure freedom of action in dealing with Mamadou Lamine. Conversely, Samori tolerated the 'surrender' of his territory to the French for the purpose of avoiding French interference in his attack on neighbouring Sikasso. In 1884 Samori chose to collaborate with the British in order to head off the French menace; Samori's tactic was largely influenced by commercial considerations, as he sought to ensure a steady flow of arms through Sierra Leone, a British-controlled territory.

Ajayi (1969: 506) points out a significant factor in African response to European occupation, being the relationship of a particular African state with its neighbours, "whose attitude to the invader was often a crucial determinant." In essence, African collaboration and resistance partly depended on the interrelations between African polities in the period prior to the advent of colonialism. This interpretation is widely supported. Hargreaves (1969) notes that Porto Novo, for instance, chose to cooperate with the Europeans, both commercially and politically, in order to enlist support against constant harassment by the Dahomean army.

African rulers, it has been argued, may have underestimated the danger of European imperialism (Kanya-Forstner (1969a), Hargreaves (1969), Franz Ansprenger (1988), and Gertzel (1962). How then did African rulers perceive the foreigners and their behaviour on the eve of conquest, and how did their perception influence their response? Hargreaves (1969: 202) notes that the threat of French creeping imperialism in Futa Jallon escaped the attention of traditional rulers for twenty-five years, thus Alfa Yaya of Labe

collaborated with French officials until “their contemptuous distrust of chiefly power became unmistakable” by 1912. Ansprenger argues that prior to 1884 African merchants thought that they understood European interests, and were capable of handling them. Although coastal traders began to notice a change in European attitude, they still hoped for a continuation of the old commercial relationship, and extended their trust to the acceptance of other aspects of creeping imperialism such as missionary education. According to Ansprenger (1988: 515), “the confidence of African societies diminished as the Europeans began to put into effect the provisions they had laid down” at the Berlin Conference. The stipulations of these provisions conflicted with the interests of coastal traders who desired the goals of extending and increasing trade with the peoples of the hinterland. Henceforth traders like Jaja and Doula merchants began to put up resistance to European imperialism. And their resistance was eventually crushed.

For purposes of commerce and employment western-educated elites tended to view the European presence as an opportunity to exploit, argues Ajayi (1969: 507). Alternatively, Ansprenger (1988: 514-515) surmises that the attitude of the western-educated elite to European expansion was characterised by sheer ambivalence; while they perceived in the colonial encroachment a threat to African societies, they also sought to control that menace by European weapons such as Christianity and modernisation.

British and French occupation of West Africa owed a great deal to the assistance of African allies such as the military auxiliaries, *tirailleurs sénégalais* and the West African Frontier Force (WAFF). According to Kanya-Forstner (1989: 138), the *tirailleurs sénégalais* was formed in response to the high mortality rate which tropical diseases inflicted on French troops; they were well-trained, well-armed, and led by French officers; and they constituted about 80 percent of French troops in the Western Sudan during the 1890s. Kanya-Forstner as well as Myron Echenberg (1991) note that the *tirailleurs* were largely motivated by material gains in offering their services to the French. They were often supplemented by irregular auxiliaries and non-combatants, drawn from local allies.

The WAFF was created in 1897 by Lord Lugard, under Joseph Chamberlain's direction, and it was intended to counteract French military resources and expansion in the mid-Niger region, noted Perham (1968: 644-682), and Ukpabi (1987). The WAFF was largely composed of Hausa, Fanti, Yoruba and Nupe troops. As their counterparts under French command, the African component of the WAFF served under British officers and non-commissioned officers. Like the *tirailleurs sénégalais*, the African component of the WAFF was largely motivated into service by the prospect of plunder. The activities of the WAFF ranged from crushing resistance in northern Nigeria to fighting in the jungles of Asante. Obviously, the WAFF and the *tirailleurs* played a significant role in the European occupation of West Africa in the late-nineteenth century.

## Conclusion

The partition of Africa began in 1879, and it was unleashed by French military officers in the Western Sudan, who sought to protect French trade in competition with British traders. The French advance arose from the repeated breakdown in comprehensive agreements between France and Britain on trade issues in West Africa. The French military officers and their British counterparts constituted an important expansionary force at the West African periphery of empire. These men on the spot served as sources of information for policymakers at home in Europe, and they represented the interests of the policymakers in ensuring security for economic development.

Apart from the military officers, European merchants on the West African coast played a major role in the partition of West Africa. Arguably, the preoccupations of the European traders in West Africa were the crucial factor in the partition of the region. The trade depression of the late nineteenth century in Europe enhanced the value of African markets for European exports. Besides, the depression adversely affected the terms of trade for African products, as their prices increased at a lesser margin than the prices of imported goods. This led to trade competition and rivalry between European merchants in West Africa themselves, as well as disputes between the European merchants and African producers and traders. European merchants therefore engaged their chambers of commerce in

Europe to lobby for government protection, hence the European occupation of West Africa.

African response largely affected the course and nature as well as the timing of the European partition in specific areas of West Africa. Naturally, African cooperation accelerated the pace of the European intrusion, while resistance prolonged it. And African military auxiliaries assisted the European conquest of West Africa, as they worked for economic gains and plunder in the European enterprise.

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# **A MODEL OF SAINTS, WIZARDS AND DEMONS: THE DYNAMICS OF PUBLIC POLICY IMPLEMENTATION**

**Ebenezer Teye Amanor-Lartey<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

Sustainable socio-economic development cannot be possible without effective implementation of public policies. Public policy implementation in Africa has been largely ineffective as a consequence of multifactorial factors. This theoretical paper undertook a quick overview of some policy implementation works. The paper identified a complex web of actors involved in the policy making environment and implementation process, and draws significant insight from the theoretical perspective from studies on the saints, wizards, demons and systems. A model of Saints, Wizards and Demons is proposed to analyse the contribution of policy implementation actors (i.e. saints, wizards and demons) in the policy implementation process. This paper suggests that policy implementation could be improved if the key actors involved in the policy implementation process are identified within their appropriate ‘implementation functional’ groups. This model is simplified one which seeks to throw more light on the saints, wizards and demons as the key implementation actors who determine the rate of success or failure of policy implementation.

**Keywords:** saints, wizard, demon, public policy, policy implementation model

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## **Introduction**

The concept ‘public’ assumes that there is a sphere of life which is held in common, hence, not private or limited to the individual (Sapru, 2004). Such a sphere which is held in common by all, is administered through policies. Those policies and regulations that relate to the public life, are referred to as public policies. A policy is the general guidelines and directives on the main course of action to be followed in achieving a desired goal (Dror, 1968). A policy denotes the set of directives that offer a guide to achieve an objective. Policies give direction to a course of action that ought to be taken to achieve a desired end. A policy could be summed to mean a set of interconnected choices made and actions taken by political actors in relation to societal goals and how those goals are to be achieved in order to resolve a societal problem. Policy, according to Brooks (1989) refers to a decision by government to pursue a certain action with the aim of addressing some problem.

A public policy sets “forth courses of action for addressing problems or for providing goods and services to segments of society” (May, 2003, p. 279). Public policy refers to those actions of government and the intentions that determine those actions. Policy implementation entails the “process of putting policy into effect by public and private individuals” (Sapru, 2004, p. 8). Pressman and Wildavski (1973) see implementation as a process which involves the interactions between the stage of goal setting and all actions that are employed and geared towards the achievement of such goals. Implementation is therefore, a goal setting/objective–goal achievement continuum (Han and Hill, 1984). Implementation is therefore, the processes that are involved in putting policy objectives into action to achieve a goal. The success of governments are therefore directly linked to the extent to which policy goals are achieved. Policy implementation therefore, is that process that begins from the formulation to the evaluation of policies.

Derthick (1972), Pressman and Widavski (1973) were the pioneers and major proponents of the top-down approach to policy implementation and laid the solid foundation for modern studies on policy implementation from the perspective of the top-down model. To the top-downers, effective

policy implementation hinge on the principle of ‘command and control’. The top-down model to policy implementation holds that, people ought to do what they are asked to do. It was also assumed to entail the keeping of control over the sequence of events that take place in the process of implementing a policy.

To the top downers, public policy making and implementation is embedded within an environment which has a legal, political and social contexts which affect the policy success or failure (Sabatier, 1986). The top-down approach reduces policy implementation to directives given by the ‘top’ which must be carried through. The top-down approach is identified to be very effective in the implementation of policies where there is a dominant policy agent implementing the policy. It does not take into cognisance, the plethora of actors that are involved in the policy implementation process. This gave rise to the next approach of policy implementation, the bottom-up approach.

The bottom-up approach on the other hand, saw implementation to hinge on the ‘street-level bureaucrats’ (Lipsky, 2010), who are the key to the success or failure of public policies. To bottom-uppers, implementation has to take into account the interaction of bureaucrats and the beneficiaries of the public policy. It is only under this circumstance of interaction that implementation would have occurred. This is the crucial point of departure which separates the top-down and the bottom-up theories. The bottom-up approach sees the role public service workers play in policy implementation. To the bottom-uppers, discretion of officials in the policy process is key to policy implementation.

Sabatier and Mazmanian’s (1981) ‘Implementation Model’ combines some critical elements from the ‘top-down’ and the ‘bottom-up’ approaches, and argues that policy implementation studies should be multi-levelled. Analysis should be multiple-levelled due to the ever increasing actors, and the nature of the inter-organisational interactions involved in policy implementation (Sabatier, 1986). Lewis and Flynn’s (1979) behavioural model of policy implementation also developed later, stressed on the external environment and the constraints it could have on

the actions of actors in the policy implementation process. In the thesis of the behavioural model, the actions of actors in the policy implementation process are not only influenced by internal factors, but are greatly imparted by the diverse forms of interactions that the policy actors are engaged in on a day-to-day basis.

## **The Saints, Wizards, Demons and Systems**

Peterson (1994, 1998) and Ayee (2000) applied the concepts of saints, wizards, demons and systems to assess the roles of the various stakeholders in the implementation of public policies. Peterson (1998) was the first to use these concepts to assess the factors that contributed to the success or otherwise of public bureaucracies. He came up with four major variables that could determine the rate of success or failure in policy implementation. Peterson (1994) postulated that saints, wizards, demons and systems were the actors that had the trump card in the determination of the extent to which public bureaucracies could be successful in policy implementation. Peterson (1998) applied these saints, wizards, demons and systems variables to explain the rate of failure of technology as a tool to reforming public bureaucracies. Ayee (2000) drawing insights from Peterson (1994 and 1998), applied the concepts of saints, wizards, demons and systems to explain the success and failure in the implementation of public policies and programmes in Ghana.

Saints have been explained to be the active government reformers (Peterson, 1998) who seek the progress of society through the successful implementation of public policies and programmes. They are the officials with rare qualities including being competent, progressive and committed (Ayee, 2000). Politicians and bureaucrats who exhibit these qualities fall within the ambits of saints. The saints include a wide range of public officers who wield some power in the policy cycle. Such public officers include bureaucrats and politicians who are open-minded and have the political will to work at getting public policies implemented successfully. They have such attributes as ability to manage staff, skills in delegation, access to resources, willingness to take risk and commitment to policy goals (Peterson, 1994; Peterson, 1998; Ayee, 2000). Saints are also public

officials who are not averse to change and innovation. They are critical thinkers who are highly motivated.

Wizards are regarded as the appropriate policy analysts with available and reliable relevant information as well as the required professional integrity (Peterson, 1994; Peterson, 1998; Ayee, 2000). According to Peterson (1998), there are two classes of wizard: the appropriate and inappropriate wizards. The appropriate wizards were identified to perform five roles: First and most importantly, they provide a unity of design and implementation. Second, in the short to medium term they help in insulating the system. Third, they bring essential and appropriate resources. Fourth, they help the saint in management. Fifth, and second in importance to providing unity of design and implementation, the wizard improves the short-term productivity of the organization. Inappropriate wizards on the other hand, lack the needed skills and the expertise of the appropriate wizards. The inappropriate wizards have some skills but their skills are narrow, shallow and inappropriate to the success of public policies.

Demons were identified as being the antagonistic and lethargic group in the policy cycle (Peterson, 1998). Usually, they form a very small part of the group of public officials and they engage in nefarious activities that could impede the saints and the wizards working to their optimal levels in the public policy process. Their activities are the most destructive in the policy implementation cycle and they obstruct successful policy implementation. The demons seek personal gains through foul means to the detriment of the public good. Their activities are summarily, corruption of all forms. Such forms of corruption include bribery, cronyism, fraud, embezzlement, etc. Their activities undermine the effectiveness and success of public policy implementation.

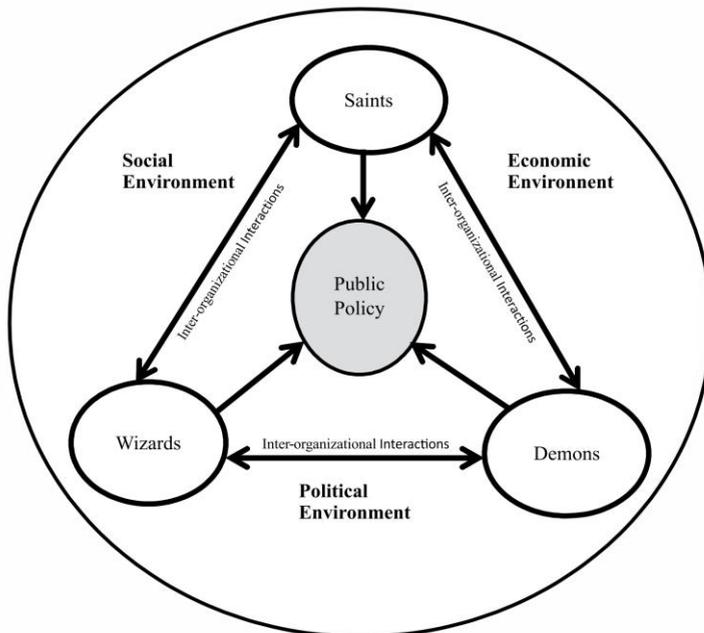
The system is the total political, social and economic contexts within which the policy cycle is situated. The system defines how the policy is made, the influences and the expectations of the recipients or beneficiaries of the public policy. The system is the overall environment within which the public policy is made and implemented. The extent of success or

failure of public policies is a product of the interactions that take place within the system (environment).

## Towards a Model of Saints, Wizards, and Demons

This paper considers the saints, wizards and demons as the major players in the policy implementation process. The systems as explained by Peterson (1994 and 1998) are factors that are within the bureaucracy itself that contribute to the policy success or failure. Aye (2000) also explained the systems similarly to be made up of variables that are present in the public bureaucracy. This paper departs from their position on the components of the system. This paper postulates that, there is also, an external environment which imposes some measure of influence on the major policy implementation actors classified as saints, wizards and demons as well as determines the form of inter-organizational interactions or relations within the bureaucratic set up.

**Figure 1: Policy Implementation Model of Saints, Wizards and Demons.**



Source: Author's own construct

The Model of Saints, Wizards and Demons comes with the idea that embedded in the implementation of every public policy, there is an environment within which the process takes place. That environment of policy implementation is a constellation of the social, political and economic dynamics that shape public policy implementation. From the policy formulation stage, through to the evaluation stage, these social, political and economic variables are ever present, and they exert some influence on the inter-organizational relations and on the actors that are involved in the policy implementation process. If there will be saints, wizards and demons, they are the creation of the interactions of other factors in the environment within which these actors (saints, wizards and demons) are also situated. Winter (1990) in the integrated implementation model, called it the socio-economic context. This socio-economic context as explained by Winter (1990) exerts influences on the policy formulation, implementation and evaluation processes. The environment in this model also admits the influences that the social, economic and political environments can bring to bear on the formulation, implementation and evaluation of a public policy.

At the heart of a policy implementation model is the public policy itself. Embedded within the public policy are some important variable that are explained variously by different scholars. For Winter (1990), they are the policy formulation, policy design, the implementation process and the implementation outcomes. For the Model of Saints, Wizards and Demons, before a public policy goes through the full policy cycle, it is expected to have been formulated, designed, implemented and evaluated.

To the Model of Saints, Wizards and Demons, the critical roles of the agents called the Saints, the Wizards and the Demons, need to be projected beyond any other consideration in the policy process. Such agents determine whether the policy would succeed or fail. To begin and for the purpose of this piece, public policy ought to be properly situated. It is defined as what governments do, why they do it, and what difference it makes (Dye, 1998). It is put in another way when it is explained as

whatever governments decide to do or not to do. Jenkins (1978) also defined public policy as “a set of inter-related decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where those decisions should, in principle, be within the power of those actors to achieve” (p. 3). Anderson (1997) on the other hand, defined public policy as “purposive course of action or inaction followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem or matter of concern” (p. 5). From these definitions, it comes out clear that a public policy connotes the actions of state actors in response to a problem of public concern. The actions of the state actors are meant to solve the problem confronting the public in order to achieve a ‘public good’. The Model of Saints, Wizards and Demons assumes that public policy is a process or series of state actions (or inactions), decisions (indecisions), activities (inactivities) that are put in place in the face of a public problem in order to remedy the situation.

Within the Model of Saints, Wizards and Demons, there are three groups of public officials or agents who directly affect public policies meant to solve a problem of public concern. The first group is the saintly group of officials. The saints belong to a group of government (political and bureaucratic) officials who occupy superior offices within the public administrative system. Such officials include the top government officials who are political office holders as well as top bureaucratic officials. The saints are the public officials who are in supervisory positions in the policy making and implementation process. Not all political appointees of the government are qualified to be saints. The saints are the breed of public officials, who carry some attributes such as risk taking, initiation of innovation, professional commitment, ability to manage staff, skills in delegation, access to resources and right decision-making abilities (Peterson, 1994; Peterson, 1998; Ayee, 2000).

The role that the saints play in the policy making and implementation process is mainly, one of supervision and direction. The saints define the policy goals, mobilize resources needed for the effective implementation of the public policy and defend the policy. The saints manage and create the enabling environment for effective policy implementation. The saints

provide a clear vision, direction and a sense of purpose for the other agents to follow. The saints rally the other agents around the policy goals for successful implementation.

The second group in the model is the wizards. The wizards are the technical agents with the required expertise in the policy making and implementation process. They have the necessary skills and information to turn the policy objectives into workable programmes and projects for the achievement of public good. The roles of the wizards include the provision of support to the saints. The support is provided through research and analysis of data for effective policy implementation. The wizards being the experts in their areas, provide concrete strategies to the saints to be able to function efficiently. Some members of the wizardry group are the Departmental Heads, Technical Advisors, and Special Assistants etc. The wizards have an important attribute of professional integrity. The wizards, as the technical agents, should be able to professionally advise the saints on the feasibility of policy objectives based on facts.

The third group of agents is the demons. The demons are the hostile and apathetic, yet very destructive group in the policy cycle. They are not interested in the achievement of the policy goals to the benefit of the general public. Their interest in the policy process is self-centred. They seek their personal gains to the detriment of the public good. The demons are simply put, the corrupt public officials at all levels of the political and bureaucratic hierarchy. They could be high political office holder or technical staff. All that matter to such, are their personal benefits from public policies and programmes.

## **Relationship between Policy Agents**

There are forms of relationships that exist among the saints, wizards and the demons. The saints in the first place, support other saints in creating a friendly atmosphere for effective policy making and implementation. The saints also supervise the wizards in order to give direction to their expertise. When the wizards are left without supervision, they end up

becoming inappropriate wizards because their expertise would no more be beneficial to the policy making and implementation process. The saints also have the difficult task of identifying and whipping the demons in line. If the demons are left, they could undermine the policy goals into failure. The saints have to be uncompromising in their focus and whip the demons into following the policy goals or get punished.

The wizards in their relations with the saints, provide essential supports needed for policy survival. Because the wizards have the institutional memory and the needed technical expertise, they are better placed to offer pieces of timely advice to the saints to avert mistakes. The wizards are able to also relate with other wizards within the environment by providing the needed support and by sharing experiences to insulate the policy process from failure. Among the wizards, networking for improvement becomes their basic mode of survival. This is achieved through workshops and training programmes. The wizards, due to their knowledge, relate to the demons in ways that seek to block their paths and loopholes through which the demons get corrupt. The wizards can create systems that can prevent the demons from operating to full capacity in order to make policy objectives achievable.

The demons are difficult to locate, yet they are everywhere and they wreak havoc anywhere they appear. The demons undermine the saints as well as the wizards. They always look for ways of reaping unmerited benefits from the policy. In situations where they sense some booty to be looted from the policy goals' achievement, they support the policy. Whenever their personal gains are not feasible, they fight the policy goals by undermining the saints leading the process. They raise blockades such as resistance to reforms and delaying in the performance of their duties. If the systems created by the wizards are also not favouring the wizards, they try to create other openings in the system in order to continue with their demonic and nefarious activities.

## **The Environmental Impact**

Mention must be made of the context of the environment within which these agents operate in getting policy objectives achieved. The environment (political, economic and social) could be tonic or toxic to the policy making and implementation process. The tonic environment is the environment that enables the effective performance of the duties of the saints and the wizards. A tonic environment deters the demons from engaging in corrupt acts as they are aware of the possibility of punitive actions that could be brought against them. The determinants of a tonic environment include the political will and commitment of political and administrative leadership at all levels of the policy implementation process to punish corrupt officials. Another determinant of a tonic environment is the eradication of patronage and partisan considerations in national policies. Other tonic ingredients include application of rules, reward for hard work, a sense of patriotism and nationalism and the building of systems for good governance.

The toxic environment on the other hand is created through a combination of various factors including poor national leadership, widespread corruption without punishment, poor conditions of service, recruitment of inappropriate staff, disregard for the rule of law and general social decadence among others. Toxic environments create good breeding grounds for the demons to increase in number and influence. Toxic environments clog the vessels of supply that serve as incentives that keep the saints and wizards active and eventually, they give up and either leave the system or are demonized and then join in the demonic activities that make public policies fail.

## **Conclusion**

Policy implementation is meant to be successful in order to solve societal challenges. The more policies succeed, the better society will turn to be. The paper sought to simplify policy implementation analysis by using the saints, wizards and demons embedded in an environment. Policy implementation goes beyond the action of actors such as the saints and the wizards. It is the ability of these saints and wizards to outwit the demons

that result in policy success. The success of public policies hinges on the effective management of the system to provide incentives (tonic environment) to the saints and wizards on one hand, and creating a very toxic environment for the breeding of the demons.

There ought to be the creation of more saints and wizards. These categories of actors on policy implementation are those who will either make policies succeed or fail. Focusing on the politics of policy formulation and implementation should begin with the generation of more saints. Such saints and the appropriate wizards will help improve the living conditions of society. It is therefore imperative that wizards are kept at bay when it comes to control in the policy implementation process. Such demotivating systems as stiff punishment should be meted out to deter them from thriving and possibly infesting the saints and wizards.

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# **THE PARADOX OF NORTH-SOUTH MIGRATION: VULNERABILITY AND COPING STRATEGIES OF MIGRANT WOMEN FROM NORTHERN GHANA**

**Makafui Kpedator<sup>1</sup>**

## **Abstract**

Migration and vulnerability as social phenomena have existed over the years and have equally attracted several concerns from both local and international stakeholders who have been devising strategies to minimize the challenges associated with this social menace. Globally, vulnerabilities of migrant women are viewed as a major problem confronting most developing countries, especially countries in sub-Saharan Africa, where many factors and conditions have combined to perpetuate them. Utilizing qualitative data based on migrant women from the Upper East, Upper West, Savannah, Northeast and Northern Regions working in La Nkwantanang-Madina, the paper analyzes the vulnerabilities of this migrant group of women, identifies how the women cope, use their agency and improve their wellbeing in their new work environment. The paper also explores the strategies used by these migrant women to deal with their childcare problems at both the destination and origin. The major findings of the study show that migrant mother's main vulnerabilities have to do with housing and language, which calls for the need to design and implement effective and efficient policies on housing for these vulnerable poor women and their children.

**Keywords:** Coping strategies, Migration, migrant women, vulnerability, social capital

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## **Introduction**

Migration, historically, used to be a preserve of men, who moved from Northern to Southern Ghana. However, in recent times, women also migrate independently within Ghana (Wrigley-Asante, 2014). In the past, when male migrants from the northern parts of Ghana travelled to the south, particularly to Accra, they engaged in informal labour activities (Hass, 1973). This trend has continued but has grown to include other informal sector livelihood activities such as trading, domestic work, and food vending among others (Awumbila et al., 2014). The men who used to travel from Northern Ghana to the south carried people's loads, for a fee, and were usually referred to as "kaya", a Hausa word for 'load'. Consequently, the emergence of female migration gave birth to a new term called "kayayoo". "Yoo" is a Ga word meaning woman. Therefore, "kayayoo" is a combination of two different linguistic terminologies: "kaya" and "yoo". While the men are called kaya, the women are referred to as, "kayayoo" (singular) and "kayayei" (plural).

The impetus for undertaking this study comes from an encounter with some migrant women head porters in my adolescent years. I observed how one of the women porters combined hard work and child-care at the same time. This single mother collects used canned tins of milk, milo, and margarine to sell, after cleaning, to raise money to buy food for herself and her baby. As I watched her, I asked myself questions: how do these women survive? What are the prospects of the children of these women? Do they have relatives who are not too busy to help them care for their children? What coping strategies do they deploy to survive the economic hardship of Accra? Are there state social intervention policies to respond to the needs of these women?

The experiences of these women stimulated my curiosity and interest in researching into their lived experiences. This paper focuses on northern women who migrate to Accra, particularly to the La Nkwantanang-Madina Municipality. Following the changing gender dimension in north-south migration, the paper argues that there is the imperative to explore the challenges these women migrants face and how these challenges, and the coping strategies they engender, affect the care and wellbeing of their

children. For example, in the face of their homogeneous characteristics, how do they cohere to devise coping strategies? More importantly, most of the research work on the phenomenon did not elaborate on how the challenges the women face in Accra dovetail into the care they provide for their children. In the sections that follow, this paper explores these issues. The paper is divided into four main sections. The next section following this introduction is devoted to the review of relevant migration literature as it relates to migration in Ghana. This section is followed closely by outlining the challenges migrant women encounter, the methodology for the study and then the main findings and discussion are put into perspective in relation to vulnerability and coping strategies of migrant women of Northern Ghana. The paper concludes by focusing on what needs to be done.

## **Migration in Ghana**

Migration is a human phenomenon. Scholars have established various causes of migration within Ghana, outlining the main drivers and challenges of migrants (Teye et al., 2017; Darkwah et al., 2016). The main drivers of migration in Ghana are usually economic, political and social. Long before European colonization in Ghana, trade networks existed between what became known as the southern territories and northern territories of Ghana and Upper Volta (present-day Burkina Faso) and Northern Nigerian. By the time the Asante Empire was consolidated in the eighteenth century, the Asante had established trade networks with the Northerners in what used to be called northern territories (Arhin, 1979). Also, decades of Asante war expansion and aggression, which was framed around the notion of territorial aggrandizement, had brought the northern regions into direct contact with the Asante. The Asante people conquered the Dagomba people and demanded slaves from them to build the Asante Empire. When Islam became the established religion of the Northern Region, literate Muslims in Arabic were engaged by the Asante as administrators and ritual functionaries (Owusu-Ansah, 1983). In some cases, some of the ritual functionaries from Northern Ghana were incorporated into the ritual retinue of the Asante. The presence of northerners in Kumasi, most of whom were Muslims, birthed some of the earliest *de jure* Zongos in Asante by the 1890s (Schildkrout, 2009).

Later, when the Europeans consolidated their rule after they conquered and annexed the Asante Empire in 1900, the place of Asante as a bulwark against British expansion into the Northern Regions was broken. Under the aegis of George Ekem Ferguson, who signed treaties with the Northern chiefs on behalf of the British, the British had full control of the Northern Regions in 1901 (Adu-Boahen, 2000). With this control, they resorted to exploiting the labor of the Northern people. The northerners were conscripted into the Gold Coast Constabulary (the forerunner of the police service) and the Gold Coast Frontier Force (which metamorphosed into the army) during the so-named world wars (Killingray, 1982). They were also used as laborers in the mines and railway building in southern Ghana (Plange, 1979, Akurang-Parry, 2000). Given that colonialism fed on patriarchal tendencies, the British preferred male Northern migrants to female migrants. Most northern men travelled to the south to work and whatever they accumulated was consumed and some sent to their origins in the northern part of Ghana to take care of their families. The male-biases of the colonial political economy discouraged female migration from the North and the women who migrated were seen as sex workers (Darkwah et. al, 2016).

By the time Ghana attained independence in 1957, the colonial policy of reserving the northern regions as a labor pool had resulted in the northern regions lagging in development. The North, compared to the South did not enjoy sufficient infrastructural development from the colonial administration. Because of this, during the struggle for political independence in Ghana, some Northern elites were reticent about joining in the struggle. But when it became imperative for them to join the struggle for political liberation, they formed political parties like the Northern People's Party in 1954 to contribute to the political trajectories of the Gold Coast (Kelly, et al., 2007). But because most of these Northerners had a longstanding relationship with the Asante, they formed alliances with the National Liberation Movement, a political party formed by Asante youth and traditional political actors. The party was later banned by the Nkrumah government along with other regional, tribal and religious parties, but its spirit has been recalled by other pressure groups such as the Northern Youth Association in the 1960s and 1970s and the Northern Students'

Union, which was founded in 1965 and maintains its existence today (Kelly et al., 2007:186). Since independence, the northern regions have been on the radar of the political elites. But political party manifestos on the Northern Regions are more of empty rhetoric than a real pragmatic effort to rectify the imbalance in the north-south development. The northern regions continue to lag in development. Apart from Kwame Nkrumah, who initiated policies like free education to bridge the gap between the north and the south (Yaro, 2013), post-Nkrumah political elites of Ghana have not shown much enthusiasm in developing the north.

The plight of the northern regions exacerbated, following the wanton implementation of neoliberal reforms, mandated by the Bretton Woods institutions- World Bank and the International Monetary Fund- in the 1980s. The reforms included the removal of subsidies on education, health, and agriculture. Considering that, these institutions are the fundamental basis of Ghana's economy, the removal of subsidies deepened the economic woes of most Ghanaians. Those who were hit hard were the northerners (Whitehead, 2002). This was because of two main reasons: first, the economy of the northern regions is subsistence farming. Since subsistence farming is the mainstay of the political economy of Northern Ghana, the removal of the subsidies meant that many of the farmers had to look for an alternative source of livelihood. The second reason was that there was less effort on the part of government to stem the tide against the deepening of poverty and deprivation in the North (Lobnibe, 2008).

These challenges as well as climate change intensified the migration of people from the northern part of Ghana to the south (Wrigley-Asante, 2014). Since the whole Northern sector became increasingly impoverished, the sex dimension of north-south migration has changed to include women. As has been observed by many scholars, there is an increasing feminization of north-south migration (Darkwah, et al., 2016; Wrigley-Asante, 2014). These women come to Accra with either their children (usually without their husbands) or come as single young women. There are many reasons for the feminization of north-south migration. Three main reasons account for the influx of young single female from Northern to Southern Ghana; increasing consumerism amidst grinding

poverty; the increasing inability of household heads to carry out their roles as breadwinners and finally the erosion in patriarchal authority linked in large part to the inability of household heads to fully provide the financial needs of their households (Darkwah, 2016:27).

Indeed, some research works have looked at the challenges female migrants face in the south and the coping strategies they deploy to deal with these challenges (Oberhauser et al., 2011; Shamsu-Deen, 2013; Yiran et al., 2014). As such this paper discusses how these challenges and coping strategies spill over to affect the wellbeing of their children. In terms of the strategies these migrant women deploy to contain their problems and also ensure the wellbeing of their children, the paper is situated within the framework of the theories of social capital and social networks.

## **Challenges Encountered by Migrants**

Several problems are encountered by migrants. In Ghana, migrants have been observed to buy water daily from neighbors or use water from wells. This is because many migrant neighborhoods, particularly within cities, are usually described by city authorities as illegal settlements and therefore are denied access to basic services. For instance, 94 percent of the migrants in Old Fadama and approximately 63 percent of those in Nima do not have toilet facilities within their residences (Awumbila et al., 2014). Living in poor environmental conditions in these slums, in tandem with inaccessibility to basic necessities, may precipitate heightened environmental risk.

Further, some of the immigrants and emigrants enter or leave Ghana through unauthorized routes (Asare, 2012:11). In consequence, many immigrants are illegally resident in Ghana. A case in point is that some ECOWAS member state nationals enter the country as short-term emigrants and yet often stay beyond the mandatory 90 days (Asare, 2012:11). An observation of the situation from a tertiary educational level paints a grimmer situation in the context of which more than 60 percent of faculty positions in polytechnics, as well as 40 percent of those in public universities, are vacant (Manuh, Asante & Djangmah, 2005). In the same vein in 2000, it was estimated that only 49 percent of the requisite workforce in the health sector was available (Nyonator & Kutzin, 2000).

Health sector research revealed that most migrant nurses had challenges reintegrating into their various health professions. These challenges entail the failure of the Ghanaian system to take cognizance of their practical experiences in nursing from abroad due to the immeasurability of these practices (Asare, 2012). Interestingly, "those with recognized certificates from abroad go through similar challenges, which they communicate to their counterparts abroad, to discourage them from returning home to offer their services" (Asare, 2012, 10). Also, some migrant labourers work under some of the worst conditions, with minimal social protection and denied labor's rights (Asare, 2012; Awumbila et al., 2014).

The literature reviewed has provided information about the different facets and dimensions of migration. It points out the challenges and some forms of coping strategies that migrants deploy to survive the challenges at their migratory destination. It is also clear from the review that migration is increasingly becoming feminized with more women migrating from the north to the south. Given this existential reality, how then are they able to transcend internal differences to collaborate in dealing with their challenges and in the process provide care for their children? I argue that what is keeping these women together is their ability to imagine a social order that is based on narratives and shared experiences. This creative narrative assumes that they are one people with shared challenges. It leads to the creation of 'fictive' families where the traditional family ethics of we-feeling and reciprocity are emphasized. It also leads to the sharing of common values. I argue that it is this imaginative social order that makes it possible for these women to reinvent and envision pre-industrial values to find answers to their disenchantment with life in urban Madina. It also makes it possible for social capital and social networks to be deployed in dealing with their common challenges.

## **A note on Methods**

A "willingness-to-participate" method in addition to the purposive sampling technique was used to enroll study participants, utilizing the assistance of key informants from the Municipal Assembly Office and Community-Based Organisations (CBOs). Also, policymakers, programme planners and representatives of CBOs were purposively

selected. Again, observation was very key to the research. There were times the researcher moved into the community just to observe how northern women migrants organize their daily activities. The research had its sensitive part such as discussing the marital and other forms of conjugal relationships with migrants. There were also sensitive cultural issues such as polygamous marriages and ‘forced’ marriages. Given the sensitive nature of aspects of the research, the respondents were anonymized using pseudonyms.

## **Discussion of Findings**

This section of the paper discusses some of the major findings. It must be reiterated that the extant literature is replete with many reasons for the migration of women from the northern parts of Ghana, namely Upper East, Upper West, Savannah, Northeast and Northern Regions to the southern parts of Ghana, specifically Accra.

### **The Impact of Patriarchal Cultural Practices**

During the fieldwork, I encountered young females from the north, who recounted their migration to Accra as a result of running away from what is generally referred to as patriarchal cultural practices, like ‘forced’ marriages, female genital mutilating, and some form of rationally inexplicable ritual and deaths. For example, in an interview with one of these women, she recounted the cultural reasons that ‘forced’ her to Madina as follows:

I come from a big family in the north. We lived together. Farmed together and did many things in common. But for some reason, some of my siblings started dying in ways that were considered spurious and suspicious. In a spate of a year, I lost two of my siblings. It was as if that was not enough. In the following year, another sibling also died. My parents were incensed and decided to find out from the ritual experts what the problem was. While the ritual experts could not readily point out the causes of death, they asserted that there was some evil spirit lurking around the family. It became obvious that there was no solution insight

concerning the series of deaths that had occurred in my family. Knowing that I was the potential next in line to die, I decided to flee the north and moved to Kumasi. In Kumasi when news reached me that the family was heading to pick me, I decided to run further south to Madina (Abiba a study participant).

Other women also left the northern regions because they had no interest in marrying men that their families had chosen for them. These women wanted to assert their agency in choosing their spouses. But since some of them were compelled to marry men that their parents had chosen for them, they felt the easiest way they could escape from such marriages was to migrate to southern Ghana. In southern Ghana, these women felt that they would be invisible to the prying eyes of their parents. They felt also that they would be able to determine the men they should marry. As Sakina, a study participant narrated:

You know marriage is important for us. But sometimes much as marriage is important, it is our men who choose women and also our parents who mostly decide to choose male spouses for us. I would have no problem if my parents had chosen a man whom I loved for marriage. But in my case, the man that was imposed on me was already married and did not have any prospects of taking good care of me. I felt that he would rather be a liability. But because he had helped my parents on the farm, my parents thought that one way they could express their gratitude was for me to marry him. I protested. But my parents still insisted. To avoid any further problems, I ran to Agbogbloshie and later to Madina.

The issue of 'forced' marriage featured in the research as one of the cultural reasons for migration. In Northern Ghana, just as in the south, marriage is not just the binding of two individuals; it is also an establishment of alliances between families. In the northern regions where

poverty is more pronounced and where aged parents need more hands to cultivate the land, it is through marriage alliances that some aged parents mobilize labor to work on the farm. In the case of Sakina, it was because of the mobilization of labour that she was 'forced' to marry a man who already had a wife to cater for. She therefore saw the marriage as an infringement on her agency.

There was also the case of witchcraft accusation. None of the respondents said that they had directly suffered witchcraft accusations. But they had relatives who had suffered from such accusations. The lack of rational explications for what are considered mysterious deaths, illness, and extreme poverty favors the belief in witchcraft. The chances that one's misfortune could be aggravated by witches and wizards provide enough reasons for some of these women to migrate to the south.

In addition, the study found that some of these women migrants come to Accra as part of their search for the ideal world – which is supported by a sense of adventure and peer pressure. In my conversations with some of my respondents, they indicated that migrating to southern Ghana is an index of 'civility' and social mobility. The idea of 'been-to' in the case of Ghanaians who travel abroad plays out the case of northern migrants to Accra as well. Accra is considered the ideal place to establish a connection and participate in the global world. It is a symbol of actualizing one's ambition in life as vividly captured by Zakia, one of the respondents:

You know Accra is the deal. If you travel to Accra you are respected back in the village. This is especially true if you keep sending money home to help your family. Sometimes if you go home you buy a few things to share with friends and family members. Once you can do that it gives you social standing among your people. Travelling to Accra also gives you the chance to meet people and interact about life. It is a big deal to come to Accra.

Most of the women who migrated to the south as a result of cultural reasons came on their own. A few of them came in the company of their friends. Those who for certain reasons – such as marriage could not move,

gave their female children to their female relatives to go to Accra with. These children were brought to Accra to labour and the money accrued to their labor is remitted to the family in the north. Such children were always pressured to work in hazardous conditions to meet the expectations of their families back home in the north. Also, very few of the migrants came to Madina with their husbands. Usually, their husbands came to Accra as casual laborers. They work as cleaners in state and private institutions. Others also secure jobs as watchmen (security men) in some senior high schools. Their wives complement the meagre income they make by working as head porters. But in the case of women who migrate to Accra with their husbands, not all of them achieve the reasons for migrating. For example, Ishetu said that:

My husband was staying in Madina so when he married me, he brought me here. My husband promised to assist me further my education but failed because I have to work and support my children's education. My dreams of furthering my education have been aborted so I am working hard to invest in my children's education.

### **Migrant Women Children's Education**

Education has been identified as central to nation-building. In Ghana, education was introduced by the missionaries particularly in the nineteenth century. The missionary education was meant to provide literary skills to the people of the Gold Coast, who were to work as co-missionaries and help with the translation of the Bible from English to the local languages. Others were also trained as clerks and secretaries. The missionaries also introduced technical skills, including joinery, mason, and horticulture. Later in the early twentieth century, the colonial administration partnered the missionaries to provide education. The colonial governor was interested in increasing labor supply in the administration of the colony.

Education in the north began with the incursion of the Catholics into the regions. The Catholics moved into the northern regions in the twentieth century from Upper Volta (now Burkina Faso). Like their counterparts in southern Ghana, they built schools and other social amenities. But

generally, at the time of Ghana's independence in 1957, there was a disparity between education in the north and the south. To bridge the gap, Nkrumah instituted free education in the north to encourage most northerners to catch up with their Ghanaian counterparts in the south. Over the years, many education policies have been rolled out to boost education in the country. The most popular was the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) that was introduced in 1995 by the government of the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The FCUBE was designed to ensure free education for all Ghanaians of school-going age. As a project of the UNESCO, it was made mandatory of nations to implement the policy. In addition to the FCUBE, other social intervention programs have been rolled out to support basic education in Ghana. One of these social intervention programs was the School Feeding Program, which the government of the New Patriotic Party rolled out in 2005. The program was based on the assumption that the free supply of food in basic school would encourage more children to go to school and also remain in school. The government of the NDC, under the late president, J.E.A. Mills, also piloted the provision of sandals for pupils.

Accra has benefited from most of these policies. But despite all the attractions of these policies, many of my respondents are reticent in sending their children to school. For children from the north who migrate to Accra and live with their parents, a few of them go to school. Most of them are compelled to stay at home and take care of their younger siblings. Some of them also join their mothers to work as head porters. Those who stay with non-kin members hardly enroll in school. While most of them are brought to Accra on the promise of being given education, they are hardly sent to school upon arrival in Accra. Instead of education, they are readily enrolled in the world of work as head porters and domestic servants. The research made a comparatively novel observation about children living with only their fathers. The fate of such children as far as their education is concerned is contingent on the kind of work their fathers are doing. If their fathers work as casual labourers, such children are likely to receive an education. But if their fathers have no regular income, the education of such children tend to suffer. But, generally, the research observed that northern fathers who have migrated to Accra tend to have

high interest in the education of their children, compared to the women migrants.

The reasons for the disposition of northern women migrants towards the education of their children are varied. For some of them, it is poverty. Education is said to be one of the surest antidotes to poverty. But one must also relatively be rich to be able to send one's child to school. This is a paradox that is hardly addressed in discourses on education. For example, for a child to successfully go through the education process, the children must have a conducive environment where he or she can learn. The child must have learning materials adequately provided. These are extrinsic motivations that enhance the chances of a child excelling in the pursuit of education.

In addition to these extrinsic motivations, the child must be personally motivated. Personal motivations come from the stories and experiences the child hears and acquires. If the child sees many young men and women excelling in education, the child is likely to be encouraged to also work hard. On the other hand, if the child does not hear or see persons who have excelled in education, the child will be less motivated to pursue education. In both ways, most of these children indeed lack adequate extrinsic and intrinsic motivations to go to school. So, while parents may feel reluctant to send their children to school, it is less doubtful that some of these children may feel inspired to go to school. Also, while the school feeding program may provide some motivation for children to go to school, it is not enough to provide the complexities involved in receiving an education.

But in my conversations with parents about the education of their children, some felt that education has a liberating effect from poverty and felt challenged to give their children education. For example, one of them asserted that:

I did not get the chance to go to school in the north, because my parents were poor. They also did not understand the benefits of education. Fortunately, I got married to a man

who had had some form of education. So, when we moved to Accra, he was bent on giving our children education. Currently, two of our children are enrolled at the La-Nkwantanang L/A school. It is difficult providing for all their educational needs, but we are doing the best we can to support them. At least there is free education, so we hope to also do what we can (Fulera, a study participant).

For those who do not give their children education, they are not oblivious to the benefits of education, but they feel that the weight of poverty is difficult to bear. Their energy alone cannot overturn the wheels of poverty. Their fortunes, they believe, cannot be turned around if they did not work hard enough. They, therefore, engage their children in work. Sometimes their older children stay at home to provide care to their younger children. Children who stay with non-parents or kin-members hardly make it to the classroom. As I have indicated above, some of these children are brought to the south to work in Madina to remit their families home. Such children, regardless of their age, are pushed into the workforce to raise money for their parents or relatives at home in the North. It is either they work as head porters or domestic servants helping women in Accra who sell cooked food.

From the above, it is obvious that the provision of free basic school and food is not enough to overcome the barriers to the education of children from the north who are in Madina. For many of those interviewed, I gathered that the fact that though education is an investment that has its benefit in the distant future, most parents compared the immediacy in getting money from selling to waiting for about ten or fifteen years to benefit from the education of their children and take the former. Also, most of these parents and guardians know about young university graduates who are roaming the streets of Accra as jobless men and women. Others have no family relatives who have higher education and are in a position of influence in society. These parents and guardians are, therefore, left without a role model they can suggest to their children. The situation is worse for female children, who even when they are given education would have their education truncated after basic school. The

idea that a woman must marry is a major hindrance to the education of children from Northern Ghana who are in Madina.

## **The Role of Grandmothers and Fathers in Child Care**

In Northern Ghana, as elsewhere in the south, childcare is considered the primary duty of females. The category of females with childcare includes grandparents, aunts, female siblings, and older siblings. But in my conversation with my respondents, I observed that some northern women migrants leave the care of their children in their communities of origin with their husbands and grandmothers. But the father's intervention of the care of their children in the absence of their wives (the children's mother) is conditioned primarily on whether the husband consented to the migration of his wife. If the woman's decision to migrate was sanctioned by her husband, then the husband would feel obliged to provide care for their children. But in instances where the husband feels let down by his wife who has absconded to the south, he sometimes feels reluctant to accept direct care of their children.

In such an instance, he would prefer that the children are taken care of by his mother or the children's maternal grandmother. This also implies that most grandmothers are active caregivers. They take care of their grandchildren in the absence of their children. Incidentally, some of these grandmothers are still active and strong and can provide adequate care for their grandchildren. But some of my respondents said that having their children under the care of their grandparents is not without its attendant risks. For example, a grandmother may 'spoil' her grandchildren. Also, grandmothers can take advantage of providing care to make 'unreasonable' demands sometimes. Given these concerns, what is important to the research is that husbands and grandparents step in to care for children. This is echoed by Moeshatu who said that:

I have an aunt that lived in Accra. She called me and told me she is going back to the north, so I should come and take over her job. She would resume work when she returns. My main work is washing clothes for a fee. I also work as a head porter. I do kayayei anytime I have nothing to wash.

Though some of the women are industrious and can quickly secure jobs of their own, some have the challenge of a double burden where childbearing and child raising issues present them with double jeopardy. As a result, some of the women expressed the feeling that it is hard living as a migrant mother. Some of the women also have difficulty building social networks and that affects them during hard times. While it is easier for some to borrow from friends and neighbors, some do not have these social resources. In the midst of all these, some of the women are optimistic about the future of their children and are ready to sacrifice for them. Some of the women are happy and content with what they have. However, some spoke about attacks in their neighborhoods by armed robbers, of which some have constantly been victims, where the robbers took away their money, clothes and electrical gadgets such as television sets.

### **Migrant Challenges in La Nkwantanang-Madina**

The challenges that northern women migrants face in Madina is discussed within the context of life in an urban Accra. Accra is the hub of brisk economic activities. Since the city became the administrative capital of the colonial administrators in 1877, Accra has maintained its reputation as the hub for multiple activities. It is the desired destination of most migrants in Ghana, including those from the northern regions. In Kumasi, the basic image of Accra is the seat of government where people in the city have ready access to the president of the republic. One popular request that is made to a resident of Accra when he travels to Kumasi is that he or she should extend felicitation to the president of the republic. Accra also conjures the image of a city that promises all the goodies of life. The city remains the hive of the capitalist world where globalization has made it possible for goods to travel from one nation to the other. At the national level, all the economic activities in Ghana end in Accra. The major administrative centers, as well as, major social service providers are located in Accra.

Many people, therefore, migrate from the countryside to Accra to catch a glimpse of its perceived physical splendor. Others move into the city to seek job opportunities. For many of the youth who aspire to be politicians, Accra promises to be the best place for one to launch one's political

ambition. Accra also has major markets, which make the capital the best place to initiate and birth a business idea. The cosmopolitan and multicultural characteristic of Accra further makes the city the ideal place for one to establish networks and liaise with potential benefactors. For many people outside of Accra, who nurture the ambition to travel abroad, the location of the nation's international airport in the city assures them that one is simply a step away from travelling abroad if one dwells in Accra.

Given all the good things that people associate with Accra, it is important to point out that life in the city is not as easy and simple as people see it. The cost of living is very high. Food prices are high. Clothes are expensive. And the cost of transportation also keeps soaring. It is also expensive to rent in Accra since most landlords and landladies do not accept less than two years of advancement payment. Social services like water, electricity, and sanitation are not also sufficiently provided in some areas in the city. The city of Accra is equally densely populated that burdens the few social amenities available.

Madina, which is the focus of my research, is located about eight miles away from Accra central. Until recently, Madina remained the main destination of many northern women migrants. The area has different constituencies, which reflect the different levels of social and economic statuses of residents. At the Madina Estate, the area is populated largely by people within the middle-income bracket and most of them work in the formal sector of the economy. In the Zongo, most of the residents there are in the lower-income bracket. The Zongo constituency of Madina is densely populated. It is, however, in the Zongo constituency where most of the northern female migrants reside when they move into Madina.

Given that the Zongo constituency of Madina is densely populated, there is a huge housing deficit. Most of the houses in the Zongo do not have enough space for people to use as sleeping places. So, kiosks and other shops serve dual purposes. During the day, the kiosks and shops serve an economic purpose. In the evening, they are converted to bedrooms. Some of the migrants also sleep in front of shops and kiosks. This situation poses a major challenge to migrants. For instance, when it rains, most of them

have to stay awake until the rain stops and dry the floor. They are exposed to thefts from some of the criminals in the community. Similarly, those with children always have to straddle among shops in search of a place for their children to sleep. In discussing how the shortage of housing poses a problem to these migrants, one of them stated that:

Getting a place to sleep is a major challenge. Sometimes, we are forced to contend with cold weather during the rainy season. There have been times when we spend a few sleepless nights because it rained continuously, and we had nowhere to go. We also experience cases of theft. Some of the drug peddlers and marijuana consumers also target us for stealing. Some truck pushers who also attempt to steal from us.

Another respondent, Sadia expressed her concerns about accommodation as follows:

This place is better because I didn't grow here [Madina]. Getting work in Madina is easy compared to the north. If you go to the market, there are so many jobs to do. I could even sell pure water [sachet drinking water] right now and get some money to buy food. It is just that getting somewhere to sleep is a challenge (Sadia, a study participant).

The idea that life in Madina is better than in the north is said in the context of getting easy informal work to do. But it is also true that Madina lacks the social networks and connections that obtain in the north. In the south, some of these migrants face issues of ethnocentrism. If life in Madina is better, perhaps it is also because this respondent was looking at what the future in Madina promises her. About theft, Helda, a study participant indicated that:

Mostly, my money gets stolen at night when we are asleep. Meanwhile, I kept the money for my children's school fees

and feeding. We go through a lot of challenges here; even when we lock the place, the thief's will break-in, they sometimes cut the kiosk in which we sleep.

The accommodation challenge in Madina is such that many of these migrants are exposed to mosquitos and are vulnerable to malaria. Over the years, the Social Welfare Service has been providing these women with treated mosquito nets. But this practice has always been like a drop in the desert. Since most of the women do not have a bedroom, they are unable to use the nets that are given them. There were reports that some of the ladies face the threat of rape.

A few of the women migrants pull resources to rent temporary accommodation. But usually, they struggle to afford the cost of receiving social services like water and electricity supply. Some also pay some amount of money to sleep in other people's kiosks. But there have been cases where shop owners accuse these women of stealing. The major challenge with accommodation is perhaps the packing of women in a small space. Sometimes there is no breathing space when these migrants sleep. The situation is dire for children who are forced to share the same crowded space. The practice of sharing sleeping space in front of a kiosk or shop is a challenge that needs immediate attention.

The accommodation challenge leads to health challenges, given that most of these women and their children are indiscriminately exposed to mosquitos, leading to the high prevalence of malaria among them. Their exposure to heat and crowding in a small space exposes them to communicable diseases like skin rashes. Their children also sometimes suffer from diarrhea whenever there is a diarrhea outbreak in Madina. One of the respondents, shared with me health challenges she faced:

Health is really a challenge. Our worst moments are during the rainy season. During the rainy season, we easily catch malaria. Some of us also develop skin rashes. As for our children, it is sad. They tend to fall sick often. We are always left without protection when we walk in the sun and sleep in crowded spaces. Some of the young ladies also

struggle with menstrual hygiene. There are a few of them who do not readily get money to buy a menstrual pad (Selama, a study participant).

Some of them also have health-seeking behaviors that do not support the appropriation of western medicine. They think that some accidents at the workplace are a result of some witchcraft or malevolent spirit somewhere. For instance, one of them who had an accident at the workplace that led to a deep cut in her leg. But she vowed never to take it to the clinic for treatment until she visits a ritual functionary. This issue of mystical causality is one of the challenges among some migrant women.

In addition to this, most of the women do works that are disproportionate to their age. Some of them in their late forties do want to carry heavy loads like the young ones. Given the high cost of living in Accra, some of these women strain their energy by doing multiple jobs, including hazardous ones with no physical protection. For example, some of the women sit for hours winnowing. Some also spend hours at the milling machine ground as they ply their jobs. Perhaps, the greater challenge is that most of these women go to such hazardous workspaces with their babies and younger children. This imperils the health of women and children. Those who also help food vendors to cook risk their health working close to the fire all the time. Similarly, the nature of the work of those who carry stuff (head porters) to be paid is such that they hardly find time to rest. Many of them also do not go to the clinic when they are ill. They rather engage in self-medication. Some individuals who hawk over the counter drugs in the markets, supply these migrant women with such over the counter drugs, particularly painkillers.

The other challenge that northern women migrants face is the difficulty in getting caregivers<sup>2</sup> and care providers<sup>3</sup> for their children. This challenge is such that women with young children struggle to get people to take care of their children. There are a few daycare centers and nursery schools around, but the cost of receiving the services of these institutions is usually beyond the reach of women migrants. Some, therefore, strap their children to the back as they pursue their daily chores. This exposes most children to the scorching sun, which is a threat to their health.

There is also the challenge of language. Language is an important index for social cohesion. It is also necessary to indicate the extent to which one is accepted into a particular society. It is said that communicating in a common language helps in solidifying and lubricating social relations. Through the speaking of a common language, shared values such as mutual respect, care for one another, and sharing each other's burdens are configured to define a relationship. Speaking a common language also eases tension as it also brings the 'foreigner' close home in a 'foreign' land. Unfortunately, many of the migrants speak neither Hausa nor Twi, the two dominant languages in most of the Zongo communities in Accra. Because some of them do not speak any of these languages, it creates a linguistic barrier that spills over to economic barriers. For example, the lack of mutual intelligibility often frustrates the ability of women head porters to bargain well. There are times they are cheated because they could not communicate to bargain. The absence of a common language also breeds mistrust. This is because when people communicate in a common language, trust is built that is extended to business activities. But the absence of a common language has always magnified the suspicion migrants have for host members of the Madina community and vice versa.

Ideally, northerners from Zongo communities in the migrating towns do not struggle to connect linguistically when they come to Accra. Those who

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<sup>2</sup> The term caregivers is used to mean individuals who provide informal service of helping migrant women take care of their children. Usually, the contract is informally established.

<sup>3</sup> The term care providers is used to refer to institutions, like the schools and other social centers that provide service to migrant women by taking care of their children. There is always a formal arrangement to receive service from care providers.

also come after they had spent some time in Kumasi do not also struggle much with language barriers. But those who come right away from non-Zongo communities in the North and do not do any transit in Kumasi are those who suffer the most with the language barrier. One of the respondents expressed her frustration with the language barrier as follows:

As for the language issue, it is tough. I speak a little Twi, but some of my sisters do not speak either Hausa or Twi. They find it difficult to bargain well. Sometimes their inability to communicate in a particular language is seen as a threat. For example, when they are spoken to in Twi, they respond with Wala or Dagbani. This frustrates their clients who think they are being insulted. It is really a challenge (Faida, a study participant).

The other challenge which is related to the language barrier is ethnocentrism. As I have said, the absence of a common language creates suspicion. But more importantly, it combines with other factors to fester ethnocentrism. This challenge goes back to the colonial era. During the colonial era, most southerners did not see northerners in their glory. They saw them as laborers and cheap workers. They were seen as the scum of the earth. In fact, names like *ntafoo*, *eserem fo*, and *mpepe fo* may not in themselves be derogatory. But in the south these words are usually used with ethnocentric inclinations. Northerners are also stereotyped as dirty people, thieves, and mindlessly submissive. The challenge with ethnocentrism is that one is always guilty before proven innocent. The reality of ethnocentrism was captured by one participant as follows:

I pay rent here [Madina] and yet being treated with disrespect. I cannot even express myself because people see me as a foreigner. We go through several emotional and verbal abuses daily. People don't respect us the Northerners. You can be carrying a heavy load and if the pan should touch someone, the person would really insult you. Some people value what they sell than we Northerners. We are all here to have a better living standard else we would all live in our hometowns. In the North, you

can start a business and the business would collapse halfway and you won't know what to do, so to pay our debts, we move to Accra (Safia, a study participant).

## **Social Capital as Coping Strategy**

Through the social networks that these women establish, they can revitalize the 'traditional' adage that it takes a village to raise a child. Through these networks, the women migrants can circumvent the sense of 'strangeness' which manifests in the ethnocentrism directed at the time by some Madina residents and provide their children an imagined 'homogenous' community. This imagined 'homogenous' community transcends ethnic identification to regional solidarity. Their children, therefore, grow up in such communities and enjoy the collective care from other members. It needs to be stated that these ethnic-based associations are different from the religious-based associations in the sense that the ethnic and regional solidarity thrives on a common sense of origin – Northern Ghana, not religious affiliation. This is primarily because the marginalization they suffer as a group is indiscriminate and has nothing to do with one's religious identity.

Also, some of these northern women belong to different religious groups. There are Muslims, Christians, and those who subscribe to their ethnic indigenous religions. Since most of them are not 'reformist' in terms of being fanatics about their religious leaning, they are easily able to bond with people of other religions. In the same way, they are more concerned with how they can mobilize to deal with their daily existential challenges that have less or nothing to do with religion. The practice of sharing food and eating together has been one way that they circumvent religious binaries of 'us' and 'them' that could be potentially conflictual. Help from the ethnic-based association is based on how common challenges could be resolved with shared energy and ethnic and regional values.

On the other hand, some of the Muslims among them also belong to religious groups. These religious groups are established based on receiving Islamic education from a common source – the Madrasa (Makaranta). This religious-based association is limited in scope in terms of membership. Non-Muslims may join. But help from religious-based

association could be extended to a non-Muslim migrant in an event of a crisis. We can read common humanity and common 'fictive' descent as the reasons for non-Muslims receiving support from a religious-based association. We observed in the course of the fieldwork that sometimes the line between the distribution of benefits between ethnic and religious-based association is very thin and blurred. For example, I interviewed non-Muslims who received help from a Muslim-religious association. Even so, in terms of childcare, receiving support from a member has no religious or ethnic consideration. This implies that ethnic-based groups are more instrumental in providing care for children than a religious association. This is because group members can easily leave their children to other ethnic members or assist in caring for other members' children. Members can receive support from both ethnic and religious associations. Sometimes, different benefits could be derived from different sources. For example, a Muslim mother can appeal to a Muslim religious functionary to provide care for their children, especially if she suspects that her children's sickness is because of spiritual manipulations. In the same breadth, a Muslim woman in a religious group can also consult Muslim ritual functionaries to seek help in their economic activities. The same Muslim can appeal to an ethnic association to get help financially and also help to raise her child.

## **Conclusion**

I argue that female northern migrants are not caught in the web of exploitation, as it is usually presented in literature and popular narratives. Instead, these females have developed creative and instrumental ways of surviving in a 'strange' and unfriendly life in urban Accra. Through the establishment of social and religious networks as well as appropriating available state social intervention programmes, these female migrants are able to stake in the education of their children and envision a better future for themselves. In an era of education related social interventions such as the School Feeding and Free Senior High School Education programs, there is the need for new ways of exploring the coping strategies of female migrants. The paper argued that there is the need to move away from casting female northern migrants as helpless victims to actualizing them

as active agents who deploy their physical and cognitive abilities to make ends meet in Accra.

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