

**Papers of 4<sup>th</sup> Canadian International Conference on  
Humanities & Social Sciences 2022**



**Unique Conferences Canada Publication  
Toronto, Canada**



*Published by*

*Unique Conferences Canada*

Suite 2201, 250 Young Street,  
ON M5B 2L7

[admin@uniqueca.com](mailto:admin@uniqueca.com)

[www.uniqueca.com](http://www.uniqueca.com)

Published in Canada

September 2022

**ISBN 978-1-988652-50-4**



@UCC September 2022

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**4<sup>th</sup> Canadian International Conference on  
Humanities & Social Sciences 2022 (HUSO2022)**

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**SUPPORTING JOURNAL**

International Multidisciplinary Research Journal - ISSN 2424-7073

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## **Human Rights, COVID19 and Health Equity: How Can Human Rights Advance Health Equity?**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper investigates the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) legal and moral appeal and how it can address health disparities and promote health equity. Health equity addresses the undesirable, avoidable, unequal, and unjust health disparities. Equity is synonymous with social justice and fairness. As a result, health equity is a normative ethical concept that carries moral weight for those who believe in human rights. Unjustified or unfair health inequality leads to the distribution of resources that drive a specific type of health inequality—systematic health inequality due to the social determinants of increasingly disadvantaged people. It is impossible to argue that all health disparities are unethical. Men and women, for example, may have different health issues that are not common to both sexes. Men have prostate problems; women do not, and young people are generally healthier than older adults—it is challenging to argue that these health disparities are unjust. However, health equity would focus on the equitable distribution of health for all. For instance, it addresses racial/ethnic differences in the likelihood of heart disease or cancer in people who live in an unhealthy environment, etc. These health equity issues must be addressed legally and morally, and the human rights framework provides a legal and moral foundation for health equity.*

**Keywords:** COVID19, health equity, human rights, health disparities, healthcare

### **Introduction**

Human rights allow everyone to live in dignity, democracy, equality, justice, and peace. Every person has these rights simply because they are human beings. Without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinions, national or social origin, land, birth, or another status, they are guaranteed to everyone. Human rights are crucial to the full development of individuals and societies. Human rights are seen by many as a collection of moral standards that apply to all. Human rights are also part of international law, found in treaties and declarations specifying the specific rights countries are expected to uphold. Countries also integrate human rights into national, state, and local legislation. A history of modern human rights development begins with the movements to end slavery, genocide, segregation, and government injustice. Since the First World War, academics, activists, and national leaders have called for a declaration to uphold the most critical human rights and fundamental freedoms and support the international framework – the League of Nations. During World War II, massacres showed that these previous attempts to protect human rights from government abuses were insufficient. So, the United Nations have taken positive steps to create the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Today, the UDHR has both legal and moral weight.

Health equity addresses the unwanted, avoidable, unequal, and unjust disparities in health. Equity refers to social justice and fairness. Therefore, health equity is a normative ethical concept that bears moral weight on those who hold human rights. The definition of health fairness concentrates on the distribution of resources and other processes which drive a particular form of health inequality—systematic health

inequality or social determinants among social groups that are increasingly less advantaged is unjustified or unfair health inequality. One cannot argue that all health inequalities are unethical. For instance, men and women can have different health issues that are not natural to both sexes. Men have prostate problems; women do not have to face this issue, or young people are relatively healthier than older adults. It would be difficult to argue that these health inequalities are unfair. But there would be significant questions from an equity standpoint about differences in the nutrition status and vaccine levels between girls and boys and racial/ethnic disparities in the probability of heart disease or cancer in people who live in an unhealthy environment. These health equity questions need to be addressed legally and morally.

Equity doesn't necessarily mean egalitarianism. The normative standards of egalitarian principle may not work with equity. Equity is value-based and inherently normative, but equality is not naturally a normative or standardized concept. Health disparities are associated with health inequities, possibly because inequities can be charged with a tone of blame, decision, or morality. However, it is essential to admit that these terms are not synonymous strictly. Health equity focuses on distributing resources and other processes that lead to a particular form of health inequality. The concept of equality is indispensable for operationalizing and measuring health equity. It is essential for accountability under the human rights framework.

### **The Social Determinants of Health Equity**

The correlation between health equity and the social determinants of disadvantaged communities has become a focal point of research since the beginning of the pandemic, COVID-19. The question of why the impoverished population has lost more lives to the pandemic points to the social determinants contributing to an unfair distribution and access to adequate healthcare in the United States. According to the data, diseases like hypertension, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, obesity, chronic lung disease, and kidney disease are risk factors for poor COVID-19 outcomes. Blacks have the highest frequency and earliest development of hypertension and kidney disease. Native Americans have an extraordinarily high frequency of diabetes, while Hispanic/Latinx people have comparable rates of related illnesses. Haynes et al. argue that "On a national level, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's data representative of 10% of the US population reveal that Blacks account for 33% of COVID-19 hospitalizations, despite comprising 18% of the sample population" (Haynes et al., 2020, p. 104). Consequently, it is not surprising that the current pandemic has disproportionately afflicted people of color.

The current crisis in public health did not develop out of thin air; instead, the health disparities brought to light due to this crisis are driven mainly by socioeconomic and environmental factors. For instance, it is challenging to maintain a social distance in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods due to the prevalence of overcrowding, the presence of households consisting of multiple generations, and the inability to find work that can be done from home. The impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable communities bring to light substantial discrepancies in the distribution of resources, which perpetuate poverty and social exclusion. In addition, there is no question about the insurance coverage gap between the insured and the uninsured. A sizeable portion of communities of color has no health insurance. As the unemployment rate continues to rise, having access to public insurance choices like Medicaid will become increasingly important to protect the vulnerable population.

### **Health Equity and Human Rights**

Equalizing opportunities to be healthy requires addressing the most critical social and economic determinants of health. Concern for equal opportunities is the basis for the absence of systematic social disparities. All human rights are interrelated and indivisible, in line with human rights principles. Thus, we cannot isolate the right to health from other rights, including the right to a fair, healthy standard of life and education and the freedom to engage entirely in one's society from discrimination. The critical economic



and social determinants of health must be addressed, including healthcare, living conditions in households and communities, working conditions, and policies that influence these factors. The problem of equal opportunity in health is also the reason for including the absence of systemic socioeconomic inequalities in healthcare and its vital social determinants in the concept of equity in health.

The United Nations Declaration was adopted by the General Assembly on 10 December 1948. The first international document states, "The basic civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights that all humans should enjoy." (UN1948). International law provides a human right to health under several treaties, the most important being the 1966 International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Article 12 of the ICESCR (UN, 1966) acknowledges everyone's right to the highest physical and mental health requirements, hence the right to health. Other relevant suggestions include the states and countries ratifying the laws such as maternal and child health regulations and boosting environmental and industrial sanitation. Similar ICESCR protections include the rights to healthy and secure work conditions, social security, safeguarding and maintaining the family, and the right to an acceptable standard of living, including food, clothes, housing, etc.

Other global human rights treaties, such as the International Convention for the elimination of all forms of racial discrimination (UN1965), the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (UN1979), and the convention on children's rights (UN1990), as well as provisions about health, are also included in several other international human rights treaties (Schrecker et al., 2010). Under international law, the primary responsibility for human rights rests with national governments; nevertheless, their responsibilities extend beyond their borders. The duty laid down in Article 2(1) of the ICESCR argues for "international assistance and co-operation, especially economic and technical." The rights found in ICESCR are universal, as are all human rights treaties, meaning that they extend to all people in all countries to foster a life of human dignity.

Translating rights into legislation may be a prerequisite for successful compliance, but it is unlikely to be adequate. The consequences of litigation depend on many factors: the legislative past and the courts' receptivity, the political history of the claims on economic and social rights, and civil society's mobilization (Schrecker et al., 2010). Creative strategy and advocacy are essential for implementing a human rights approach. Suppose the tribunals want to enforce health-related economic and social rights. In that case, they must break the political terrain where maximum available resources are specified in government budget priorities and successfully monitor the allocated resources by concerned organizations and individuals.

Human rights law protects a world of unprecedented abundance, but governments and concerned agencies often overlook it. The UN looks at the role of human rights in improving health outcomes. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration between those working in human rights and the social determinants of health to define common objectives. A recent study of 194 countries identified 72 indicators of how health systems incorporated "right-to-health features" Only 56 of the 160 countries that have ratified ICESCR had legally recognized the right to health. Eighty-eight countries did not have an adequate health information system for maternal deaths (Backman et al., 2008; Schrecker et al., 2010). The result highlights the importance of evaluating the efficacy of accountability systems in ways that contribute to better rights. These human rights structures operate at an international, regional, and national level but are often powerless to enforce substantive penalties for infringements and non-real commitments. However, many countries have enshrined civil rights in the constitution enforceable by the courts.

### **The Universal Nature of Human Rights**

Human rights embody the necessities required for citizens to live with equality. Human rights allow citizens to determine how they live and communicate and what kind of government they want to support. Rights also ensure human rights so individuals can take full advantage of all resources to meet their

fundamental needs, such as food, shelter, and schooling. Finally, human rights guard us against violence by ensuring life, dignity, equality, and security. According to the United Nations, human rights: "Ensure that a human being will be able to fully develop and use human qualities such as intelligence, talent, and conscience and satisfy his or her spiritual and other needs." (UN, 1996-2020) The universality of human rights is the foundation of international human rights law. That implies that we are all reasonably entitled to our human rights. As stressed in the UDHR, this concept is reiterated in several international conferences, statements, and resolutions on human rights. Henkin argues that, in principle, "the contemporary articulation of human rights, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, claims and prescribes universality" (Henkin, 1989, p. 11).

The idea of human rights is related but not equivalent to justice, fairness, and democracy. The rights of the Universal Declaration are politically and legally universal, having been accepted by virtually all states. However, ensuring respect for rights will require the continued development of stable political societies (Henkin, 1989). Some moral/cultural relativists deny the prospect of achieving a universal definition of human rights. But some of the world's sovereign states have ratified the ICESCR, including most Asian countries whose political leaders have often argued that human rights are rooted in Western liberal values. The universality of economic and social rights also rests on their role in defining a minimum set of preconditions necessary to human functioning, which include among the most fundamental needs for human development the social determinants such as proper nutrition, protection of water, and shelter (Mansdotter et al., 2020; Nussbaum, 2011; Sen, 2005).

The universality of human rights implies that human rights must be the same anywhere and for all. Every person is entitled to inalienable rights and freedoms as a human being. These rights ensure the dignity and value of the individual being and the well-being of people. Multiple viewpoints have already questioned human rights' universality; the idea had a brutal political and academic battle for acceptance. The main challenge was the allegation of the universality of vocabulary. The political and philosophical definition of human rights has not been universal for a long time. It had roots in John Locke's natural rights in the 17th century. We seem to proclaim Locke's restatement in the Declaration of Independence in the United States right from its inception. Yet traditionalists and progressives such as Edmund Burke and Bentham rejected the idea when Locke introduced the concept of natural rights (Henkin, 1989). Even today, moral philosophers like MacIntyre and Sen are skeptical about the conceptual soundness and the moral claims of human rights as baseless (MacIntyre, 2007; Sen, 2004).

Religions also questioned the concept of human rights. On many occasions, almost every religion, including Protestantism, whose focus on individualism has contributed to the theory but has not warmly received human rights principles. Religions have not favored approaches that might be called inherently anthropocentric. Autonomy and freedom were not religious ideals and were considered disorderly and anarchic. Cultural anthropologists have accused natural rights of being a western notion and cultural hegemony of forcing them on others. In every case, they insisted, human rights have no chance if the world's societies do not support the notion (Henkin, 1989).

Political and moral thinkers claim that although the universal appeal to human rights has not been wholly acknowledged, we can safely argue that it has found universal appeal in at least three areas; (1). political, (2). legal, and (3). moral levels of universal acceptance (Henkin, 1989). Today, one cannot deny political universality. World War II and the total awareness of Adolf Hitler's enormous crimes contributed to the age of rights. Human rights are acknowledged as our time's philosophy; no other notion of politicism except socialism, no capitalism, or even democracy, however established, generally undefined, was universally cheered. All nations have, in a way, embraced the concept of human rights. The widespread rejection of discrimination, for example, also suggests that the idea of fairness and rights is widely recognized. We may be approaching universality, even among philosophers. The natural rights got a revival. Philosophers who continue to avoid natural rights may still accept a sense of universal moral

intuition that provides the foundation for human rights. Philosophers who claim to reject economic and social rights as rights do not question and indeed reaffirm the principle of human rights. These are all signs that the concept of human rights receives universal acceptance today.

### **How Can Human Rights Advance Health Equity?**

The ideas of inequalities in health and justice are rooted in profound, pragmatic societal ideals and standards of ethical and human rights that are universally accepted. Amartya Sen believes health is necessary for society to work, and ill-health can also hinder the full implementation of one's human rights (Sen, 1999). The main principles underlying health inequalities and health equity's conceptions include legal and moral human rights principles outlined by Braveman et al. (2011, pp. 149-151, *Italics Original*), which are worth mentioning. (1) *"All people should be valued equally."* The theory of human rights that all human beings deserve equal rights is fundamental to all people's equal treatment. (2). *"Health has a particular value for individuals."* The health and willingness of a person to engage entirely in workers and a democratic society are essential. Health conditions mean future pain, injury, and death, threaten one's right to make a living, and are barriers to sharing one's thoughts and participating in politics. (3). *"Nondiscrimination and equality."* Everyone should achieve optimal health status without distinction based on race or ethnic group, skin color, religion, language, or other characteristics. It directly reflects the human rights principles of nondiscrimination and equality. (4). *"Rights to health and a standard of living adequate for health."* International human rights conventions, signed by nearly all nations, oblige states to uphold, protect, respect, and encourage all people's human rights, including the right to the highest attainable standard of health and the right to an average life is appropriate for health and well-being. Governments must show good faith in systematically reducing barriers to fulfilling these rights. (5). *"Health differences adversely affecting socially disadvantaged groups are particularly unacceptable because ill health can be an obstacle to overcoming social disadvantage."* This concern resonates with equity principles of common sense and ethical concepts of justice, especially the notion that necessity should be a core determinant of health resource distribution and the idea of Rawls' responsibility to optimize the well-being of those who are worse off (Rawls, 1999). (6). *"The resources needed to be healthy should be distributed fairly."* The basic principles of equality, freedom, and the right to a decent standard of life are core principles of distributive justice. (7). *"Health equity is a value underlying a commitment to reduce and ultimately eliminate health disparities."* Health equity means striving to equalize opportunities to be healthy. It requires a concerted effort to achieve more rapid improvements among those worse off in society.

### **Conclusion**

Humanitarian ethics and human rights values endorse a preference for those who face the most significant challenges. There has been plenty of evidence that members of the oppressed ethnic/racial communities have met many and sometimes crippling hurdles, even for decades. Human rights values will shield efforts to resolve racial/ethnic and other health inequalities from several possible challenges. In addition to its role in enabling litigation at the domestic and international levels, international human rights law provides a substantial boost to advocacy for global health equity by offering normative specificity and an analytical framework based on enforceable law. The occasional incidence and limited reach of litigation or issue-based lobbying may only allow for incremental progress toward health equity; nevertheless, rights can operate more methodically to improve health equity. Researchers in human rights think that just as the right to a fair trial has been crucial in the growth of well-developed judicial systems, so does the right to health have a unique role in promoting policies that increase health equity.

The twenty-first century's first decade ended with no proof of progress in reducing ethnic or socioeconomic disparities in health. There is the possibility of bringing about a paradigm change, from

viewing health as a component of monetary allocations that is either charitable or superfluous to understanding health as something that implicates enforceable legal and moral duties. Human rights researchers have created rights-based versions of public and global health policies, programs, and mechanisms that strive to proactively implement the conceptual framework and responsibilities of the right to health (Forman, 2014). The acknowledgment of the right to health in international law makes available to social and political actors a potentially powerful collection of norms, resources, and strategies for achieving health equity. These are made available because of the right to health. Individuals' rights to claim public health services and healthcare that is both accessible and inexpensive may result in improved health outcomes, which will ultimately lead to a reduction in health inequalities. It is time to show a deep dedication to alleviating health disparities, which lies at the center of the pursuit of a more equitable society.

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## Implications of Neorealism and Neoliberalism on Geopolitics and Foreign Policy

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### Abstract

*Geopolitics is one of the significant determinants of the foreign policy of any country. States generally change their foreign policy as per the change in geopolitics. Geopolitics guides state leaders to make rational decisions on foreign policymaking by analyzing local, regional, and global contexts and developments. As geopolitics is the combination of geography and political processes, it comprises the size of the geography, location, border linkage, geographical shape, people circulation, vital resources, engagement and effect of external actors, etc. These all things influence the foreign policy decision-making process. The paper analyzes the implications of neorealist and neo-liberal developments on geopolitics. In addition, it also assesses the impact of changing geopolitics on countries' foreign policy. The paper focuses on the contribution of mainstreaming theories of International Relations to analyze geopolitics. Since the research perspective determines the theoretical grounds of the study, neorealism, and neo-liberalism are suitable bases to lay down the foundation for the study of geopolitics however, geopolitics itself is an unavoidable theory of International Relations whose significance in the twenty-first century is increasing day by day. The paper adopts a qualitative method based on a systematic approach under descriptive and critical analysis. From the historical context to contemporary issues consisting of the origin of concepts of geopolitics to its dimensions, theoretical grounds of geopolitics to approaches, and philosophical basis to challenges of geopolitics, are reviewed to develop the necessary arguments in this Research.*

**Keywords:** Foreign Policy, Geopolitics, Neoliberalism, Neorealism

### Introduction

Geopolitics is one of the determinants of the foreign policy of any country. Geopolitics guides countries' leaders in making rational decisions on foreign policymaking, analyzing local, regional, and global contexts and developments. It is a combination of geography and political processes, which comprises the size of the geography, location, border linkage, geographical shape, people circulation, vital resources, engagement and effect of external actors, etc. These all the things influence the foreign policy decision-making process. Super and great powers study their geopolitics seriously and investigate its impact on foreign policy. Then, they revisit their foreign policy accordingly. Therefore, geopolitics is one of the most important determinants of foreign policy.

Geopolitics is a prominent discourse in International Relations. In most cases, rulers of the powerful countries contribute to the ups and downs of geopolitics. Amid the bloodshed in Afghanistan, Iraq, Sudan, and less well-reported places such as the Congo, the continued relevance of geopolitics is overwhelming (Dodds, 2007, p. 1). The US forces began bombing the Taliban and Al Qaeda in Afghanistan on 7 October 2001. The 2003 invasion of Iraq by the USA on 20 March is another devastating attack on a sovereign state. Other incidents which diverted the flow of geopolitics in the interest of great powers are:- The occupation of Korea by the USA and the former USSR in 1945 to disarm the Japanese invaders from the Korean peninsula, the intervention in Syria, and overthrowing of an elected parliamentary government in 1949 by the Truman administration, the role of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to overthrow Egyptian King Farouk in 1950, and the then US President Eisenhower's attempt to impose an embargo on Cuba in 1958,

etc. Small states, developing nations, and other third-world countries usually become losers from such great games of geopolitics, and their international relations is also affected. Hence, geopolitics is a prominent discourse in International Relations.

Growing global changes and challenges like the effect of globalization, technological innovation and its misuse, terrorist activities, various fundamental groups, and their political agenda have made geopolitics more complex. The recent geopolitical development challenges the existing world views, and theories which opens the way for inducting new perspective and discourses. The researcher focuses on the theoretical debate on geopolitics as the primary focus and neorealism and neoliberalism as the secondary focus for analyzing geopolitics. In International Relations, neorealism and neoliberalism are mainstreaming theories as many IR scholars claim. But, in the Nepali context, such claims seems scientifically and theoretically invalid. Therefore, this research investigates the relevance of the theory of geopolitics and explores a new avenue. Additionally, it examines how the global changes and challenges affect the theoretical discourse globally and assesses impacts locally

## **Methods and Materials**

Philosophically, the research focusses on investigating the feature of the reality of geopolitics and its relation with other IR theories. Geopolitical and theoretical ontology is dealt with in this research that what kind of knowledge is existed. The paper adopts the qualitative method under an analytical and critical approach, and hence this paper focuses on secondary data. A review of historical documents is a tool for data collection. The whole research tries to collect qualitative data as secondary sources. Scholarly Journals, textbooks, policy reports, and governmental publications are the source of data. The text analysis is the tool for analyzing data for reaching conclusions via critical observation and analysis.

## **Results and Discussion**

### ***Geopolitics in Concepts***

Various theorists have proposed the multiple concepts of geopolitics. Dodds (2007) argues, "Geopolitics, precisely because it is preoccupied with borders, resources, flows, territories, and identities can provide a pathway for critical analysis and understanding – albeit a controversial one" (p.3). Pascu (2015) opines those geopolitics deals with the general development of human society and the study of many issues arising out of the growing influence of permanent political-economic changes on the whole system of human consciousness and socio-political life and culture (p. 437). In broader understanding, geopolitics conceptualize as the analysis of the importance and influence of geographical elements and their settings which impacts a country's internal and external policy. Geopolitics covers the studies related to strategic and political models, domestic affairs and linguistic matters, cultural and religious domain, theories, border issues, and human relations with the environment or states' structure of political-economic conditions. Therefore, geopolitics includes every dimension of geography, states, people, and interests, however, the paper focuses only on a few dimensions of International Relations.

### ***Origin***

The term geopolitics emerged during the last decade of the 19th century and re-emerged at the final decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is necessary to describe some of the problems arising from the development of human society and the increasing influence of political-economic change on the overall system of human consciousness and socio-political life and culture (Pascu, 2015, p. 438). Geopolitical theorists Friedrich Ratzel, Rudolf Kjellen, and Karl Haushofer played a vital role in developing the first concept of geopolitics. The role played by the conservative geopolitical school of Germany is significant in the consecration of the new disciplines. The geopolitical perception was generated by legion concerns regarding the political geography, political theories, and military conceptions in that period. It developed due to the historical



phase of the society and the state traveled to Germany from the second half of the nineteenth century in combination with the expansion policy during the Second World War (Claval, 2001, pp. 27-31).

At the end of the 19th century, the French geopolitical school identified itself as part of the first period of geopolitics which covered the issues such as domestic studies of French under human geography (Pascu, 2015, p. 438). Gokmen (2010) investigates that geopolitics was born at the end of the nineteenth century and departed from universities with the end of World War II. (p. 3). He described the IR as a separate academic discipline born from 1919 to 1939, even called the interwar period. Sometimes, it was practiced as a separate discipline, and sometimes it was considered only as political discourse. Likewise, Deudney (2000) claims that geopolitical theory emerged in two waves, early naturalism and global geopolitics, the latter of which grew out of the former in the late 19th century under the impetuses of the Darwinian and industrial revolution (p. 78). He explores, "global geopolitics was analyzed from the late 19th and early 20th centuries produced by Alfred Thayer Mahan, Friedrich Ratzel, Halford Mackinder, Frederick Jackson Turner, H. G. Wells, Karl Haushofer". Other scholars gave greater explicit recognition to technology...and was focused on the global-scope system of power and security relationship...As per Deudney, geopolitics is more related to the balance of power system which relates to the security arena as well.

Although IR and geopolitics deal with similar issues and share many common theoretical assumptions, IR theories never directly address geopolitics or its key figures. Any history of IR that fails to address the relationship between the two remains historically flawed. In this way, geopolitics emerged as a separate theory of International Relations, and now it needs to investigate its relations with other IR theories.

### ***Debates***

Cohen envisioned geopolitics ... as a tool to manage the balance of power in the interests of the whole world (1964). The author's notion here does not demand the strategic competition and preparation of war and the focus seems just on the common good with equal opportunity and balanced relations without any dominance from any country. From Cohen's perspective, the world system is made up of geopolitical structures. These structures are organized by two hierarchical sorted spatial levels: first-geostrategic realms, and second-geopolitical regions. These two levels are related to the third level, the national state, which is the linchpin of Cohen's entire world system (Antonsich, 2004, p. 807). But, Taylor aimed to convert geopolitics into an instrument of peace. Cohen talks only about promoting and managing equilibrium conditions which advocate more about the interest of the world but Taylor argues that geopolitics should play a role as an instrument to establish peace in the world. Cohen does not care about world peace but in contrast, Taylor emphasizes it.

According to Gokmen, the term "geopolitics" was coined by Rudolf Kjellen (2010, p.9) in 1899, after that it became further popular academically. The difference between geopolitics and political geography is obvious: - Geopolitics deals with the spatial needs of the state, whereas political geography assesses only spatial conditions (Goodall, n.d., p.191). Similarly, geopolitics is an "analysis of the geographic influences on power relationship in international relations". It is defined as "the study of the effect of a country's position, population, etc on its politics", as per the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. Additionally, Rudolf Kjellen, the inventor of the term, defines geopolitics as a state theory of geography or phenomena in space. This means that the state behaves like a creature that grows in nature. Geopolitics deals with such characteristics of the state. Furthermore, the definition of Hagan (1942) is that "geopolitics is a contemporary rationalization of power politics" (p. 485). Gokmen further elaborates, "Geopolitics can also be considered to be a combination of history (political process) and geography" (2010, p. 16). He quotes from Cohen's *Geopolitics of the World System* about geopolitics, which provides a new definition:

*Geopolitics often known as an analysis of the interactions between geographical environment and perspectives on the one hand, and in the meantime political processes on the other. (...) Both are dynamic, and are influenced by each other. Geopolitics tries to address the results of this interaction (Gokmen, 2010, p. 16).*

Thus, looking briefly at all the above discussions of various scholars, geopolitics is about any influential power in a certain geography which can use, directly or indirectly, to control or influence the actors concentrated in that territory to fulfill its national and global interests.

### ***Geopolitics and Neorealism***

Neorealism is one of the dominant theories of International Relations. Jackson and Sorensen (2013) write that Theory of international politics proposed by Waltz provides a scientific description and analysis of the international political system (p.79). As geopolitics is the analysis of the interaction between geographical setting and political processes (Cahnman, 1943; Natter, 2003; & Gokmen, 2010), the international political system does not exclude its effect on the geopolitical issues. Therefore, the international political structure is related to neorealism because it talks about the international structure. Jackson and Sorensen define neorealism as the structure of the system that is external to the actors, in particular the relative distribution of power, is the central analytical focus (2013, p. 79). According to Waltz's neorealist theory, a basic feature of international relations is the decentralized structure of anarchy between states. Decentralization of anarchical structure is part of political and strategic action which impacts geopolitical circumstances. In his words, Waltz argues that The state units of the international system are 'primarily separated by their more or less capabilities to perform the same function ... The structure of the system generally changes with the change in the distribution of capabilities in the system units' (Waltz, 1979, p.97). The level of capabilities to perform the task of state affairs is a part of political matter, and changes in the distribution of capabilities in national and international structure and systems play a role to change geopolitics as well. Neorealists claim that the rise and fall of the great powers and the corresponding change in the balance of power lead to international change (Jackson& Sorensen, 2013, p. 80) which ultimately shifts the geopolitics too. Such change or shift occurs as the result of great-power confrontation, they claim.

The neorealist approach does not provide leaders with a clear way of policy guidelines as they face the real challenges of global politics. Since every state focuses on its national interest, global policy guidelines never are outlined and proposed by neo-realist thinkers because every state has a different national interest in nature which also differs in the global challenges and ways of achieving it in different conditions. Waltz deals with the concept of national interest: each state develops a course with a view to better serve its own interests. (1979, p. 113). The national interest seems to be operated like an automatic signal commanding state leaders when and where to move. In other words, national interest provides explicit way and guidance to state leaders that how to deal with world powers and global leaders both in a general and particular condition. These all the realist theory, perspective, discourse, debate, and states' activities influence the geopolitics directly and indirectly due to which geopolitics either change or goes into conflict with those things.

### ***Geopolitics and Neoliberalism***

Neoliberalism adopts the highly individualistic notion of society, viewing it as a collection of individuals. David M. Kotz (2018) writes, "Neo-liberalism glorifies market relations, which are viewed not just as an institution that allocates resources efficiently, as claimed by neoclassical economics, but as essential to human freedom". Neo-liberalism advocates for free trade, deregulation, and privatization of companies throughout the world. It is a part of International Political Economy (IPE) which is the interplay of economics and politics in world affairs (Woods, 2001, p. 1). It is argued that sometimes politics guides the economy, and sometimes economy shapes politics. Research shows both are interrelated and

interdependent. Gilpin (2001) claims, "...world economy has a considerable impact on the power, values, and political autonomy of national societies" (p. 77). Likewise, Alt, Frieden, Gilligan, Rodrik, and Rogowski (1996) elaborate that the tools of modern political economy have brought to bear on a wide variety of topics. The two active area of work are the politics of trade policy and the new economics of institutions (pp. 689-690). In addition, Eichengreen (2000) shows "how the actions of self-interested groups in national societies affect the making of foreign economic policy and how international political and market forces can influence the interests of social actors" (p. 37). Alt and Alesina argue by focusing on how political and economic institutions constrain, direct, and reflect individual behavior, it stresses the political context in which market phenomena takes place and attempts to explain collective outcomes like production, resource allocation, and public policy in a unified fashion (1996, p.645). In addition, it is claimed that a hegemon, a dominant military and economic power, is necessary for the creation and full development of a liberal world market economy because, in the absence of a such a power, liberal rules cannot be enforced around the world (Jackson, & Sorensen, 2013, p. 180). Based on all the above texts and analysis of renowned authors, it is proven that the international political economy is the interplay of economics and the politics in the world affairs which are interrelated to each other.

There are various theories under international political economy. Neo-liberalism is also one of the theories of IPE. Neoliberalism to a greater extent based on the ideas of an Austrian economist, Friedrich Hayek, who had written in the 1930s that the control of an economy by a government is the "road to serfdom". He wrote a book entitled *The Road to Serfdom* in 1944. In that book, he writes:

*...it was almost unavoidable that, once their position had entered some point, it would soon collapse altogether. The situation was further weakened by the unstoppable slow progress of the policy of gradual improvement in the institutional structure of an independent society. This progress depends on increasing understanding of the social forces and the favorable conditions for them to function in a desirable way (Hayak, 1944, p. 18).*

The above statement implicitly advocates the principle of neo-liberalism which has mentioned the institutional framework of a free society and working desirably. The recent concept of neo-liberalism seems evolved from this concept of Hayak however Adam Smith has written about the base of neo-liberalism in his famous book *Wealth of Nations*. Ambrose (2006) writes, "Due to his (Adam Smith's) influence on today's socioeconomic institutions, his thinking indirectly but strongly shapes the development of gifted and talented individuals (p. 185). The last portion of this sentence advocates the principle of neo-liberalism. Talented individuals and their work in an open and free society can bring the bigger result. Ambrose further reviews, "The most well-known modern interpretations of Smith's work suggest that he promoted economic freedom through the operation of free markets largely unfettered by regulation from governments, which themselves should be tightly constrained" (Ibid). Therefore, the concept of neo-liberalism goes back to the Smith era i.e. later 18th century however it emerged clearly in world affairs in the mid-20th century through Hayak's work.

Though the practice of neoliberal policy began after World War II, its theoretical concept evolved in the 18th century as explained above. David Ricardo (1772-1823), cited by Jackson and Sorensen (2013), has also included the notion of neo-liberal discourse or liberal economics. He argued that free trade makes expertise possible and increases efficiency and productivity, like free trade, that is, free trade across national borders benefits all participants (p. 165). He emphasizes free trade and its efficiency in increasing productivity which is the neo-liberal concept. Ricardo in his theory of comparative advantage, introduced in 1817, suggests that countries will engage in trade with one another, exporting the goods that they have a relative advantage in productivity. One of the most important idea in economic theory, the basic principle of comparative advantage logic, is that all actors, as always, can mutually benefit from cooperation and voluntary trade. It is also a fundamental principle of international trade. This concept of comparative

advantage is also one of the foundations of the neo-liberal concept because in neo-liberalism, all actors can get the benefits at all times. Consumers buy the commodities with whom, who provide comparatively at lower cost, and thus they save their comparative advantage.

As it is a construct, scholars always try to explain, analyze, and review the theory from a different perspective. Gilpin states that liberal economics has been called 'a doctrine and a set of principles for organizing and managing economic growth, and individual welfare' (1987, p. 27). It indicates there was a lack of individual welfare in other economic models. Individual welfare relates to individual choices and freedom, which are relatively guaranteed in the neo-liberal economic model. David M. Kotz defines, "Neo-liberalism is a particular set of ideas and beliefs, that is, an ideology is associated with neoliberalism. Neoliberal ideology embraces a highly individualistic concept of society, viewing it as simply a collection of individuals" (2018, p. 427). The 18th-century Scottish philosopher David Hume also remarked that a nation was a collection of individuals. The state eventually should be dedicated to protecting the rights of those individuals, especially in a free-market world as neo-liberalism believes. On contrary, Prebisch (1982) argues... 'ignoring the relationship between social structure and power, it is hypocritical: 'if there is economic freedom, it will be the freedom to be poor' (p. 273). As Prebisch's argument, neo-liberalism cannot protect the economic benefits of individuals, whereas there is a high chance of being further poor in the neo-liberal economic system. As the scholars analyze neo-liberalism from their perspectives differently, it is a construct raised by some prominent leaders and scholars.

Dados and Connell write, "Reagan and Thatcher created the political conditions for the free market economists' theory to be put into practice" (2018, p. 29). It indicates the neo-liberal world order is the brainchild of Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher, the then-American president, and British Prime minister, respectively. Neoliberalism is also termed Reaganism, Thatcherism, economic rationalism, and 'the Washington consensus' (Quiggin, 2018, p. 143). Dados and Connell further claim, "A wave of monetarist policy, privatization, deregulation, tax reduction and attacks on welfare-state 'entitlements' followed" (2018, p. 29), which is a core principle of neo-liberalism. The emergence of neo-liberalism usually begins with the role of anti-communist economists and the movement to create free market principles in Europe and the United States. From the global influence of the United States and Europe, under the rubric of structural adjustment programs, neoliberalism spread to the rest of the world in the 1980s and 1990s through the IMF and the World Bank, the authors claim. The financial crisis emerged in the 1970s, and the slow declining process of the former USSR, the neo-liberal world began in which the role of Reagan and Thatcher was significant.

Many social democratic and communist forces attempted their effort in anti-neoliberal discourse however it became a global phenomenon, was widely accepted and implemented by many countries especially after declining and fall of the former USSR. The Bretton Wood System (The World Bank, IMF, and GATT) expanded the neoliberal policy worldwide, and thus the neoliberal policy emerged in world affairs in the 1970s after the failure of the 'Keynesian Economic Model'<sup>1</sup> which significantly contributed to shifting the global geopolitics from Keynesian era to neo-liberal era of the global economic model. This shift also impacted the strategic and political dimensions of geopolitics. Hence, neoliberalism is also one of the dimensions of geopolitics.

## **Conclusion**

From the above analysis of geopolitics, neorealism, and neoliberalism, the paper concludes that the emergence and evolution of geopolitics, its development, and geopolitical shifts are occurred basically due to the course of global Power Play, and its development. The neorealism emphasizes global political

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<sup>1</sup> Keynesian Economic Model argues that the solution to a recession is *expansionary fiscal policy*, such as tax cuts to stimulate consumption and investment or direct increases in government spending that would shift the aggregate demand curve to the right.

structure and the international system. When such structure and system break due to such global power play, geopolitics also changes because of changes in the level of engagement of geopolitical actors. In such conditions, foreign policy becomes outdated. Neoliberalism promotes privatization, free market, and deregulations, and individuals are free to increase their benefits as far as they can. It challenges the welfare system of the states. Neoliberal discourse started globalizing human and state affairs that eventually implicates geopolitics which results in the change in geopolitics. When geopolitics changes its course, the foreign policy also in this case becomes irrelevant and hence needs an update, redefine, or revisit on it. Therefore, foreign policy, geopolitics, and other two dominant theories of International Relations should be studied, debated, analyzed, and concluded in an integrated way for precise results and findings. Hence, foreign policy, geopolitics, neorealism, and neoliberalism are the comprehensive packages of world affairs in 21st-century international relations and these should not be studied separately and independently.

### **Acknowledgment**

The author would like to thank his Ph.D. supervisor Prof. Dr. Khadga K.C. Prof. K.C. is a globally renowned academic who started the Ph.D. program in International Relations and Diplomacy first time in Nepal at Tribhuvan University. The author is one of his first batch of Ph.D. candidates at Tribhuvan University, Nepal.

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## **Providing tailored justice as a Human Rights obligation: Feminist lawyering to address gender-based violence against women**

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### **Abstract**

*International human rights norms prescribe the obligation to protect women against gender-based violence which requires, inter alia, state provision of justiciable, accessible, affordable and non-discriminatory access to justice. However, the interpretation and application of the law still lack gender-sensitivity, intersectionality and trauma-informed approach. Consequently, many survivors face structural obstacles obstructing access to justice and often experience secondary traumatising when navigating the legal system. This paper argues that the unique nature of the intersecting experiences of women with gender-based violence calls for a tailored practice of the law. The argument developed here is that the obligation to provide survivors with justiciable, accessible, affordable and non-discriminatory access to justice implies to radically transform the practice of the law altogether. This paper therefore proposes feminist lawyering as an alternative approach to the practice of the law when addressing gender-based violence. First, this paper exposes how the legal system replicates mechanisms of power that also operate in the manifestation of violence. Second, this paper discusses some key practical strategies that have been proposed and implemented to transform the practice of the law based on empirical research conducted in Uganda. Lastly, feminist lawyering as an alternative approach to address gender-based violence is analysed as a legal obligation under international human rights law.*

**Keywords**— *Feminist lawyering, Gender-based violence, Intersectionality, Human Rights Law*

### **Introduction**

States' international human rights obligation to protect women against violence requires the provision of justiciable, accessible, affordable and non-discriminatory access to justice. However, even when access to justice appears to be guaranteed, its restorative objective is not always achieved as the legal system itself remains a daunting, hostile and re-traumatizing space for many survivors of gender-based violence (GBV). Power dynamics at stake in a situation of violence are often replicated in the criminal legal system which fails to apply the law from a gender-sensitive, trauma-informed and intersectional perspective. Such a structural issue prevents many survivors from accessing tailored justice and further impacts their already damaged agency. This paper explores the potential of feminist lawyering as an alternative model of legal practice, not only to prevent secondary victimization, but also to contribute to the progressive restoration of the survivors' agency. This paper adopts the definition of feminist lawyering as it has been conceptualized by Cahn (1991, p. 4) as 'a process that recognizes power in legal relationships of women to the law, and of attorneys to their clients. Feminist lawyering, while recognizing the importance of the lawyer's perspective, emphasizes the centrality of the client's experiences.'

The interdisciplinary nature of this research is reflected in its methodology, which combines socio-legal and doctrinal approaches to desk-based research and empirical research. The literature review revealed that feminist approaches to the *enactment* of the law, (Charlesworth et al., 1991; Otto, 2016; Schneider, 2000) have been widely promoted, especially with regards to GBV. In contrast, little attention has been dedicated to the practice of the law from a feminist perspective in the recent scholarship. Feminist lawyering is a concept that emerged in the scholarship in the 1990s in an North-american and predominantly White



context (Abrams, 1991; Cahn, 1991; Menkel-Meadow, 1994; O’Leary, 1992). Since then, feminist lawyering has progressively disappeared from the literature, with only a few relatively recent pieces on the topic (Galldin, 2020; White, 2013). The identification of this gap and the rare documentation of feminist lawyering outside of the Western context (Tamale & Bennett, 2011), led the author to conduct empirical research in Uganda. This paper thus shares findings based on 30 interviews of legal practitioners and shadowing of 15 legal practitioners in key Ugandan legal aid organizations promoting intersectional and afro-feminist approaches to legal praxis (Tamale, 2020). First, this paper briefly exposes how the legal system replicates mechanisms of power that also operate in the situation of violence, leading to secondary victimisation. Second, the author discusses some of the key practical strategies that have been proposed and implemented by Ugandan, self-identified feminist legal practitioners to transform the practice of the law. Last, feminist lawyering as an alternative approach to address gender-based violence is contextualised as a legal obligation under international human rights law.

### **Replicated power dynamics: the re-traumatising nature of the legal system for gender-based violence survivors**

In this paper, GBV is conceptualised as a crime of power, based on gender relations of ‘dominance and subordination with elements of cooperation, force and violence sustaining them’ (Bhasin, 2000). Furthermore, this crime is simultaneously ‘a practicing of gender and a gendering practice’ (Jakobsen, 2014) to assert power over a subjugated group in order to reinforce conformity with gender norms and roles. In other words, gender is an organising factor of society which sustains its various systems of domination through violence. However, it is crucial to recognise that gender is rarely the only locus of oppression in the perpetuation of violence as it intersects with other systems of domination and identity markers including, *inter alia*, race and class (Crenshaw, 1989), as well as disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, HIV status, migration status etc.

Defining GBV as a crime of power is indispensable to comprehend the mechanisms operating in many legal systems that reproduce and even exacerbate survivors’ experiences of oppression in seeking justice. Research demonstrates that navigating the legal system can be experienced as a “second assault” or a “second rape” (Martin & Powell, 1994) due to a range of structural obstacles standing between the survivor and justice. The first obstacle lies within the adversarial nature of many legal systems, mostly in common law traditions. Perpetuating a narrative of a winner/loser, guilty/not-guilty binary, the courtroom therefore becomes a jousting field where two, supposedly equally situated, contestants combat for their rights as part of a legal dispute. The issue is that, in practice, the ‘contestants’ are never on an equal footing, especially in GBV cases, as the crime was committed based on the exploitation on dominance and power (Ainsworth, 2017). The physical setting of the courtroom opposing the accuser and the defendant is a striking reminder of the adversary nature of trials. This is one of the mechanisms that may trigger re-traumatisation as the survivors must face their abuser and defend themselves against a dominant party once again. Second, the adversarial model further suggests that the lawyer is *in control* of the trial before a supposedly neutral and objective judge. This truth-seeking objective of justice empowers lawyers to question the witness and the survivors without giving them the opportunity to elaborate freely on their own narrative. As such, survivors have described the legal system as a ‘silencing machine’ (Galldin, 2020, p. 305). Here again, the dominant narrative is not the survivor’s experience, but, rather, what the ‘Truth’ requires to unveil. In other words, the legal system deprives survivors from a platform for expression and an active role in the legal process that resonates with the loss of capacity for control as a mechanism of GBV. Conventional legal systems’ injunction to portray the survivor as the ‘ideal victim’ as a pre-requisite to credibility (Christie, 1986) constitutes the third structural obstacle. Only those who fit into this ‘ideal victim’ category are worthy of justice. As Bumiller so eloquently indicates, ‘the accuser is forced into the role of an “angel” who must defend her heavenly qualities after her fall from grace’ (Bumiller, 1991, p. 97). In addition to re-victimising survivors, the ‘ideal victim’ discourse essentialises women (Kapur, 2002), preventing the Court to look beyond legal categories of victimhood and failing to account for the

intersectional experiences of GBV. Hence, the survivor is entrapped into a closed legal space as a reminder of the imprisoning effect of GBV. The system of legal precedents adopted in common law jurisdiction constitutes, in and of itself, a fourth structural obstacle. More particularly in the context of sexual offences' trials, the survivor is commodified as 'an object of a theory about non-consent' (Bumiller, 1991, p. 102). The survivor's narrative being cancelled, the prosecution usually relies and/or speculates on the accuser's behaviour, sexual history and moral values relying on a legacy of phallocentric precedents. Just like in the perpetuation of GBV, the development of such a strategy forces the survivor into a gender-stereotyped role with the view to discredit their claim (Cook, 2011).

### **Implementing feminist lawyering strategies: lessons from Uganda**

This section proposes a feminist lawyering framework to address GBV as an approach adopted to challenge the structural obstacles impeding the progressive restoration of the survivor's agency in seeking justice. Such argument has been developed after conducting empirical research in Kampala, Tororo and Mbale with 5 key feminist organisations providing legal aid and/or targeted training to legal practitioners: FIDA-Uganda, MIFUMI, Women's Probono Initiative, Ugandan Women's Network (UWONET) and Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA). Below is a discussion and analysis of the data collected through interviewing and shadowing methods.

#### ***Feminist lawyering as a self-reflective practise***

Feminist lawyering is an approach that seems to commence outside of the client relationship with a broader reflection on identity and privileges. Interviewed legal practitioners heavily rely on positionality as a process to inquire their social location on a daily basis. All of them acknowledged coming from a privileged socio-economic background and identified this background as having facilitated their admission to law school. These privileges, mostly described as being based on class, have been recognised as having impacted legal practise, especially through the relationship with the survivor. Several legal officers at MIFUMI, for instance, stressed the central role of self-reflexivity and positionality in order, not only to acknowledge, but also to actively attempt to counter privileges. Interestingly, one programme officer and lawyer at UWONET nuanced this statement and showed awareness of the limitations of self-reflexivity by believing that privileges can never be fully countered. Rather, she stated that lawyers can only try to mitigate their *biases* based on experience and identity.

This paper understands identity as a "complex, multi-layered and dynamic phenomenon that is both fluid and situational" (Njeri, 2021, p. 387). The multiplicity of identities and experiences that constitute an individual converges towards 'intersecting privileges' that will affect the legal practitioner's negotiation with their environment. Indeed, feminist lawyers interviewed seem to analyse the impact of their privileges from an intersectional perspective as they have all mentioned the importance to account for the diversity of women's experiences. A legal and programme officer at Women's Pro-bono initiative stressed that every woman evolves in a unique and distinct reality which informs their experience and thus their expectations in navigating the justice system. It appears that many of the interviewed feminist lawyers actively resist the conceptualisation of women as a stable, homogenous and a-historical group that universally suffer from subordination based on patriarchy as the only system of power (Mohanty, 1988). Rather, many understand oppression from an intersectional perspective. Indeed, the term 'intersectionality' was mentioned several times during interviews evidencing some knowledge on feminist legal theory. Therefore, intersectionality seems to be an inherent part of this self-reflexive process that assists in distinguishing the lawyer's experience from the survivor's experience. Another lawyer at Women's Pro-bono initiative recognised being 'different' from her clients citing economic status, migration status and disability as examples of identity markers that differentiate one individual from another. As intersectional discrimination often operates at the crossroad of multiple systems of power (Crenshaw, 1989), privileges also emerge from these very systems, based on the exploitation of the 'less-privileged' ones. Feminist lawyering as practiced by

the Ugandan legal practitioners interviewed seems to require them to reflect on their identities that are informed by the relations with structures of dominance ultimately influencing praxis and ethics.

Going beyond mere reflection, strategies are sometimes implemented at the organisation level with the objective to bring lawyers closer to the survivors' realities. At Women's Pro-bono Initiative, legal officers also engage in programming and research work with the communities. Interviewees reported that, playing both roles helps to inform their argument in Court after experiencing the law from a more practical context, outside of the courtroom. Interfacing with the realities of 'other' women in society becomes crucial, not only to establish a connection with this reality but also to be more informed when addressing the judges in a trial setting. Another legal officer at Women's Pro-bono Initiative described how her 'urban-self' could not have fairly represented a survivor from an up-country area, due to her lack of contextual understanding, if she had not been to the field to conduct advocacy work. A similar strategy has been adopted at FIDA-Uganda where members of the legal clinic often work collaboratively with programme officers, not in the context of case management, but rather through the organisation and participation in various events. The objectives are to strengthen understandings of the realities of the marginalised women whom they work with, as well as to acquire further knowledge on gender and the law more broadly.

### ***Commitment to extra-curricular feminist legal and political education***

All legal practitioners interviewed discussed the importance to engage in feminist legal and political education after graduation from law school. Many spoke about the phenomenon of commercialisation of legal practise that prevents newly graduated practitioners from adopting an approach that would differ from the rigidity of the conventional framework taught at university. A former legal officer at MIFUMI spoke about the impact of politics at play within the justice system that ultimately turned access to justice into a mere transaction. All interviewees went to law school in Kampala and they reported about a power and money narrative perpetuated from the first lecture that creates a certain mindset and inhibits critical thinking. Legal practise is seen as 'way to get rich' and to 'wear fancy suits' according to many legal practitioners interviewed in this project.

Seeking extra-professional/curricular training and networking opportunities appears to be an essential feminist lawyering strategy aiming at 'learning to unlearn in order to re-learn' (Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2018, p. 24), as well as to co-learn. All interviewed legal practitioners participated in at least one feminist training outside of their workspace. A good example of this is AMwA's African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) which offers intensive training on feminist praxis. The organisation is well-known throughout Uganda and was often cited as a space for deconstruction of what has been assimilated in law school, even though the training opportunities are not particularly addressing legal practice *per se*. The executive director, who also self-identifies as a feminist lawyer, was interviewed as part of this research and shared about the content of the AWLI. Departing from the radical feminist ideology that 'the personal is political', the first day focuses on self-development and positionality. This comes back to the importance of developing self-reflexive praxis rooted in feminisms to 'look internally' and check one's privileges. The second- and third-days cover feminist theories, with a particular focus on afro-feminism. The last two days of the AWLI are dedicated to networking and capacity building activities with the co-construction of individual and collective projects and the establishment of a mentorship programme to allow for continuous learning, beyond training. Interestingly, despite the AWLI application process being open to anyone, there is an overwhelming participation of lawyers who constitute at least a quarter of the promotion each year. One of the legal practitioners interviewed, currently programme assistant at FIDA, stated that attending this training considerably transformed her praxis which, since the training, has been increasingly rooted in the broader vision of using the law to challenge systems of power, particularly when addressing GBV. Additionally, this introduction to feminist theories triggered interest and encouraged her to further her legal and political education after the AWLI.

As such, feminist political education teaches avenues for transgression and resistance. It is both a framework for action and a structural analysis that encourages the dismantlement of, not only patriarchy, but all structures of power. Acquiring feminist political education appears to be crucial in contextualising one's legal praxis within a broader social movement to understand the systemic power dynamics at play in a GBV case.

### ***Critically thinking space and relationship dynamics***

Such education is then progressive translated into practise through the analysis and even sometimes the reversal of client-lawyer power dynamics. Attention to space emerges as a recurring theme during interviews. Some of the lawyers start by symbolically removing barriers of power in order to instore a balanced relationship with the survivor. A former legal officer at MIFUMI shared about her habit to avoid having consultations with a survivor of GBV in her office, across the desk. Rather, she reported preferring to invite them to sit outside, under a tree. In doing so, she not only shows that she is able to analyse that desk constitutes a physical barrier communicating power and hierarchy but also that she searches for solutions that would reverse such power. Through this process, the lawyer forces herself to move outside of her institutional, professional space of comfort and privilege. This anecdote is particularly telling when one knows that MIFUMI is an organisation that emerged out of a healing circle initiative whereby women used to gather under a tree to share their experiences of GBV, in the village of Mifumi, in Tororo district. Additionally, a lawyer and programme officer at UWONET stated her endeavour to always pay attention to sitting arrangements when meeting with a client and even before attending a mediation. She spoke about a GBV mediation where the complainant was sitting on the floor, in the corner while the perpetrator was sitting on the chair. Believing that such situation already created an imbalance that would affect the survivor personally as well as her case, she sought to 'bring it back to her level' by sitting next to her to help her keeping a certain level of control. Here again, the awareness of spatial power dynamics suggests a sensitivity to the gendered nature of space navigation and provokes a commitment to mitigate power through creative accommodations (Young, 1980). Additionally, the dress code itself is understood as a physical barrier and manifestation of power by several practitioners who see the fact of wearing suits as a legacy of colonialism to express financial power. A former legal officer at MIFUMI actively resists these injunctions to appear professional and powerful by purposely avoiding wearing suits when meeting with a client.

Going further than removing physical barriers, MIFUMI, in adopting a particularly effective multi-sectoral approach to GBV cases, works in close collaboration with many stakeholders including the police. As such, lawyers may request police officers to come to the organisation's office to take the survivor's statement, with a view to spare them from the hostility of the police station. One of MIFUMI's legal officers stated the importance of ensuring that the survivor is as comfortable as possible, asking her where she would like the formal reporting process to occur. In that case, she analysed the survivor's decision to meet at the office rather than at the police station as being due to the fact that she had already opened up in that very space. Indeed, physical and psychological comfort of the survivor emerged a recurring theme during empirical research. Many strategies were adopted to reassure the survivors including offering a cup of tea or even inviting them for lunch to enable a discussion.

Mitigating power and contributing to the progressive restoration of the survivor's agency as part of this client-lawyer relationship push feminist lawyers to promote a narrative based on self-confidence and strength. For instance, at FIDA, several lawyers described the survivors as brave and courageous for taking the decision to seek justice. This highlights the awareness of the re-victimising and re-traumatising nature of the legal system. Several legal practitioners explicitly described the justice process as being violent. To counter these power systems at play in seeking justice, observation at MIFUMI revealed that lawyers often communicate how proud they are of their clients for coming forward.

### ***Centering the survivor in the legal process***

All legal practitioners interviewed stated that giving the power back to survivors necessitates to centre the clients in the legal process. At FIDA, for instance, ‘what do you want?’ and ‘how can we help you?’ are the first questions that the lawyers ask the survivors after listening to their story. This evidences the understanding that survivors’ needs and interests are diverse, intersecting and context-dependent. There can be a myriad of definitions of justice ranging from justice as a means to foster social and cultural change, justice as prevention or punishment as well as justice as ensuring recognition, dignity and giving a voice to survivors (McGlynn et al., 2017). Enabling survivor’s formulation of what justice means to them appears to be central to the praxis of feminist lawyering. The executive director of Women’s Pro Bono initiative, also self-identifying as feminist lawyer, defined feminist lawyering as the responsibility for legal practitioners to envisage the survivor as an ‘autonomous human being that is capable of defining what justice means for them’. This perspective suggests that a feminist lawyer should approach every case with the conviction that survivors are *capable of decision* rather than being passive recipients of legal advice. As such, it seems important to legal practitioners at Women’s Pro-bono Initiative to ensure that the survivor has a central role in participating in the formulation of the intervention from her own perspective. Here again, the commitment to adopt an intersectional analysis of GBV plays a crucial role in centring the survivor in the legal process. One of the legal practitioners at Women’s Pro Bono Initiative reminded that women are not homogenous, and that their multiple and different realities will inform their expectations in navigating the legal system.

It transpires from the interviews that placing survivors at the centre intervenes within a broader commitment to reversing the mechanisms of deprivation of choice and control which are inherent to GBV. A lawyer at FIDA referred to the necessity to restore the survivor’s right to have a choice. She posited that, as ‘society makes women not choosing’, a feminist lawyer has the responsibility to give the survivors options. This statement is particularly interesting as it justifies the necessity to provide the survivors with option by the contextualisation of the structural inhibition of women’s capacity for choice. Another legal officer at MIFUMI also established a parallel between the lawyer and the perpetrator of domestic violence. She begged the question ‘What is the difference between you and the dictator that they have at home, if you are also reproducing the fact of imposing decision on her?’.

Feminist lawyering therefore promotes a survivor-driven litigation process. Instead of thinking themselves as ‘legal experts’ and ‘law-knowing officers’, feminist lawyers work in *collaboration* with the survivor, as a support to client’s own problem-solving (Galldin, 2020, p. 304). Rejecting the ‘paternalistic approach to litigation’ which supposes that the lawyer is the only one who can know what is best for their client by virtue of their legal expertise, (O’Leary, 1992, p. 213), all interviewed feminist lawyers value experience-based knowledge and actively seek to offer the survivor a platform of expression from the very first consultation and throughout their journey to justice.

### **Conclusion: Giving the power back to survivors as an obligation under international law**

This paper has outlined and analysed some of the sets of strategies developed by Ugandan feminist lawyers, starting from locating themselves within power dynamics even before interacting with survivors. This concluding paragraph argues that feminist lawyering as an alternative approach to conventional legal practise constitutes a model that conforms with international law on access to justice in light of CEDAW’s framework on access to justice.

CEDAW Committee’s General Recommendation n° 33 on women’s access to justice details the 6 interrelated and essential components of access to justice: ‘justiciability, availability, accessibility, good-

quality, accountability of justice systems, and the provision of remedies for victims' (CEDAW Committee 2015, para 14). Feminist lawyering seems to fit under the obligation to sustain good quality of justice systems which ought to be "*contextualized, dynamic, participatory, open to innovative practical measures, gender-sensitive*, and take account of the increasing demands for justice by women" (Ibid, emphasis added). The sets of strategies developed above, indeed, suggest the commitment to root GBV cases in an intersectional and context-specific approach. Legal practitioners consistently articulated the notion of privileges as preventing them from seeing GBV cases from the survivor's perspective, coming from a background that is often different than theirs. Engaging in self-reflexivity and acquiring feminist political education are two avenues for the implementation of contextualised legal systems. General recommendation n°33 also refers to good quality of justice systems as being open to innovative practical measures. This paper argues that feminist lawyering can be described as innovative as it seeks to challenge the commonly established views on litigation and client representation by shifting power dynamics and expertise. States thus have the obligation to guarantee flexible legal systems that are able to welcome the implementation of innovative measures. A participatory and gender-sensitive approach to GBV cases seems to be one of the key characteristics of feminist lawyering. Feminist lawyers understand and actively work against the oppressive nature of gender that emanates not only from the incident(s) of GBV reported by the survivor, but also from the legal system itself. As explained in the first section, GBV is a crime of power rooted in gendered systems of domination and such gender analysis to GBV cases implies to have a high level of awareness about these oppressive dynamics. Feminist lawyers acquire critical knowledge through extra-curricular legal and political education. They are then able to inject this perspective in order to centre survivors in the legal system and to mitigate power in the lawyer-client relationship.

Additionally, CEDAW Committee's General Recommendation n° 33 elaborates on the justiciability of access to justice which reiterates the necessity to handle cases in a participatory and gender-sensitive manner as well as the importance to 'improve women's unhindered access to justice systems and thereby empower them to achieve de jure and de facto equality' (CEDAW, 2015, para 15). It can be argued that this provision for empowerment refers to legal practitioners' responsibility to work towards the progressive restoration of the survivor's agency and capacity for control in navigating the legal system. Feminist lawyers' commitment to centre the survivor in the legal process as well as their systematic utilisation of a narrative of self-confidence particularly resonates with this provision. Moreover, empirical research revealed that feminist lawyering praxis is mostly developed within the NGO space. General Recommendation n°33 provides that justiciability also obliges the state to "cooperate with civil society and community-based organizations to develop sustainable mechanisms to support women's access to justice" (Ibid).

To conclude, conceptualising feminist lawyering as fitting under CEDAW's legal framework on access to justice constitutes a first step towards the mainstreaming of this alternative approach that is particularly relevant to reverse power dynamics in GBV cases. As such, this paper argues for States' responsibility to actively enable the development of this approach to guarantee the justiciability and the good quality of the justice system so that survivors can access tailored justice.

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## **Ethics and Accountability in Nigeria Civil Services: An Empirical Analysis**

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### **Abstract**

*Ethical standards and accountability of civil servants in Nigeria is a veritable means of ensuring that civil servants and political office holders are committed to the norms of good governance and responsible leadership. Ethics and accountability are the criteria for good governance which brings about legitimacy and popular support from the people. Again, courtesy and respect are the fundamental values required by all civil servants in dealing with people. Exhibition of lack of good behaviors among the civil servants indicates lack of ethical behaviours and accountability in the civil service. Lack of ethical behaviours and accountability among civil servants apart from resulting in the displacement of the civil service goals, they also constitute a drag to development. The current study therefore examined accountability and ethics in Nigeria civil service, and proffers practicable solutions to the problem. . The study therefore recommends the need to strengthen and reposition the public institutions of accountability in Nigeria state. Institutions such as public accounts committee of the legislative arm, the civil service commission, the public complaints commission, the accountant-General's offices and Auditor-General's office must be strengthened to make them effective in checking unethical behaviours and ensuring accountability in Nigeria's civil service.*

**Keywords:** *ethics, accountability and transparency*

### **Introduction**

Ethics and Accountability in the civil service are not recent issues in public discourse. The issue of accountability and ethics have its roots in ancient times. In Nigeria, history attests to evidence of concern in the practice of accountability and ethics in the traditional political societies. However, the pre-colonial societies were not immune from the problems of accountability. In the pre-colonial state, the supreme power and authority resided with the people. Governments of the various empires, kingdoms and small city States were guided by broad consultation, consensus and accountability. The people had several methods through which they expressed loss of confidence in the reigning government. Amongst these weapons were the withdrawal of Chief from palace, refusal to perform certain rituals, singing anti-loyalty songs, invocation of spirit of deities and outright rebellion (Haruna, 2013).

Ethics in its traditional sense is derived from a branch of philosophy called moral philosophy. It is coined from a Greek word 'ethos'. It focuses on the theory guiding right conduct from wrong conduct. In other words, ethics in its normative sense is the theory of right or wrong or good or bad. Other disciplines as well as institutions became fond of the term ethics and have adapted it to refer to the basis of defining right from wrong behaviour or practice, hence the term ethical practice or behaviour and unethical practice or behaviour.

The common practice in government institutions and corporate organisations is to set benchmark or minimum basic standard which members of an institution or workers in an organization must abide with. When such standards are set, they are usually called ethical standards. These standards vary from one institution or organization to another (Hembe, 2016).

Accountability is a key requirement of good governance. Not only governmental institutions but also the private sector and civil society organizations must be accountable to the public and to their

institutional stakeholders. In general, a system or an institution is accountable to those who will be affected by its decisions or actions. Accountability cannot be enforced without transparency and the rule of law. Good governance becomes a potent instrument for the development of society when these characteristics are enforced. A system of public administration can only enforce them under a political dispensation committed to their enforcement. It takes a political dispensation that is itself the product of ethics, transparency and accountability to be committed to governance based on the same principles and standards (Herero, 2014).

### **Method of Data Collection**

The method of data collection was questionnaire and in-depth interview. This study made use of the one-time survey method of data collection using the structured questionnaire as the primary method of data collection. The structured questionnaire was administered to the respondents in the ministries of education and health. The data for this study was collected principally using primary sources complemented with secondary sources. The secondary source of data was journals, magazines, newspapers, periodicals and textbooks. The questionnaire was used to gather data from all the categories of civil servants, while the interview was used to gather data from top and middle management staff of both ministries. This enabled a blend of data needed for a proper study of the research topic.

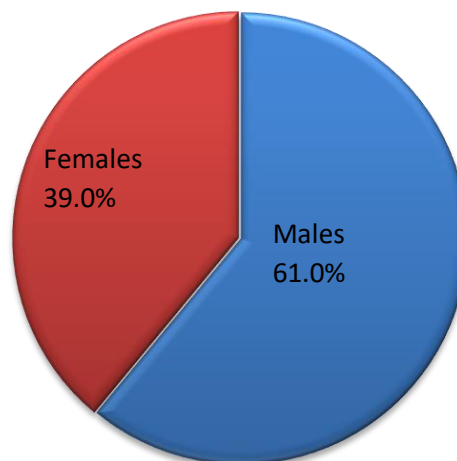
Prior to the commencement of the fieldwork, the researcher presented the research proposal to his project supervisor and experts in the field and departmental board of post-graduate students for thorough constructive comments on the work and method. In addition to this, a pre-test of the instrument was carried out before the actual field study in order to access its validity and reliability. At every relevant stage of the work, the researcher consulted his supervisor and proposal discussant to make sure the fieldwork was conducted properly.

### **Data Presentation**

#### **The Analysis of the Socio-Demographic Profile of Respondents**

The socio-demographic data of the respondents are presented and analyzed in this section. These include the distribution of respondents according to their gender, marital status, religion, educational qualification, rank and age bracket.

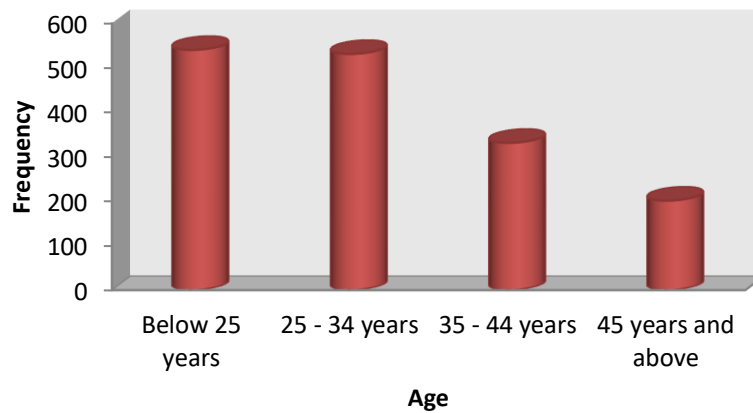
#### **Pie Chart showing Gender of Respondents**



**Source:** Field Research 2022

Figure 1 shows that Nine hundred and seventy-eight (61.0%) respondents were males while six hundred and twenty-five (39.0%) were females.

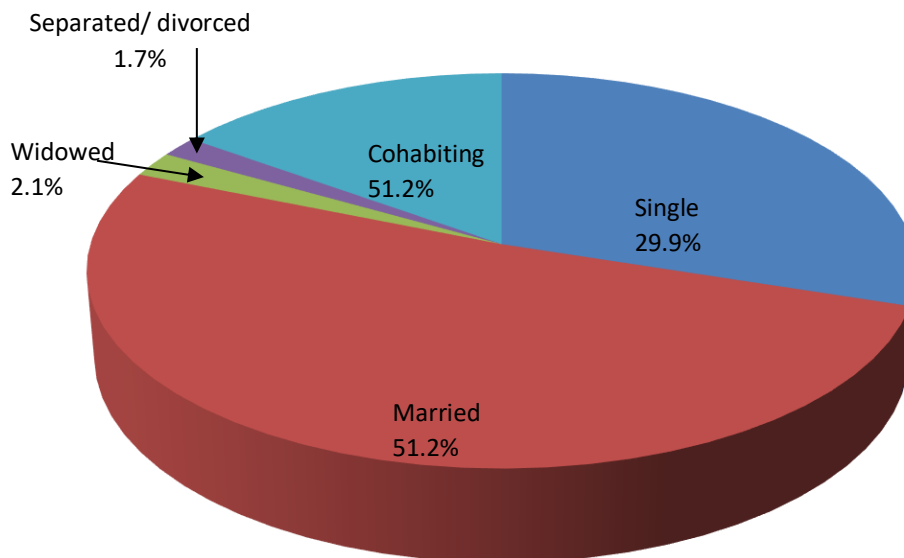
**: Bar Chart showing Age Distribution of Respondents**



**Source:** Field Research 2022

Figure 2 shows that 540 (33.7%) of the respondents were below 25 years of age, 531 (33.16%) were between 25 - 34 years, 331 (20.6%) were between 35 - 44 years, while 201(12.5%) respondents were 45 years and above.

**Pie Chart showing Marital Statuses of Respondents**



**Source:** Field Research 2022

Figure 3 shows that four hundred and eighty (29.9%) of the respondents were single, 821 (51.2%) of the respondents were married, 33 (32.3%) were widowed, 27 (1.7%) were separated/divorced while 242 (15.1%) were cohabiting.

**TABLE 4.1: Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents**

Variable	Frequency (1603)	Percent
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
First School Leaving Certificate	83	5.2
Secondary School Certificate	674	42.0
Diploma/OND	267	16.7
B.Sc/HND	367	22.9
Masters Degree	187	11.7
Doctorate Degree	25	1.6
<b>Level of Employment</b>		
Top Management	459	28.6
Middle Management	934	58.3
Low Level Staff	210	13.1
<b>Length of Service</b>		
Below 5 Years	92	5.7
6 - 10 Years	548	34.2
11 - 15 Years	531	33.1
16 - 20Years	252	15.7
Over 20 Years	180	11.2

**Source:** Field Survey 2020

Table 4.1 presented above shows that eighty-three (5.2%) respondents had First School Leaving Certificate, 674 (42.0%) had Secondary School Certificate, 267 (16.7%) respondents had Diploma/OND, 367 (22.9%) respondents had B.Sc/HND. While 187 (11.7%) respondents were holders of Master's Degree, 25 (1.6%) of the respondents had were holders of Doctorate Degree.

Four hundred and fifty-nine (28.6%) of the respondents were top management staff, 934 (58.3%) respondents were middle management staff, while 210 (13.1%) respondents were low level staff. Ninety-two (5.7%) of the respondents had work in their organisation for a period of below 5 years, 548 (30.6%) had worked for 6 - 10 years, 531 (33.1%) had worked for 11 - 15 years, 252 (15.7%) respondents had worked for 16 - 20Years, while 180 (11.2%) respondents had worked for over 20 Years.

## **Discussion**

The study found lack of accountability in Nigeria Civil Service. Accountability rests both on giving an account and on being held to account. In the case of civil servants in Edo state, this has not been the case, as civil servants rarely give account or are being held to account of how the resources of the state is being utilized. In Nigeria, civil servants are not accountable to the people; there is discrepancies between what actually goes on in government and what is being reported to the citizens. Again, the people are not allowed to participate in policy formation and have a say in how the policies should be implemented. Consequently, the level of accountability and ethics in Edo State Civil Service is not high as revealed by the study.

The study found that accountability and ethics are rules that govern the moral value of people's behaviour in Nigeria Civil Service. This is true because civil servants are expected to be open, fair and impartial in handling government businesses. They must be rational in making policy, such that all the policies made should not be anti-people. They must be transparent, responsive, and compassionate in carrying out their duties. It is from this angle that Adeyemi, Akindele, Aluko and Agesin (2012) pointed out that public and civil servant must demonstrate high ethical standards by being transparent, accountable and trustworthy, consistent in character, courageous and dedicated and committed to duty. In addition, they must give enabling environment for justice, while accountability must be ensured, as well as commitment to work (Adegbami and Osungboye, 2019). When accountability and ethics do not form the moral value of civil servants, they exhibit bad conducts and evil practices or behaviours, such as bribery, corruption amongst others, all of which prevents government from providing social amenities, infrastructural facilities, quality education, and quality health care service delivery to its people. It could be recalled that in 2018, the people of Evbuotubu community, in the Egor Local Government Area of the State staged a protest over the deplorable state of public goods in the area. The angry residents lamented that the bad condition of the roads, in addition to the irregular power supply, had not only subjected them to hardship but also threatened their means of livelihood. The angry resident stated, "We do not have good roads, from Asoro bus stop to the main community. The situation is very bad" (Okere, 2018). "The community school is always flooded when it rained and the children do not have a playground" (Okere, 2018). One of the protesters even accused the Governor of the State of failing to fulfill his promise to fix the bad roads during his electoral campaign (Okere, 2018). As a result of the lack of good roads, accidents and deaths are frequent in the state.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion therefore, it is established that there is lack of transparency and ethical behaviours in Nigeria Civil service occasioned by unethical practices and lack of accountability, in spite of the fact that accountability and ethics govern the moral value of civil servants' behaviour in the state civil service. The study revealed that civil servants in Nigeria exhibit unethical behaviors such as embezzlement of public funds, tribalism, absenteeism, and mismanagement.

Embezzlement of funds was found among the staff of Edo State civil service and when funds are embezzled, civil servants revert to unethical behaviors to cover up their evil acts. Another fact revealed by the study is that tribalism limits accountability and ethical behavior in Nigeria civil service. It was found that when employment or promotion in the civil service was not on merit ground, it frustrates and discourages those who rely on merit. Such civil servants consequently resort to unethical behaviors for solace, which in turn affects accountability of the civil service to the people they serve.

The study also revealed a high rate of indiscipline in the state's civil service. Such acts of indiscipline are unexcused absence, leaving without permission, dishonesty, deception of fraud, habitual lateness to work, truancy, and lack of commitment to work: loafing, buck-passing or refusing to take responsibility, deception or fraud, willful damage of property/materials, fighting, insubordination, and falsifying of records/forgery. It also includes bribery and corruption, tribalism and nepotism, misuse of government property, drunkenness, embezzlement or misappropriation of public funds, all which affects accountability in the states civil service

The study found that impartiality affects accountability and ethics in Edo State Civil Service. Impartiality increases civil service efficiency, accountability and trust in societies. It also enhances service quality both for the citizens and the civil servants. Absenteeism was also found to be responsible for lack of accountability and unethical behavior in Nigeria civil service. This is because civil servants who detest unethical practices adopt absenteeism as coping strategy; so as not to take part in the unholy acts. Their

decision further aggravates the whole situation and makes the entire civil service unaccountable to the people they serve.

### **Recommendations**

Obviously, there is need to eliminate unethical behavior and problems of accountability in Nigeria civil service. Thus, based on the above findings, the recommendations below are imperative.

- a. There is the need to appoint disciplined, committed, visionary, purposeful, responsible, selfless and mentally resourceful persons as heads in Nigeria civil service. It is only people with such qualities that have the capacity to positively employ and steer the civil service towards attaining a high degree of ethics and accountability.
- b. There is the need to strengthen and reposition the public institutions of accountability in Edo state. Institutions such as public accounts committee of the legislative arm, the civil service commission, the public complaints commission, the Accountant-General's offices and Auditor-General's office must be strengthened to make it effective and checking unethical behaviours and ensuring accountability in the state's civil service.
- c. Any civil servant found guilty of fund embezzlement or any other kind of fraudulent activity in the state civil service should be made to face the full weight of the law. In addition, politicians should be discouraged from interfering with disciplinary action against civil servants who committed offence.

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## Post-Pandemic Priorities & Touristic Casualties: Impact on Creative Economies of the Global South

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### Abstract

*The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted global socio-economic activities greatly, and it might take decades for the world to either recover from the multi-dimensional impacts or to adjust to new post-pandemic realities. Many countries have been compelled to reorder their socio-economic priorities and engagements with the aim of limiting the contagion. Part of the measures introduced to control the cross-border spread of Coronavirus was the lockdown, whereby movement was restricted across territories. The lockdown disrupted tourism. Transportation, hospitality, including accommodation food, and creative product(ion)s for tourism experienced a sharp decline in patronage. Many economies of the Global South that were growing alternative economic lifelines in tourism were badly affected. This paper examines the effects of the pandemic on the creative economies of select countries of the Global South. Two major carnivals, one in Nigeria and the other in Brazil were used as case studies to illustrate the integrated effects of the Pandemic on touristic creative products. Data were obtained from primary and secondary sources. In the analysis, it was discovered that the decline in tourism in the Global South has been constant over the years, manifesting in poor physical infrastructure, epileptic communication systems, poor security network, skeletal insurance and weak healthcare plan, affecting all the sub-sectors and sub-sets of tourism. These problems have only been complexified by the Coronavirus pandemic situation. The pandemic particularly made the decline in art and culture-core tourism sharp and more severe. Public and private sector-sponsored tourism initiatives have experienced massive losses of invested capital. There is rapid infrastructural decay due largely to abandonment, human capital flight, outright job losses and subsequent spike in social disorder. To revive tourism and to build a sound post-pandemic creative economy, it is suggested that the operations of the industry be reconfigured so as to mitigate the adverse social and economic effects in the Global South. Home-grown innovative recovery solutions are recommended, including the promotion of internal tourism activities. It is also recommended that countries in the Global South develop tourism along the lines of comparative advantage and operational competencies.*

**Keywords:** Pandemic, Touristic Casualties, Creative Economy, Global South

### Introduction: The Pandemic, the Panic and the Casualties

The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic started in Wuhan, China in 2019, and at the onset, it was difficult to understand its nature, let alone speculate the impending intensity. As the pandemic unfolded, it ushered in one of the worst public health experiences the world has ever known. The world was unprepared for this global disaster, general devastation and carnage. Every continent was affected either directly by the disease or by the ripple effects of the pandemic. As the deadly Coronavirus pandemic affected almost every aspect of life, almost every human endeavour was halted. Sadly, many sectors of the global economy were negatively impacted. Frantic measures were taken to curb the spread. Following recommendations of the World Health Organization (WHO), there were restrictions on movements, or what was popularly referred to as total lockdown; enforcement of physical distancing in gatherings, wearing of facemasks, hand washing



hygiene, use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers and other measures to limit the spread of the contagion. Only activities of high priority were allowed during the pandemic.

Many studies have been carried out on the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on sectors of economic productivity – trade & commerce (Barbero, José de Lucio & Rodríguez-Crespo 2021); maritime (Saviolakis & Pazarzis 2021), aviation (Liu, Kim, & O'Connell 2021), oil and gas (Afaha, Aderinto & Oluwole 2020), industrial production (Deb, Furceri, Ostry & Tawk 2022), environment and food security (Andrew-Essien *et. al.* 2022). A number of studies have also been done on the effects of the pandemic on the social sector – education (Ogunode, Ndubuisi & Terfa 2021), health care systems (Arebgeshola & Folayan 2022), housing (Musa, Adeogun & Durosinmi 2020), social welfare systems and sports (Uroh & Adewunmi 2021), but the concern of this paper is on the effects of the pandemic on tourism, particularly cultural tourism where there were heavy casualties across all the sub-sectors and downline creative economies associated with tourism. Specific touristic casualties included carnivals and festivals, musical shows, dance fiestas, film festivals, souvenir art productions, art exhibitions and fairs. Case studies are drawn from major cultural tourism activities – carnivals and festivals in Nigeria and Brazil, two countries from where the experiences of the other countries in the Global South, consisting of under-developed countries, especially in Africa and South America could be extrapolated.

Nigeria is the largest economy in Africa. Even though the number of infections and the death toll from the coronavirus were relatively low compared with other countries that experienced the pandemic, the effects arising from of the lockdown and other measures of mitigation were economically and socially devastating. Brazil was the third behind US and India, respectively on the scale of countries with the highest Coronavirus infections in the world as at March, 2022. Brazil was the second, behind the US with reference to the number of Coronavirus-related deaths in the world. These statistics made Brazil perhaps the worst hit country in terms of Coronavirus infections and impacts in the Global South. Brazil draws much revenue from the sector of cultural tourism, specifically from its annual carnivals.

### **The General Ripple Effects of the Pandemic**

The Coronavirus pandemic is a global health issue, and so its preliminary, frontline consequences were observed first in the health sector. Basically, lives were lost in many countries, and as the impact of the pandemic unfolded, a number of inadequacies and vulnerabilities were seen in the health sector globally. First there was serious manpower deficiency arising from the loss of medical workers at the frontline and the fact that the hospitals and other health facilities were overwhelmed by patients, requiring attention, some in intensive care units. Medical facilities and equipment were not sufficient to handle the deluge of patients. In some countries, infected persons whose symptoms were mild were advised to quarantine at home to reduce the crowd in hospitals. Tents were provided in some places to handle spill overs. Being a new health phenomenon, many of the treatment therapies, including the vaccines were either speculative or experimental. Opinions of medical experts on the efficacy of the vaccines and the safety of their usage were polarised (Motta & Callaghan. <https://theconversation.com>).

Beyond the direct impact on the global health sector, there was even more serious impact on the livelihood of people across the globe. The corresponding impacts of restriction of movements were that people stopped working, major factories shut down and workers were outrightly laid off or told to wait at home indefinitely. Investments were lost, revenues nosedived, and livelihoods were challenged at varying degrees in all global industries and economic sectors. It would be an understatement to say that the Covid-19 pandemic pulled down the global economy.

### **Reordering Priorities as Survival Strategy**

It became necessary to reorder social and economic priorities in many countries and regions. Social gatherings and non-essential activities were grounded or temporarily banned. Physical gatherings in schools were suspended; many schools were studying via online portals. Religious worship centres – churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and others were closed. Open physical markets and sales outlets operated skeletally. Sporting activities, outdoor interactive activities, festivals and other cultural gatherings were suspended. Hospitals, clinics and health centres were open, but only to cater for people with serious medical conditions and those directly infected by the Coronavirus. In summary, only activities that were absolutely necessary (very few of them) were considered priority in many countries. Survival was the watch word and every strategy was activated for that purpose.

### **Touristic Casualties**

The effect of the Coronavirus pandemic was more devastating in the tourism and hospitality sector. There was restriction in the capacity of tourism to create direct and subsidiary employments to millions across the globe, enhance infrastructural development, expose regional potentialities and resources, attract foreign direct investment and catalyze other economic footprints and lifelines in different domains. It was reported that the global hospitality industry lost \$4.5 trillion owing to the lockdown and stoppage of international travels because of the pandemic (World Federation of Trade Unions <http://www.wftucentral.org>). The Pandemic adversely affected and devastated, distinctly all the tangible elements of tourism, including transportation, accommodation, food, souvenirs, arts, entertainment and recreation, using the nomenclature and classification introduced by Hughes (2000, p. 3) and extended by Andrew & Andrew-Essien (2013, p. 276).

**Transportation and International Travels:** All means of transportation and travels were almost fully halted, save for emergency movements. Aircrafts, marine vessels, trains and land vehicles were mostly grounded. Workers in the transportation sector became temporarily redundant and some were laid off terminally. International travels cascaded to an all-time low. There was about 72% reduction in international tourists' arrivals between 2019 and 2020 (United Nations World Tourism Organization)

**Accommodation & Hospitality:** Many accommodation facilities, including hotels, guest houses, motels, short-lets, hostels and holiday flats were either shut down or underutilized during the pandemic. Since there wasn't much travelling, there was not much corresponding sleep-over, which is often in a paid accommodation. Many hotels laid off staff members temporarily. Other extensions of the hospitality sub-sector – event centres, gaming and recreation centres, restaurants and eateries were equally adversely affected. There were mass sales of hospitality business facilities such as hotels, resorts and motels. This was ascribed to bankruptcy arising from high running costs. It was also induced by loss of patronage. Owners of hospitality business outlets therefore found it extremely difficult to conduct their business and many put up their facilities for sale (Bello & Bello 2021, p. 424).

**Food:** Many restaurants, eateries and fast-food outlets were closed. With the bulk of the population wearing face masks to filter what goes into their orifices, it was certain that many eateries were not going to be patronized. The pandemic affected all the segments of food supply chain. The partial shutdown of the transportation sector, coupled with the closure of some food processing facilities led to a disruption in the food supply chain.

**Souvenir Arts & Craft, Performing Arts & Festivals:** Galleries, studios, museums and art exhibition spaces were either completely shut down or were operating skeletally in many countries by the middle of 2020. In-person art events were either cancelled or postponed. Producers of arts and craft for tourism purposes were out of job because there was no meaningful patronage. In an era where the concern was for basic survival, the need for creative art activities and souvenirs became secondary. In the performing arts sector, some of the biggest losses were seen in venue-based touristic activities. Many festivals, which are

known to be the crux of cultural tourism were cancelled due to the pandemic crisis. Many scheduled indigenous cultural festivals and international carnivals were affected. Some of them are used as case studies in this paper.

### **Aborted Carnivals: Case Studies of Touristic Casualties from Select Locations in the Global South**

In line with the thrust of the paper, it is necessary to focus on select creative economic activities associated with tourism that were aborted because of the Coronavirus pandemic. A few case studies will be drawn from the domain of cultural tourism to illustrate the abandonment of the creative art sector and the attendant effects.

Calabar Carnival, officially branded “*Carnival Calabar*”, “Africa’s Biggest Street Party” is one of the biggest tourism events in Africa, held in Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria. The carnival attracts over two million revelers yearly and has featured participants from over 30 countries since its inception. The government initiated the carnival to open up tourism, thus injecting an alternative economic lifeline to the region (Andrew and Ekpenyong 2013, p. 291, 293). Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the carnival was suspended for two consecutive years in 2020 and 2021 after 14 years of uninterrupted show. In 2021, the government regulators of the carnival specifically cited the prevalence of the Omicron variant of Coronavirus as one of the reasons for suspending the carnival.

From the perspective of creative economy, *Carnival Calabar* is a creative touristic product that creates multiple jobs and exposure in the creative arts sector. From the domain of performing arts, the carnival absorbs script writers, artistic directors, technical directors, scenographers, lighting designers, sound technicians, costumiers, make-up artists, choreographers, dancers and production managers. From the domain of visual arts, sculptors, painters, textile, ceramics and graphic artists work at the carnival to interpret and visualize themes for the audiences. Carnival is therefore a huge industry with the capacity to absorb and sustain numerous creative specialists.

In a study on the socio-economic relevance of *Carnival Calabar* to the people of Cross River State, Nigeria, Odere and Ojong (2021, p. 84) assert that the Carnival has deep social and economic value to the people of Nigeria. This assessment was done from the perspectives of job creation, income generation and infrastructural development. *Carnival Calabar* was adjudged to be instrumental to the provision of the basic social infrastructure like roads, recreational facilities, hospitals, power, water and communication facilities, all of which enhance a high standard of living and promotes cultural tourism in Cross River State. Many other studies have affirmed the value of *Carnival Calabar* from different perspectives, namely, promoting cultural diversity (Andrew and Ekpenyong 2012); engendering poverty reduction (Attah, Ogaboh and Nkpoyen 2021); enhancing youth development (Essien and Anthony 2019). These academic endorsements validate the viability of *Carnival Calabar* and justify its study as a touristic creative product.

In Brazil, a country in South America, Carnival is more than an art form or cultural expression; it is a religion. Carnival is life. Nicilda da Silva, 80, the elected queen of the Porto da Pedra samba group, Rio, Brazil in 2022 is reported to have said that “Carnival is a cleansing of the soul”. (<https://www.nytimes.com>). Carnival, by implication is spiritual. Beyond this supernatural dimension, carnival is a social, economic and political medium. Brazilian carnival, even as an artistic event mirrors the social and cultural makeup of the people, so its value transcends the glamour and festivities. This explains the attachment of the people to carnival arts in South America.

The Rio Carnival in Brazil which started in 1723 is renowned in all the above-named affinities, but even more renowned as a touristic event that is indelibly enlisted in the world tourism calendar. Despite the well-established place of carnival in the lives of Brazilians and the Rio culture, the carnival was outrightly

cancelled in 2021 and postponed from the traditional dates in February to 20<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> of April, 2022. The carnival street parties, being components of the Rio carnival where the bulk of revelers usually express themselves in various ways of merriment in designated locations across the city were outrightly cancelled in 2022 because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Only the formal carnival parade in Sambadrome at Rio De Janeiro was allowed.

Justified as the decision may have been, to postpone or outrightly cancel the carnival, even in part, the development was devastating to the carnival bands, tourist participants at the carnival, the city of Rio and the entire Brazil. Other Brazilian cities also cancelled their carnival parades. These cancellations were unprecedented as Brazilians are known to defy any condition to stage all components of their carnivals. In analyzing the postponement of carnival dates and the cancellation of carnival street parties in 2022, Milhorange and Taylor express their surprise: “Brazilians have danced through wars, hyperinflation, repressive military rule, runaway street violence and the 1918-1919 influenza pandemic. Official calls to postpone Carnival in Brazil in 1892 (for sanitation reasons) and in 1912 (to mourn the death of a national hero) were largely ignored”. (<https://www.nytimes.com>). Andreoni and Londoño affirm the tenacity of the Brazilians at their carnival: “For more than a century, Rio de Janeiro’s carnival has been an irrepressible force, unstoppable by wars, disease, labour strikes or political repression” (<https://bdnews24.com>). Yet, aspects of this all-important event were either disrupted or outrightly cancelled, for two consecutive years because of the Coronavirus pandemic. Millions of tourists and revellers who inundate the public spaces of the city of Rio every year to celebrate at the parties were extremely disappointed.

### **Impact of the Pandemic on Calabar Carnival:**

*Carnival Calabar* is the hallmark of cultural tourism, not only in the region, but also in Africa. With such extensive material, infrastructural and manpower needs, its cancellation resulted in severe loss of employment and livelihood. There was a significant drop in the demands for goods and services that are festival related. It has already been stated that the layers of creative concerns in *Carnival Calabar* are numerous. The teaming dancers, choreographers, artistic directors, musicologists, lighting designers, sound technicians, set designers, and production managers were disengaged because of the suspension of the carnival. Similarly, visual artists and designers concerned with the production of carnival floats, section dividers, props, costumes and other visual artistic elements of the carnival were also laid off. These areas of Nigeria’s creative economy were rendered redundant; some creatives who were laid off are looking for ways to diversify to other professions in the struggle to recover from the impact of the suspension of the carnival.

In 2020 and 2021, there was no upgrade in public infrastructure in the city of Calabar in preparation for the carnival as in previous years. The funders of *Carnival Calabar* did not commit funds to the carnival, not minding the fact that the carnival was conceived as a major touristic economic driver of the host state. Expectedly, this resulted in a downward economic slide that impacted negatively, especially on the city of Calabar, Cross River State, whose people are known to sustain mainly on cultural tourism every end of year.

### **Impact of the Pandemic on Rio Carnival:**

The suspension of Rio’s carnival and the adjustment of its structure upset not only the socio-cultural life of the people, but also their economic life. Indescribable losses accrued to the numerous dancers, choreographers, costumiers, float artists and set designers who collaborate to produce the flamboyant costumes and floats seen on the Sambadrome of Rio carnivals every successive year. Suspending the carnival parade and or parties deprived the city of an important source of revenue. Beyond revenue, Rio carnival had become a tool for addressing political capital and performances became a mode of making political commentaries by the citizens. Cancellation, therefore, denied the citizenry of an opportunity to

make political statements as well. With the picture of the multiple values of carnival to the Brazilians, it is clear that the Coronavirus pandemic upended not just lives, but also livelihoods across this active touristic space in the Global South.

### **General Impact of the Pandemic on Tourism and Creative Economies of the Global South:**

**Monetary Losses:** The monetary losses linked to the Coronavirus pandemic in the tourism sector alone is enormous. “About \$4.5tn was lost by the tourism and hospitality sectors as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic worldwide” (Nnodim, <https://punchng.com>). Money lost in the creative sector is difficult to quantify as the sector consists of multiple specialties, some of which operate informally. If activities that support creative economies – the performative, visual and other knowledge-based economic activities related to wide-ranging creative enterprises, some of which service the tourism industry were halted, there was indeed a huge financial loss in the sector.

**Job Losses and Reduced Wage Earnings:** Before the outbreak of Covid-19, travel and tourism accounted for 330 million jobs worldwide, a figure that was expected to rise to 440 million by 2030, considering the trend of subscription to the tourism industry and its sub-sectors (Nnodim, <https://punchng.com>). Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, the projected growth was not only stagnated, it was reversed. The World Travel and Tourism Council estimated that about 75 million tourism jobs were lost worldwide by the end of the year 2020 (China Global Television Network, <https://news.cgtn.com/news>). In Nigeria alone, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), reported that “20 per cent of Nigeria’s fulltime workforce lost employment... from both the formal and informal sectors across major industries of the economy” during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 (*Premium Times* Agency Report. <https://www.premiumtimesng.com/>). Apart from outright job losses, workers in the tourism and creative sectors, experienced reduced wage earnings at the peak period of the pandemic. This situation was complex for tourism and creative workers because job stability in these sectors are known to be precarious, and engagements sometimes seasonal. For instance, many performers – actors, dancers, musicians – typically are not employed on full-time basis, some work part-time. Many tour guides also work seasonally, and this led to reduced wage earnings.

**Human Capital Flight:** Many specialists in the creative sector migrated to greener pastures where their skills are relatively highly valued. Western and Asian economies are currently very attractive, especially to the youthful workforce. Another level of human capital flight is occupational change from the creative sector to other more viable sectors.

**Infrastructural Decay and Distress Sales of Assets:** Due to reduced patronage in the tourism and creative sectors, many facilities, including theatre houses, cinemas, hotels, restaurants, games and recreation parks are decaying, and some are offered for outright sale or lease. In Nigeria, some cinemas houses have been acquired by churches and some hotels have been converted to apartment flats. Facilities that have not been acquired or put to some kinds of usage are abandoned to decay gradually. The once very popular Sheraton Hotel and Towers in Abuja, capital city of Nigeria is a case in point.

**Deflected Funds:** There is significant reduction in the funding for tourism and the creative sector. This may be a direct result of post-pandemic reprioritization of engagements of public funds. The hardship brought about by the inactivity of the lockdown period has made managers of public and private resources and donors to re-channel funds to basic needs. The national budget allocation for culture and tourism in Nigeria was cut by about 33% in 2021. The parliament slashed 1.1 billion Naira from the 3 billion Naira that was submitted for consideration. This was obviously to redirect funds to sectors like health, works and social welfare where the needs were more pressing at the time.

**Inaccessibility to Loan and Grant Fundings:** The austere economic conditions in the Global South has culminated in the scarcity of funds in the money market. It is more difficult to access loans and to attract grants for business. The situation is worse for workers in the creative sector, some of whom may be engaged on part-time or ad-hoc status, and who may lack access to the requisite collaterals. The inability to calibrate and in some cases quantify creative services makes it difficult to know the value of creatives. This constrains many creatives from accessing supports and credits; lending institutions are often reluctant to provide credit due to the inherent difficulties in the evaluation of their skillsets, which are, really intangible assets.

**Cross-Border Ripples:** The decline in touristic and creative investments in the Global South was so steep that it generated ripples across regional barriers. Countries that provide consumables – production materials, equipment and expatriate services for operations and maintenance are adversely affected. Many materials and equipment used in the creative sectors of the Global South are imported from developed countries. A drop in demand would definitely affect the producers and their export profile.

**Spike in Social Disorder:** The loss of jobs, pay cuts, drop in economic activities arising from the pandemic, and the general inflation in many countries of the Global South combined to increase hardship on the people. The effect was social disorder in many places. There was a spike in robbery, abductions for ransom, killings and sales of human parts, drugs trafficking and consumption, internet ‘yahoo’ fraud and other social vices. Studies abound that support the link between economic hardship and social disorder (Šileika & Bekerytė, 2013; Anser, Muhammad, *et. al.* 2020). The first mob reaction to the economic hardship in Nigeria was the systematic raid on warehouses where palliative items, mainly food donated by humanitarian coalitions to mitigate the effect of the pandemic were stored in Nigeria. Many state governments had received the palliative items but failed to share them to the populace, even in the period of intensive hunger. This infuriated the people who spontaneously moved to ‘loot’ the warehouses in various locations. With the economy in recession, the Nigerian government and the law enforcement agencies are finding it difficult to contain the social vices.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations: Opening New Thought Layers for Survival of Tourism and the Creative Sector in the Global South**

The decline in tourism in the Global South has been constant over the years, manifesting in poor physical infrastructure, epileptic communication systems, poor security network, skeletal insurance and weak healthcare plan, affecting all the sub-sectors and sub-sets of tourism. These problems have only been complexified and magnified by the Coronavirus pandemic situation. The pandemic particularly made the decline in art and culture-core tourism sharp and more severe. While the world of science continues in the stampede for dependable medical remedies to unfolding layers of the pandemic, life must continue.

In revamping and sustaining tourism in the Global South, it is imperative to make strategic decisions, to reconfigure the operations of the industry so as to mitigate the adverse social and economic effects. Innovative recovery solutions that are home grown and practically tailored for the indigenous people and environment must be deployed. While waiting for the resumption of full blast international travels, domestic tourism could be developed by increasing the number of domestic destinations. Countries with large domestic markets like Nigeria with a population of more than 206.1 million (2020 World Bank estimates) and Brazil with a population of about 212.6 million (2020 World Bank estimates) could benefit greatly from proceeds from domestic tourism. It is also recommended that countries in the Global South develop tourism along the lines of comparative advantage and operational competencies.

In response to temporary closures or outright cancellations of touristic or creative artistic events, individuals, organizations and governments should deploy digital technologies to ease content creation and to allow for wider circulation of creative materials and the engagement of larger communities of viewers, thus building a new “experience economy”. In the Global South, digital infrastructure is required for the

flourishing of the idea of digital production and circulation of contents. Efforts should be made to expand digital training of content creators and service providers.

Festivals and carnivals and other performative arts that appeal to cultural tourists could be virtually publicized and viewed. The essence would be to retain the flavour or appeal of the creative products and to restore patronage when global travels fully resume. Smartly articulated virtual displays could also make money for the content producers. If the distribution network is widened to include the television networks, then money could also be made from subscription and even more from commercials.

Beyond technological innovations, grants and subsidies are needed for the creative touristic sector. In this regard, government, organizations, coalitions and individuals can provide direct financial support for the development of cultural and creative tourism as part of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) funding initiative. Financial stimulus programmes are required to soften the impact of the pandemic on the tourism sector. Funding is necessary to jumpstart creative enterprises, especially those hubs that would eventually generate jobs to reduce unemployment. Tax reliefs should be offered to individual creatives and corporate creative enterprises. Custom duties should be waived on some products imported for creative productions and tourism development.

A review of tourism laws may also be necessary for growth in the industry particularly at the domestic level. Unnecessary cultural restrictions should be relaxed to build tourists' confidence to venture into new geo-social territories. Cultural restriction on access to certain locations, participation in certain festivals, and suppression of women in some parts of Nigeria should be reviewed.

Synergies should be developed between the touristic creative sector and other sectors of the economy. For instance, tourism could be developed in alignment with the health sector as done in India. Nothing is wrong in sharing indigenous African or South American remedies to some ailments and promoting medical tourism in the process. In the suggested sequence, industrial, agricultural, fashion tourism, together with other subsets could be developed along the lines of comparative advantage per region. Integrating tourism and creative enterprises with other aspects of development will make the sectors interdependent and jointly indispensable.

Finally, in reviving tourism, the political leadership of countries in the Global South must tackle insecurity. Dependable solutions must be found for the problems that underly insecurity in their various ramifications, including those that may have been intensified by the pandemic. Insecurity adversely affects tourism from the angles of investments, expansion and patronage.

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## **Implications Of the Pandemic on Socio-Economic Status of Rural Women in Badagry, Lagos State Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the implications of the pandemic on socio-economic status of rural women in Badagry, Lagos State. The population of the study were all rural women in Badagry, Lagos State Nigeria. The sample consisted of 200 women selected from rural communities in Badagry, Lagos State. The convenient sampling technique was used to select the sample. Data was collected with the use of self-developed questionnaire of Socio-economic status of women and the pandemic (ISSQWAP). The questionnaire was a closed ended type designed in line with the modified Likert 4- point Scale of Strongly Agree, (SA), Agree-(A), Disagree-(D) and Strongly Disagree, (SD). The validity and reliability of the instrument was conducted using the test-retest method. Data collected was subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient [PPMCC] which yielded 0.85 coefficient. Findings from the study revealed that poverty, level of education, level of income, and social Status have implications of the spread of pandemic disease among rural women in Badagry, Lagos State. It was recommended that Badagry local Government and Lagos State Government should provide palliatives and empowerment in order to ameliorate the sufferings of these rural women after the pandemic. It was also suggested that Non-Governmental Agencies, International Organisations should assist in giving support to these women*

**Keywords:** *pandemic, poverty, education, income, social status*

### **Introduction**

A pandemic is an epidemic occurring on a scale that crosses international boundaries, usually affecting people on a worldwide scale. A disease or condition is not a pandemic merely because it is widespread or kills many people; it must also be infectious. Historically, measures of pandemic severity were based on the case fatality rate. Though, the case fatality rate might not be an adequate measure of pandemic severity during a pandemic response because (Reed, Biggerstaff, Finelli, Koonin, Beauvais, Uzicanin, Plummer, Bresee, Redd, & Jernigan, 2013). The broad impact of infectious disease on economic development and prosperity in developing countries has been widely recognised, and the mechanisms by which epidemic transmission of diseases occurs are well understood, there are many gaps in our understanding of the socioeconomic determinants of disease transmission (Strauss & Thomas 2015; cited in Deolalikar, and Laxminarayan, (2000).

According to the World Health Organisation, (2012) infectious (including parasitic) diseases were together responsible for the death of more than 8.7 million people worldwide in 2008. The majority of these deaths were of poor people living in low- and middle-income countries, with many of the deaths occurring in children under five years of age (World Health Organisation, 2017). The 2019-2020 COVID-19 pandemic had profound negative effect on the global economy, potentially for years to come, with substantial drops in GDP accompanied by increases in unemployment noted around the world (Stawicki, 2020). The slowdown of economic activity during the COVID-19 pandemic had a profound effect on emissions of pollutants and greenhouse gases (Le Quéré, Jackson, Jones, Smith, Abernethy, Andrew, De-

Gol, Willis, Shan, Canadell, Friedlingstein, Creutzig, & Peters, 2020; National Geographic Magazine, 2020).

Global Health Risk Framework, (2016) reported that the future estimated that pandemic disease events would cost the global economy over \$6 trillion in the 21st century-over \$60 billion per year. The same report recommended spending \$4.5 billion annually on global prevention and response capabilities to reduce the threat posed by pandemic events, a figure that the World Bank Group raised to \$13 billion in a 2019 report (World Bank Group, 2019). They are significant agents in the appalling poverty afflicting so much of the world. Their impact is felt not only in massive loss of life but also in high levels of morbidity and the accompanying impact on families, communities and weak and under-resourced health systems in low and middle-income countries. (World Health Organisation, 2012).

The Covid-19 crisis affected Africa's growth through domestic and external channels, with a significant impact on the well-being and number of people living in poverty. The most recent forecasts project a GDP contraction in most countries in 2020, the first in 25 years. The UN estimates that nearly 30 million more people could fall into poverty and the number of acutely food-insecure people could significantly increase. Africa faces a dual public health and economic crisis that risks overwhelming healthcare systems, destroying livelihoods, and slowing the region's growth prospects for years to come. Prior to COVID-19, in 2019, the continent had already experienced a slowdown in growth and poverty reduction overall, although with large differences between countries. The current crisis could erase years of development gains (OECD, 2020).

The social determinants of health-the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age-are shaped by a variety of economic, social, and political policies and forces. The likelihood of someone being healthy depends greatly on their social determinants of health. Thus, someone with a strong positive set of social determinants of health, such as being white, highly educated, and well-off financially, will have a large number of protective factors over their lifetime that increase their likelihood of good health, and relatively few risk factors that depress that potential (World Health Organisation, 2010).

The world dealt with a novel disease (coronavirus), which has caused countries and businesses to shut down temporarily and indefinitely in some cases. The shutdown was a measure taken to curb the spread of this pandemic around the world. Without any doubt, this was a burden on the world economy. Definitely, the shutdown has implication on the economy of the countries, and most especially poor households who earn a living on their day-to-day activities. It was observed that most rural communities in Badagry, Lagos state found it so difficult to cope with most of the measures and guidelines due to their socio-economic factors. To encourage these communities to adhere to safety measures to combat the diseases, there was the need to examine the implications of socioeconomic factors in combating pandemic diseases, which was the focus of this study. This study therefore examined the implications of socioeconomic factors in combating pandemic disease among rural communities in Badagry, Lagos State.

## **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested in the course of the study:

1. Poverty will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State, Nigeria
2. Level of education will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State, Nigeria.
3. Level of income will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State, Nigeria.
4. Social Status will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State, Nigeria.

## Methods and Procedure

The survey research design was adopted for this study. The population for this study comprises of residents in rural areas of Badagry, Lagos State. A total of 200 participants were selected as samples for this study. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample. The research instrument for this study was a self-developed “Socioeconomic Factors and Combating Pandemic Diseases Questionnaire (SFPDQ) to collect data. The questionnaire was divided into two sections; A and B. Section A will be used to collect demographic data of the respondents, while section B was used to test the stated hypotheses. The validity and reliability of the instrument was conducted using the test-retest method and analyzed with Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient [PPMCC) which yielded 0.85 coefficient.

## Testing of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 alpha level.

**Hypothesis 1:** Poverty will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural communities in Badagry, Lagos State Nigeria.

**Table 1: Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) on poverty and the spread of pandemic disease**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	467.274 <sup>a</sup>	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	299.001	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	171.970	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 10 cells (62.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .40.

From the above, it could be observed that the Pearson Chi-square statistic  $X^2 (9) = 467.274$ , and  $p \leq 0.05$ . The null hypothesis which stated that poverty will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State is hereby rejected since  $p$  is  $\leq 0.05$  indicating that poverty had implications on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State. This finding agreed with Health Poverty Action, (2018) reported that poverty and poor health worldwide are inextricably linked. The World Health Organisation Europe, (n.d.) asserts that poverty is the single largest determinant of health, and ill health is an obstacle to social and economic development.

**Hypothesis 2:** Level of education will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State.

**Table 2: Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) on level of education and spread of pandemic disease**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	390.798 <sup>a</sup>	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	335.650	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	180.236	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 9 cells (56.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .23.

From the above, it could be observed that the Pearson Chi-square statistic  $X^2(9) = 390.798$ , and  $p \leq 0.05$ . The null hypothesis which state that level of education will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State is hereby rejected since  $p \leq 0.05$ . This implies that level of education have implications on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State. This finding is in line with Grantz, Cummings, Glass, Rane, Salje and Schachterle, (2016) reported that illiterate, the unemployed, and those renting their homes suffered higher mortality than their counterparts in the city of Chicago.

**Hypothesis 3:** Level of income will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State.

**Table 3: Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) on level of income and the spread of pandemic disease**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	375.767 <sup>a</sup>	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	271.758	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	164.062	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 10 cells (62.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .32.

From the above, it could be observed that the Pearson Chi-square statistic  $X^2(9) = 375.767$ , and  $p \leq 0.05$ . The null hypothesis which stated that level of income will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State is hereby rejected since  $p \leq 0.05$ . This implies that level of income have implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State. This finding supports Benzeval, Judge, and Whitehead, (2015) found that along with income and employment status, education is critical in determining people's social and economic position and thus their health.

**Hypothesis 4:** Social Status will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State.

**Table 4: Chi-square ( $X^2$ ) on social status and spread of pandemic**

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	279.377 <sup>a</sup>	9	.000
Likelihood Ratio	215.831	9	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	137.526	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 6 cells (37.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .59.

From the above, it could be observed that the Pearson Chi-square statistic  $X^2(9) = 279.377$ , and  $p \leq 0.05$ . The null hypothesis which stated that social Status will not have significant implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State is rejected since  $p \leq 0.05$  indicating that social Status have implication on the spread of pandemic disease among rural community in Badagry, Lagos State. This finding corroborate that of Braveman, Egerter, and Williams, (2011) found a significant impact of social status on disease makes its definition and measurement of critical importance.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

1. People from poor family are vulnerable to pandemic diseases
2. Educated individual are knowledgeable about pandemic diseases and can prevent it
3. Individual with high income are able to for test and prevent pandemic diseases
4. People of high social status in the community can easily combat pandemic due to their social status and connections

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusions from the study, it were recommended that:

1. Badagry local Government and Lagos State Government should provide palliatives and empowerment in order to ameliorate the sufferings of these rural women after the pandemic.
2. The rural communities should be on the need to follow the pandemic guidelines prevention
3. Non-Governmental Agencies, International Organisations should assist in giving support to these women

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## Engaging in Bi-Epistemic Research: Accounting for Time, Place, and Relations

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### Abstract

*Empirical Western-based Eurocentric research paradigms may not account for the socio-historical implications of Indigenous peoples' experiences and circumstances. Engaging in collaborative research projects with Indigenous scholars and communities requires non-Indigenous researchers to respect the unique perspectives of Indigenous voices. This paper discusses how Indigenous ways of knowing, traditions, and values not only challenge the more objective Eurocentric research methods but also are privileged in research partnerships that recognize decolonial theory and research practices that focus on Indigenous ways of being. Moreover, the paper speaks to how the research engagement with participants has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Restrictions based on provincial public health protocols in Ontario (Canada) during the pandemic problematized research with Indigenous communities. While we, as a bi-epistemic research team, focused on the Indigenous participants' experiences, our inability to meet in-person undermined the conceptual and physical location of the research conversations (RCs). Despite our best attempts to establish an informal and relational space in the virtual RCs, the location of participants' gaze was not situated in a context most conducive to sharing. The paper discusses how as a bi-epistemic team and partnership, we walked alongside one another – albeit virtually in most circumstances – to honour the voices of the Indigenous community.*

### Introduction

Western-based Eurocentric research paradigms that are often empirical in nature do not necessarily account for the socio-historical implications of Indigenous peoples' experiences and circumstances (Penehira et al., 2014; Todd, 2016). Engaging in collaborative research projects with Indigenous scholars and communities requires non-Indigenous researchers to respect and honour the unique experiences and perspectives of Indigenous voices. For non-Indigenous researchers, this is particularly significant when research is conducted in non-traditional Western-based spaces. In these contexts, Indigenous ways of knowing, traditions, and values not only challenge the more objective Eurocentric research methods but also are privileged in research partnerships that recognize decolonial theory and research practices that focus on Indigenous ways of knowing and being (Archibald et al., 2019; Smith, 2012).

### Positioning the Researcher in the Research

As a non-Indigenous and settler person and ally, I have welcomed opportunities to collaborate in research projects with Indigenous scholars, Elders, and community members for over 15 years. Being positioned in what were once especially unfamiliar environments has challenged my understanding of what it means to engage in research across fundamental differences and perspectives between Indigenous and non-Indigenous epistemologies. The opportunities have brought to light how research paradigms influence the co-construction of knowledge (Cherubini, 2020, 2021). I have been welcomed by Indigenous community partners across Turtle Island and continue to learn about the nature of collaborative research practices that are sometimes unique to each community's methodologies, and how researchers must remain sensitive and responsive to Indigenous peoples' understanding of traditional knowledge (see, for example,



Ostashevski et al., 2020). I appreciate the opportunities to collaborate with Indigenous communities and have come to understand the importance of consultation and relationship with various stakeholders involved in the project. Elders and knowledge keepers provide the necessary direction for the research aims and are also instrumental in guiding the direction of the analysis in a culturally appropriate manner. Moreover, they represent the link between researchers and community and establish the context of the relational activities throughout the research process. Hence, I have a better sense of the significant relationships in collaborative research projects between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. As a result, engaging in respectful relations with Indigenous communities has meant taking part in active dialogue with them to ensure that the research remains centered upon their voices and experiences. Together, we share meals, take walks, and participate in smudging, ceremonies, and social events to strengthen our relationship – first as people and second as colleagues and collaborators.

### **Method and Process**

The research process itself reflects this same spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. We sit together in circles and share stories of common and individual experiences (Cherubini & Hodson, 2012). Using a Medicine Wheel structure with a focus on Action, Vision, Knowledge, and Relation, an Elder guides the conversation. It is a space that honours both silence and emotion, as it does tears and laughter. We immerse ourselves in the ceremony of the circle. We take the time, before and after each session, to get to know one another. The same context of respectful relations extends to the data analysis itself, where Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers and community members revisit and reflect upon the words of the research participants that were shared in circle. The transcripts are re-read aloud and the space around the table invites all members to comment informally on the emerging themes and central ideas embedded in participants' words. Particularly memorable are those projects where Elders were involved in the data analysis. Their ability to contextualize our insights in the broader understanding of culture and tradition lends itself to profound learning experiences that often challenged our assumptions as non-Indigenous peoples. They were experiences of research based on relationships.

### **Discussion: Implications of Conducting Research in a Pandemic**

This paper further discusses how the research engagement with participants has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The restrictions based on provincial public health protocols in Ontario (Canada) during the pandemic – including social distancing measures that prohibited and/or limited social gatherings – have created significant implications for conducting respectful research with Indigenous peoples and communities. The face-to-face circles so integral to the Indigenous methodology in which I have participated was replaced with virtual synchronous meetings on electronic platforms. Where once we engaged in developing relationships at community gatherings, the pandemic restrictions forced us to rely on electronic communication and telephone conversations. While the sense of respect and mutual support was not compromised, it was difficult to establish the same depth of relationship with community members and Elders (see, for example, Barney, 2014; Higgins, 2012). As a non-Indigenous researcher, I know full well how significant the community aspect is to Indigenous peoples and researchers and the importance of maintaining respectful relations (Brocklesby & Beall, 2017).

We employed the same research conversations (RCs) used in our collaborative research projects with Indigenous communities (Kanu, 2011). Research participants from the Indigenous community were invited to participate in virtual synchronous gatherings using an online platform. It should be noted that for some Indigenous participants, the platform itself presented significant barriers to engage in this community research project. Various individuals did not have internet connectivity in their homes and/or the personal devices necessary for the electronic RCs. Others had to tend to familial obligations at home and could not

participate, while some were at work during the time the RCs were scheduled and could not join the conversation. For those who were able to participate in the virtual RCs, the process was clearly foreign to their understanding of Indigenous methodology (an observation that was shared, in many respects, by the non-Indigenous member of the research team). As researchers, we worried about connectivity issues that could interrupt the virtual RCs, as we did the possibility of participants being distracted at home by commitments to their children.

While we, as a bi-epistemic research team, maintained the focus of the project on the perceptions and experiences of the Indigenous participants themselves, the conceptual and physical location of the conversations was undermined by our inability to meet in-person (Evans et al., 2009). Despite our best attempts to establish an informal and relational space in the virtual RC, the location of participants' gaze, as Freire (1970/2005) describes, was not situated in a context most conducive to sharing. In pre-COVID-19 RCs, participants' stories were shared in physical, emotional, and social spaces that nurtured reflection (Asch et al., 2018; Cochran et al., 2008; Somerville, 2014). Participants readily shared personal experiences in RCs that contributed to common understandings, mutual interests, and a collegial culture of understanding (Evans et al., 2009). In the virtual RCs, the emotion and spirit of the community was simply not the same. The words of one community member to describe the significance of traditional face-to-face interactions when conducting Indigenous research methodologies point to how genuine relations in community spaces of knowledge creation are significant for healing and celebration. This participant, among others, spoke at length about the lack of synergy that could exist in virtual gatherings in which participants could feel a sense of disconnect from others. In a virtual setting, the research team also worried about the lack of physical support for participants' emotions.

The potential separation between participants and researchers extended to the actual protocol of the virtual RCs. Researchers had to negotiate the silence between speakers in a manner that did not interrupt an individual's story or pressure them to continue speaking. It was important to provide the time for each participant to reflect upon their words and not pose a probing question to alter their sense of direction. All of this made it more difficult to assess the attention of all other participants in the virtual RC – a near impossible task when some participants chose not to activate their video cameras during the virtual meeting. During in-person RCs, there is much greater evidence of participants' sense of engagement. As a non-Indigenous researcher, I noted the stark contrast between in-person and virtual RCs in terms of gauging participants' interactions – a component of Indigenous research so vitally important to its design and implementation. It was increasingly difficult to understand and be responsive to the physical signs of participants' reactions corresponding to what they spoke about or what they heard. We knew about potential feelings of uncertainty in terms of participants' comfort levels as we were not physically present at the RC. This was to understand, in both the preparation and engagement of the virtual RCs, that the conceptual space among participants was potentially very fragile as we had to account for participants' hesitancy and resistance to share freely on an electronic platform. In virtual RC environments, the physical distance between and among participants often stifles the proper facilitation of respectful spaces for them to share their experiences. One cannot help but wonder how participants' perceptions and discourses could have been different in face-to-face RCs where they could physically and visibly engage in dialogue while supporting each other's shared experiences.

Still, this is not to suggest that the virtual RCs with Indigenous community members did not present some possibilities. For participants who normally would not have the necessary transportation to travel to in-person data gathering sessions, the virtual model allows them to participate in the research from their own homes. Similarly, for participants who are caretakers of loved ones and cannot arrange coverage to attend onsite RCs, the virtual format allows them to remain at home. From a research perspective, as well, one has almost immediate access to a draft of the transcript because the researcher can record virtual sessions; this enables a transcriptionist to have both a video recording and transcription draft of the proceedings to ensure a more accurate version of the RC. Last, and equally important, the virtual platform

may provide a greater sense of privacy for some participants; for those who may be reluctant to speak publicly at physical gatherings, or simply prefer to express themselves only in audio, the virtual platform may be more welcome.

## **Conclusions**

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected research protocols, and Indigenous research methodologies are no exception. As a settler-person, I have been privy to the powerful outcomes of collaborating with Indigenous communities in good relations (Trudeau & Cherubini, 2010). I have a better understanding of how issues related to time, place, and respectful relations are central considerations to Indigenous methodologies (broadly speaking). Research must be conducted at a time when all participants are prepared to engage in the work from a position of understanding and openness (Darnel, 2018; Ray, 2012). Relatedly, it is important to account for the place in which the research is conducted and to understand the respective and related protocols. Thus, both time and place must be situated in respectful relations with the Indigenous community to honour Indigenous ways of knowing.

Yet, pandemic-related health restrictions forced our team to approach research from different perspectives. It was difficult to measure the time to prepare properly to engage in the research. In certain instances, it felt less certain that we were in an ideal space. In terms of place, the physical spaces of community were replaced with electronic communications, telephone calls, and virtual meetings. The feeling of being rooted in the place that the community values was elusive – if not missing. In a similar light, while we aimed in all cases for respectful relations, we dearly missed opportunities to be with community. We did not have those informal moments of personal encounter to get to know one another outside the research environment.

Nonetheless, while the conditions were different and we abided by altered versions of time, place, and respectful relations, the research proceeded. The community's willingness to engage in collaboration and to share their stories of success, challenge, and resilience lent themselves to significant learning outcomes. As a bi-epistemic team and partnership, we walked alongside one another – albeit virtually in most circumstances – to honour the voices and perspectives of the Indigenous community. While we realized that the conditions and outcomes of the pandemic health restrictions would shape our collaboration differently, we relied on the fundamentals of Indigenous research methodologies to give purpose to our work.

## **Acknowledgments**

This research is supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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## **Twice Victim: Education Challenges in the North -West and South -West Regions of Cameroon, 2016-2021**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper examines education challenges in the North-West and South-West, the two English-Speaking regions of Cameroon. Education is the cornerstone of a functioning society; the right to education is a natural right. This is enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is recognized as a basic inalienable right for every person. It should be granted to every child as a means of their emancipation and for the future of society. The sustainable development of every society is a function of its educational system. Little surprise, therefore, the UN Sustainable Development Goal number four commits the member nations of the UN to ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong opportunities for all. Since November 2016, children's right to education in the North-West and South-West regions has been compromised by the ongoing political conflicts in that part of Cameroon. The educational challenge was further complicated with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. From the investigation of secondary data, the paper submits that the measures taken by the government of Cameroon to ensure educational continuity in the country in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic can only be effective in the two English-Speaking regions of the country with a peaceful resolution of the political crisis.*

**Keywords:** Education Challenges, North-West and South-West regions, COVID-19

### **Introduction**

Cameroon is an erstwhile German protectorate, 1884-1916<sup>2</sup>. Following the outbreak of the First World War in 1914, Britain and France extended the war to Cameroon, attacked and sent the Germans out of the territory in 1916. This was followed by the Anglo- French partition of Cameroon where Britain obtained one-fifth and France four-fifth of the territory. Britain further divided her portion of Cameroon into two: British Northern and British Southern Cameroons<sup>3</sup>. In a plebiscite vote in February 1961, the former voted for independence by integration with the Federal Republic of Nigeria and the latter by reunification with the independent Republic of Cameroon (the former French sphere of Cameroon). This gave birth to the Federal Republic of Cameroon (1961-1972). During this period the former British Southern Cameroons became known as the State of West Cameroon and the former French administered territory, East Cameroon. Following the abolition of the Federal system in 1972, the State of West Cameroon divided into the North -West and South -West provinces, now regions<sup>4</sup>. It was in these two regions, the English-speaking regions of Cameroon that the outbreak of conflict in 2016 and the later COVID 19 pandemic compromised the right to education of hundred thousand of children.

Education is a human right and should be guaranteed and protected for all people at all times. Education is the cornerstone of a functioning society; the right to education is a natural right. This is

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<sup>2</sup> Victor Julius Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-Present (2018): The History of a People*, (Limbe: Design House, 2019), 48.

<sup>3</sup> Julius Bongkorog, "Crossing over the come-no-go divide: A Historical Discourse on Relations between the English-Speaking Regions of Cameroon, 1996-2017", *The Lincoln Humanities Journal*, Volume 6 (Fall 2018), 250

<sup>4</sup> In 2008 President Paul Biya of Cameroon signed decrees that transformed the provinces to regions.

enshrined in the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights and is recognized as a basic inalienable right for every person. It should be granted to every child as a means of their emancipation and for the future of the society. The sustainable development of every society is a function of its educational system. Little surprise, therefore, the UN Sustainable Development Goal number four commits the member nations of the UN to ensure inclusive and equitable education and promote lifelong opportunities for all<sup>5</sup>. Since November 2016, children's right to education in the North-West and South-West regions has been compromised by the ongoing political conflicts in that part of Cameroon. The educational challenge was further complicated with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This paper examines education challenges in the North-West and South-West, the two English-Speaking regions of Cameroon. To attain this objective, the paper shall answer the following questions: what is the historical antecedent to the conflict in the English-Speaking regions of Cameroon? What is the impact of the crisis on education? When was Covid 19 first noticed in Cameroon? How did the outbreak of Covid 19 interrupt education in the Cameroon in general and the two English-Speaking regions? What is the government response and how has it widened the educational gap between the urban and rural population? The approach adopted for this paper is narrative and analytical. The essence to use the narrative is to provide coherence; explain development that led to the conflict in the English-Speaking regions; the outbreak of the Covid 19 and analyze the government response to ensure educational continuity in a complex emergency situation.

### Historical Antecedent

The political conflict in the English-Speaking regions of Cameroon, the Anglophone crisis as it has come to be known is rooted in the country's historical past. Since reunification in 1961, there has been a gradual but a systematic assimilation of the English-Speaking (Anglophone) Cameroonians by the Francophone majority. Shortly after reunification, Ahidjo divided the country into six administrative units headed by Federal Inspectors undermining the federal character of the state and downplaying the powers of the Prime Minister of West Cameroon (the former Southern Cameroons) as the inspectors were answerable but to Ahidjo<sup>6</sup>. In 1966, Ahidjo created the one-party state enhancing his dictatorship. In 1972, Ahidjo unilaterally, against the provisions of Article 47 of the Federal Constitution issued the notorious proclamation DF 72-270 OF 2/6/72 which abolished the Federal system and created a Unitary State<sup>7</sup>. From the abrogation of the Foumban Accord, one illegality followed the other. By decree No. 84-001 of 4<sup>th</sup> February 1984, President Paul Biya changed the name of the country from the united Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon, the name of *La Republique du Cameroun* at the time of reunification<sup>8</sup>. This was followed by an almost gradual annihilation of Anglophone cultural values and institutions. It created an Anglophone consciousness and feeling of recolonization and marginalisation<sup>9</sup>. The Anglophone minority deeply regret the vote in favour of reunification in 1961. The Anglophones complain of political marginalisation and the exclusion from key political positions; economic neglect and abandonment of West Cameroon projects and Francophone domination of *Societe nationale de raffinage* (SONARA)<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.un.org.sustainable-de>. Access, 16 August 2020

<sup>6</sup> Tangie Fonchingong, "The Quest for Autonomy: The Case of Anglophone Cameroon", *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 7-5 (2013), 225.

<sup>7</sup> Albert W. Mukong, *The Case for the Southern Cameroons*, (USA: CAMFECO, 1990), 94

<sup>8</sup> Fonchingong, "The Quest for Autonomy", 227

<sup>9</sup> Piet K. and Francis Nyamnjoh, "President Paul Biya and the Anglophone Problem in Cameroon", in *The Leadership Challenge in Africa: Cameroon under Paul Biya*, eds. John M. Mbaku & Joseph Takougang (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2004), 192.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 192-193.

The change of name from the United Republic of Cameroon to the Republic of Cameroon was considered as act of secession by the people of the former British Southern Cameroons. Consequently, the English-Speaking people of Cameroon, the former British Southern Cameroonians declared the State of Ambazonia in 1984<sup>11</sup>. It triggered growing consciousness among the people of the North-West and South-West regions against domination by the Francophone majority and unresolved return to the 1961 Federal Accord or outright independence for Ambazonia. Consonant with this, the English-Speaking Cameroonians met in Buea in April 1993 for the All-Anglophone Conference (AACI). It came out with the Buea Declaration which called for the return to federalism<sup>12</sup>. In response the government of Cameroon pledged to adopt some reforms to decentralize power. The following year, 1994 the second All Anglophone Conference (AACII) was held in Bamenda. It adopted the Bamenda Declaration which recommended a two-state federation or secession. The government obstinately maintained its unitary stance and had continued the gradual but systematic erosion of the Anglophone culture. With the relative political and economic deprivation of Anglophone Cameroonians, all that was left to give them a common sense of belonging was their legal and educational system<sup>13</sup>. The continuous attempt by the Francophone majority to wipe out the English Common Law and the English Educational system triggered the October/November 2016, Lawyers and Teachers strike which degenerated to a political conflict in the North-West and South-West regions with separatist fighters targeting the closure of schools.

### **Impact on Education**

Education is a key component of the Anglophone crisis; on the one hand it has been significantly affected by the crisis and on the other it was a driving force of the conflict<sup>14</sup>. The calculated attempt by the Francophone majority government of Cameroon to annihilate the English system of education had led to the strike that morphed to a political conflict. At the beginning of the crisis in late 2016, as part of the civil disobedience campaign to protest the deliberate assimilation of the English system of education into the French system, the Anglophone activist led by the Teachers' Trade Union called for the boycott of schools. However, by the end of 2017, separatists' leaders started using schools to disrupt normal in the Anglophone regions as leverage in negotiations with the Cameroonian government and to mobilise international attention to the conflict in the North-West and South-West regions<sup>15</sup>.

The separatists have made school boycott a major part of their campaign for the creation and recognition of the self-acclaimed state of Ambazonia<sup>16</sup>. The Non-State Armed Groups have imposed the closure of schools in the North-West and South-West regions. Since 2017, armed separatists have consistently targeted school buildings, killed, kidnapped, assaulted, harassed and threatened education officials and students for failing to comply with separatists demands for boycott of education<sup>17</sup>. Separatist argue going to school is not safe and education provided by the government is substandard and bias. If children go to school the world will understand the crisis has come to an end<sup>18</sup>. Education is used as bait by the armed separatist groups to force the creation of the new Anglophone state of Ambazonia. Ironically, education which was the driver of the strike, to preserve and improve the English system of education has now become its victim.

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<sup>11</sup> Mukong, *The Case for the Southern Cameroons*, 99.

<sup>12</sup> Ngoh, *Cameroon 1884-Present* (2018), 389.

<sup>13</sup> Bongkorog, "Crossing over the come-no-go divide", 254.

<sup>14</sup> Cameroon: The Education crisis in North-West and South-West Regions <https://www.acaps.org/special-report> Access, 1 February 2022.

<sup>15</sup> Human Rights Watch: Armed Separatist Attacks on Students and Teachers in Cameroon's Anglophone Regions, December 2021 <https://www.hrw.org> Access 2 February 2022

<sup>16</sup> [www.thenewhumanitarian.org](http://www.thenewhumanitarian.org) Access 2 February 2022

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Human Rights Watch, December 2021.



The armed separatist fighters have transformed schools to battlefields making them very unsafe areas. On 24<sup>th</sup> October 2020, a group of unidentified armed men attacked the Mother Francisca International Bilingual Academy in Kumba, South-West Region Cameroon shooting and killing, at least, eight children and wounding twelve others<sup>19</sup>. A few weeks later in November 2020, a group of unidentified armed group stripped naked some teachers and students in Kulu Memorial College, Limbe in the South-West region. On 9<sup>th</sup> November 2021, non-state armed groups reportedly intruded the campus of Government High School, Oku in the North-West region and abducted the principal and two teachers. On 10<sup>th</sup> November 2021, an improvised explosive device exploded and injured eleven students in an Amphitheatre of the University of Buea in the South-West region. Still in the South-West region, on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021, unidentified gunmen attacked Government Bilingual High School, Ekondo Titi and killed four students including a female teacher with scores of students and teachers wounded<sup>20</sup>.

The armed group imposed boycott of formal education through the closure of schools in the North-West and South-West regions has affected over 700,000 children keeping them out of school<sup>21</sup>. Since the start of the crisis in late 2016, over 500 students have been attacked; 255 students kidnapped; 78 taken from a school in Nkwen in the North-West region in November 2018; and 170 from a boarding school in Kumbo still in the North-West region in February 2019. At least, 200 educational professionals have been attacked by separatists' fighters since 2017. These attacks have included killings, physical assaults, kidnapping, extortion, threats and other forms of intimidations. Since 2017, at least, 70 schools have been attacked by the non-state armed groups to enforce education boycott in the Anglophone regions of Cameroon. They have burned down schools destroying classrooms and other valuables. Some schools too have been burned by the state military because they were used as camps by the non-state armed groups, for example the burning of a school at Eka village by the Cameroon military<sup>22</sup>. In September 2020, the army announced they had chased out non-state armed groups from, at least, 100 schools in the North-West region alone<sup>23</sup>.

As a result of the attacks on schools, as of February 2021, less than half of the primary schools and secondary schools 49 percent and 42 percent respectively were operational in the South-West region. In the North-West region is less than one-third, a meager 27 percent of both primary and secondary schools that are operational<sup>24</sup>. The killing of education is advertently the killing of a nation. The closure of schools is risking the lives of children and threatening a generation without education. Children have been denied the opportunity to learn and develop themselves; failing in achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 4: ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning<sup>25</sup>. The outbreak of Covid- 19 has further aggravated the challenges that the armed conflict has inflicted on the educational sector in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon.

### **The Emergence of the Covid-19 Pandemic**

In Cameroon the first case of covid-19 was identified on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020 when a French national returned from Europe was tested positive for severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus-2 (SARS-COV-2)<sup>26</sup>. Thereafter the covid-19 task force was formed and international borders were closed for

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<sup>19</sup> [www.globalr2p.org/publications/atrocity-alert-no-226-cameroon-afghanistan-and-guinea](http://www.globalr2p.org/publications/atrocity-alert-no-226-cameroon-afghanistan-and-guinea) Access 21 March 2022

<sup>20</sup> OCHA Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No. 37, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021 [www.unocha.org](http://www.unocha.org) Access 21 March 2022

<sup>21</sup> Cameroon: The Education crisis in the North-West and South-West regions <https://www.acaps.org/special-report> 22 March 2022

<sup>22</sup> Human Rights Watch, December 2021.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> OCHA Cameroon: North-West and South-West Situation Report No 37, 30 November 2021 [www.unocha.org](http://www.unocha.org)

<sup>26</sup> *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 2021,18,2554 <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18052554> 1-2 Access 22 December 2021

incoming passengers by 10 March 2020. Under the leadership of the Prime Minister several preventive measures were instituted nationally to contain the spread of the corona virus. These included the closure of schools and training institutions among others. The covid-19 occurred while Cameroon was already faced with a four-year conflict in the two English-Speaking regions of the country. Families in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon faced a two-pronged crisis, struggling with the virus and the conflict. In the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon war, violence and the virus impacted the lives of the people: their ability to earn money, access to health care and education<sup>27</sup>.

The covid-19 preventive measures unintentionally made education its victim, particularly, in the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. The Prime Minister ordered the closure of schools to prevent the spread of the corona virus. It whittled down the fragile but genuine efforts to reopen schools in the North-West and South-West regions. In Cameroon 31,851 schools were shut down and more than seven million children lost access to education due to the emergence of the covid-19. In the North-West and South-West 6,379 schools (3,692) in the North-West and (2,687) in the South-West were shut down. In both regions, the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic directly impacted 575 school aged children. An estimated total number of 1,033,000 school aged children in the North-West and South-West regions were forced out of school due to the dual emergency of the covid-19 and the ongoing political conflict<sup>28</sup>. The outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic presented a complex emergency situation in Cameroon, particularly, in the two English-Speaking regions of Cameroon, health crisis tangled with political instability which called for an emergency response.

### **Government Response**

By April 2020, covid 19 had become a public health concern. It caused complete halt of schools as education stake holders figured out how to ensure education continuity in the face of the challenges. The nationwide paralysis caused by the pandemic meant over six million learners in the primary and secondary schools were out of class<sup>29</sup>. The covid-19 inspired education in emergencies to ensure the continuity of education in the face of the pandemic. The government and other education stake holders set up various distance learning platforms on radio, television and online. These platforms included CRTV radio and TV learning (L'ecole a' la radio and L'ecole a' la Tele') broadcasting lessons in both English and French to facilitate learning from home. The ministry of secondary education set up unique online learning platforms providing lessons to children in secondary schools<sup>30</sup>. This response strategy boomeranged on the children in the rural areas.

### **Limitations of the Response Strategy**

The government response strategy had some basic difficulties that impeded the success of the e-learning strategy. The first major difficulty is the epileptic supply of electricity. Most rural areas do not have a regular supply of electricity; some villages in the North-West and South-West have gone more than half of the year without electricity as the conflict rages on. There is the absence of radio and television signals as well as the internet in some remote and rural villages. At the dawn of the conflict in the English-Speaking regions, in January 2017, the government shut down internet for three months in the English-

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<sup>27</sup> [www.globalr2p.org/publications/atrocities-alert-no-226-cameroon-afghanistan-and-guinea](http://www.globalr2p.org/publications/atrocities-alert-no-226-cameroon-afghanistan-and-guinea) Access 22 December 2021

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.humanitarianre...> Impact of covid on education in the North-West and South-West of Cameroon, Access 22 December 2021.

<sup>29</sup> <https://reliefweb.int/cameroon/ca> Cameroon's COVID-19 pandemic education response and the shift to...Access 21 December 2021

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Speaking regions<sup>31</sup>. These difficulties inextricably link to education disparity between the advantaged urban centres and the disadvantaged rural population. Before the crisis there was already a disparity in access to educational opportunities between the rural and urban areas; well-off and disadvantaged families; and boys and girls<sup>32</sup>. The weak and uneven distribution of distance learning technologies among the Cameroonian population has widened the educational gap between advantaged urban schools and the disadvantaged rural schools of the English-Speaking regions of Cameroon. The ongoing crisis has further amplified the educational gap. The education in emergencies that targets the poor, vulnerable and underprivileged has rather impoverished the children in the conflict North-West and South-West regions.

## **Conclusion**

This paper has eruditely discussed the outbreak of political conflict in the two English-Speaking regions of Cameroon a consequence of their political and economic marginalization and cultural assimilation by the Francophone majority government. It started as a Trade Union strike to preserve the English Common Law and the English education system in the former portion of the British Southern Cameroons, the North-West and South-West regions of Cameroon. Education, the main driver of the strike, became its victim with the closure of schools by non-state armed groups. The education crisis was aggravated with the emergence of covid-19 that saw the shutdown of schools as a preventive measure. Hence, education was twice victim in the North-West and South-West region of Cameroon with inestimable negative impact on the educational life of the school aged children. The children's right to education in the North-West and South-West regions can only be guaranteed by a peaceful resolution of the political conflict in the two English regions.

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<sup>31</sup> Human Rights Watch, December 2021.

<sup>32</sup> Emmanuel Beche, "Cameroon Responses to covid-19 in the education sector: Exposing an inadequate education system", <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc> Access 22 December 2021.

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## **The Vicious Linkages of Unemployment, Poverty and Social Movements: The Nigeria Situation.**

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### **Abstract**

*The Nigeria's political, social, economic and religious environments are increasingly worrisome and unsafe arising from structural defects which have given birth to the emergence of social groups that have engendered insecurity in Nigeria. The Nigeria's environment is heightened by gross unemployment and chronic poverty which makes it easy for deprived and frustrated youths to be enlisted into various violent groups with little or no financial reward or been indoctrinated by violent religious groups that heavenly paradise awaits them in the event of death. The Nigeria's situation is predominantly uncertain as insecurity and deliberate attacks of high proportion are meted on governments and industrial strategic facilities, arisen from frustration and disillusionment created by the prevalence of unemployment and poverty ravaging the country. It is against this backdrop that the paper examined the causes of social movements, justifies the connectivity and nexus between unemployment, poverty and social movements in Nigeria. In the course of the study, relative deprivation was adopted as the paper's theoretical framework. The theory states that unemployment and poverty invariably deprive individuals to meet basic needs leading to the rise of complex social groups such as the Niger Delta Militant groups, Boko Haram insurgency and Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB). Furthermore, the paper used qualitative data which were adequately analyzed historically. The findings revealed that unemployment and poverty are both causes and effects of the emergence of social groups that have become the cog in the wheel of national development. The paper recommends that leaders should instill good governance and be completely devoid of primitive accumulation of wealth at the chagrin of the less privileged individuals. Furthermore, government should initiate people's-oriented policies that will take care of the basic needs of everybody, both the rulers and the ruled. Such policies should provide good educational policies, including technical education from the secondary level that will create opportunity for the downtrodden who are easily recruited into violent groups to be educated and learn a trade to gain employment and eradicate poverty.*

**Keywords:** *Unemployment, Poverty, Social, Movements.*

### **1.0 Introduction**

The eras of military rule essentially entrenched unemployment and poverty in Nigeria. Consequently, manifest low-quality education, low life expectancy, high infant mortality, low income, unemployment, hunger and deprivation. Poverty is partly characterized by unstable food production specifically on basic foods resulting in low per capita. The poor are those deprived, unable and lack resources to acquire basic needs of life, and structurally placed to be dependent. Poverty denies its victims the basic needs for human survival, and they are unable to meet their social, economic and political obligations in society. Aisedion & Gaiani (2009, pp.165-166), bemoan the consequences of the exploitation of African resources resulted in high unemployment rate, unaffordable basic education, inequality, and crisis for constant agitation for resource control. The case of Niger Delta and other separatist movements are evidence of poverty and unemployment in Nigeria. Therefore, poverty and unemployment are

inseparable because one reinforces the other. Poverty is a state of inability to acquire the necessities of life, conditioned by lack of access to basic factors of development (Mamman, 2002, p.171). Therefore, inability to meet basic needs invariably incites and necessitates social movement. In a similar development, Field (1994,p.3) sees poverty as the inability of an individual or family to command sufficient resources to satisfy their basic needs. From the foregoing, it means unemployment and poverty go pari-pasu since the physical effects can be seen on those afflicted known as the poor. This is why Onah (2006,p.70), argued that poverty is the lack of certain capacities such as being unable to participate with dignity in society. In the same vein, Coudouel et al, (2002,p.29) advanced that poverty is a situation of inability of individuals or households to possess the needed resources. To this end, unemployment and poverty are deprivations which make victims to be vulnerable and violent in nature. Unemployment and poverty induce social vices as many of the unemployed in criminal activities directed at those they perceived as barrier of development.

### **1.1theoretical Framework and Methodology**

Many people are deprived of Justice, financial resources, status, among others. It is viewed that some people join social movements with a view to redressing injustices meted on them. Merton was the first proponent who propounded deprivation theory where he described the emergence of social movements among people who feel deprived (Merton,1938,P. 672-82). In the same vein, high levels of unemployment and poverty contribute to the rise of social movement which ultimately results in aggression in society (Huntington 1968,p.64; Scott 1976,p.76). The development of relative deprivation according to stuffer et al (1949,p.56), arises when individuals compare their situations with others. It is on this note that relative deprivation attracts attention when expected values are not achieved. According to Dollard, et al. (1939,p.67) the disparity between what people expect as their entitlement and what they believe they can accomplish explains relative deprivation. Gurr (1970.p. 24), reiterates that the possibility of aggression varies increasingly with the strength and scope of relative deprivation among members of a collective group. In Nigeria, some regions that are relatively deprived of economic and political opportunities are aggressive to undermine the authority of the state. The theory of relative deprivation also attracted the Marxian ideological argument by pointing to asymmetric access to opportunities resulting in deprivation. On this note, Enaikele, Okekunle, et al. (2017,p.53) provided that the consequences of political marginalization, socio-economic deprivation, and unfair access to fortunes instigate violent or terrorist acts. In Nigeria, the emergence of Boko Haram religious ideology came from unresolved political and socio-economic bitterness. This makes Boko Haram insurgents to be violent against individuals and the state. To this end, it is clearly understood that dissatisfaction can lead to frustration and aggression as Nigerians currently experience (Berkowitz (1969,p.123). Furthermore, group theory according Bentley (1908,p.78), included informal social associations as ‘groups’ and that actions are better ferocious when people come together to pursue a common course. *The common interest of group relationships determines its positive or negative social behaviour. Group’s negative behaviour is informed by feelings of domination, exclusion, isolation and frustration as claimed by the various social movements in Nigeria.* Therefore, IPOB as a social group, like any other social movement emerged because of frustration, isolation and domination by other ethnic ruling groups.

In line with the above authorities, social movements have their foundations among people who feel deprived of some goals or resources and find their recruits among the isolated and alienated in society. The Niger Delta struggle is one of the social movement groups whose frustration arise from failing to gain expected benefits of economic development. Deprivation contends that unemployment and poverty play significant role in the emergence of militants in the Niger Delta area of south-south, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), seeking secession in the eastern part, Oodua people’s Congress (OPC), the western agitators and Boko Haram insurgency in the northern part of Nigeria. So social movements reflect a fundamental struggle among classes organized around economic production and struggles against social inequalities. Deprivation theory argues that the Niger Delta militants, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), O’Odua people’s Congress (OPC), and Boko Haram insurgents have their foundations amidst individuals who feel

deprived of some resources or services in the country. Therefore, individuals lacking the opportunities others are getting are more likely to organize a social movement to improve their well-being.

There are two flaws in this theory. First, according to Jenkins and Perrow (1977, pp. 249-268) almost everybody feels deprived, the theory could not explain why only the groups that form social movements claimed to be deprived. Second, the reasoning associated with this theory is circular as the only evidence for deprivation is the formation of social movement. They claimed that deprivation is the cause but the only evidence for such is the movement. According to Wieu (2018, p. 87) other factors abound such as radicalization and extreme religious ideology, corruption, social, economic disparities caused by the political elites that facilitate aggressive rebellion. Also related is Mass society theory which asserts that individuals who are hopeless or socially alienated make up social movements. The theory according to Kornhauser (1959, p. 68) provides the individuals with a sense of belonging which emboldened them to act in compliance to the rules of the movement. Added to the above is Structural strain theory which exerts pressure that drives individuals to commit a crime because of lack of income, inequality in education, among others. From the foregoing, even though other theories were used, but relative deprivation is endorsed as our theoretical analysis and orientation in the study. The study used secondary materials such as books, journals, Internet, newspapers among others and were historically analysed.

## **1.2 Previous Research**

### **Unemployment and poverty**

According to Akewushola, Olateju and Adeyemi (2007, pp. 157-166), unemployment is understood as the productive and energetic people without work but available for work. This means any person who is presently not working but has the enthusiasm, fitness to work, yet unemployed is regarded as unemployment. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, out of the Nigerian Labour force of 85.08 million people, 7.53 million were not in employment (Ahiuma-Young, 2018, p. 1). Similarly, in the fourth quarter of 2020, one in three Nigerians had no jobs. National Bureau of Statistics in 2021 reported that Nigeria's unemployment rate has risen to 23.2 million people, representing the second-highest rate in the world (National Bureau of Statistics cited in Adegboyega, 2021, p. 4). With the above information, rebel groups have become sources of opportunity for unemployed youths. We have continued to observe that unemployment is threatening national development for the increasing number of mass criminal acts by restless youths. The National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) came up with the state-wide unemployment by observing that the states that were worst affected included River State, Akwa-Ibom State, Bayelsa State, Imo State and Kaduna state with unemployment levels of 41.8%, 36.58%, 30.36%, 29.47% and 28.96% respectively (National Bureau of Statistics cited in Ahiuma-Young, 2018, p. 1). There is no doubt, poverty is a condition of lack because it afflicts people and subjects them to perpetual subjugation. Olanrewaju (1996, p. 67), maintained that in developed world poverty can be measured in terms of income, while in developing countries is seen as condition of lack of basic infrastructure, among others.

Definitions above see poverty as 'condition of lack' which is inability to afford basic needs. Haughton and Khandker (2009, p. 1) succinctly explained that poverty exist where people lack key potentialities and accessibility to adequate income, education, sound health, among others. Unemployment and poverty are levers of violent conflict. Studies that brought out the correlation between the role of unemployment and poverty in causing violence and insurgencies were championed by (Becker, 1968, p. 47; Cramer, 2010, p. 2). Nigeria according to Taft and Haken (2015, pp. 120-133), is a country with over 350 different ethnic groups. The various groups are involved in different complex agitations for better living conditions using violent means. The expression of violence has had a death toll of **more** than 30,000 people from the Niger Delta struggle to the recent Biafra uprising. Alesina et al (2014, pp. 189-211); Collier and Hoeffler (2004, pp. 563-595) also affirmed that poor and unbearable economic environments increase rebellion and violent conflict. This demonstrates the link between unemployment and poverty to violent uprisings. This means that the actualization of a free, peaceful and developed society is impossible

where the majority of the citizens live below the poverty line (Ucha, 2010,Pp.46-56); Ordu, 2017,Pp35-41; Akimbi, 2015,p.).

## **Social movements**

A social movement is simply a large number of people with organized effort to cause a change or to hamper social change. Even though social movements differ in size, they are collective people who share a common outlook whose relationships are not determined by procedures or rules (Houghton, 2021,P.1). This is to say, social movements are large group of people who share common aspirations built around religious fundamentalism, security, land, gender equity, environment, injustice, corruption, child abuse, among others. It therefore suggests that those who participate in social movements feel alienated from socio-economic opportunities. Tilly (2004,P.3) defines big social movements as series of contentious performances, displays by ordinary people with common purpose and solidarity to sustain interaction with elites, opponents and authorities. The country's internal security has been significantly undermined by violent activities of armed non-state actors, made up of radicalized youth groups as foot soldiers (Wieu, 2018,p.12). These groups portray similar traits and leverage on the vulnerability of the Nigerian youths to drive for recruitment and radicalization. It is believed that the sympathizers of the group are mostly disaffected and unemployed youths (Onuoha, 2014,p.14). From the beginning, most social movements start with peaceful protests, demonstrations, petitions, and dialogue to convey their grievances to the appropriate authorities. Most of them embark on the use of violence when the authorities employ repressive measures against them. This is what happened in Niger Delta region where we have so many militant groups. However, for the avoidance of doubt, social movements in this paper refer to major non-state violent groups that employ violence to express grievances against the inattentiveness of the government. The outstanding social movements referred to in this paper are Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), The O'Odua People's Congress (OPC), The Arewa People's Congress (APC), The Bakassi Boys (BB), The Egbesu Boys (EB), Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB), Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB), and Boko Haram Insurgents (BHI). To this end, the uniqueness of the paper is explicitly clear, although some authorities have extensively dealt with issues on unemployment, poverty and social movements, yet none of the authorities could comprehensively articulate the nexus between unemployment, poverty and social movements to which peace and security are engendered in Nigeria. It is this area the paper contributes to the body of existing knowledge.

### **1.3 Analysis**

#### **Causes of social movements in Nigeria**

Social movements are predicated on a change in society resulting from gross marginalization, alienation, underdevelopment, ecological and environmental degradation. The effect results in unemployment and poverty as in the case of Nigeria. Social movements in Niger Delta region reveals deep-rooted dissatisfaction of what they get from oil exploration. The exploration of oil by multinational companies has destroyed the ecosystem, devastating their sources of livelihood with chemicals, gas flaring and oil spillage. The unwholesome situation is without equal development response from the government or the multinational companies. The neglect of the region by successive governments and repression of peaceful agitators by government took the peaceful agitation to violent movement (Orji, 2011,p.1). One of the most prominent activists on environmental issues was Ken Saro-Wiwa, leader of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) in the early 1990s. He advocated for non-violent resistance to environmental injustice in Ogoniland, which has suffered from widespread oil spill pollution. The marginalization and exploitation of the resources from the Niger Delta area of Nigeria, escalated armed and violent conflict towards the government and oil companies in 2004. The most popular militant groups include: The Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND), and Niger Delta Avengers (NDA). In the wider circumstance of development crisis, widespread oil pollution, and increasing



insensitivity of government, the militants started targeting oil pipelines and kidnapping of foreign oil workers for ransom or to negotiate their needs (SDN,2020,p.2). In the Eastern part of Nigeria, IPOB evolved from the problems of development crisis such as: Unemployment, poverty, social and political imbalance. Furthermore, the unbalanced politics of wealth allocation formula further facilitated the feelings of secession and agitation for Biafra Republic by the Southeastern Nigeria. The massive underdevelopment halting economic growth of the Nigerian state increased poverty, hunger, insecurity and instability also influenced the emergence of Boko Haram insurgency (Olomjobi,2015,p.45). The problem is further compounded with the failure of successive governments to address the high rate of poverty, unemployment, corruption and mismanagement of public funds affecting society. This assertion is seen in the Biafra course, a feeling of frustration and domination occasioned by loss of confidence in the nation's politics intensified the Biafra agitation for a nation of their own (Ojiako,1981,p.14).

### **Unemployment, poverty and social movement nexus in Nigeria.**

This aspect explains the nexus between, poverty, unemployment and social movements in Nigeria. The nexus explains why youths and the masses join Boko Haram as an alternative means and source of income. The linkages further explain how Boko Haram takes advantage of religion to justify their barbaric acts. Poverty is noted to be a contributing factor to insurgency according to Liolio (2013,p.5) the capacity for Boko Haram to recruit its members is dependent on the nature of the economic underdevelopment and levels of poverty in the area. The emphasis is that frustration is a factor as a result of socio-economic and political inequality forcing the masses who have chosen to join social movements the hope for a better life in Nigeria. Ojolo (2013,p.21) noted that individuals and groups grievances such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, discrimination, and economic marginalization, can be used as mobilizing instruments by sinister group to get support and recruit for terrorist violence. Shuaibu et al (2015,Pp.254-266) highlighted that people who are desperate, living in poverty, marginalized or physically threatened turn to radical life in search of what will satisfy their needs for welfare, recognition and security. Hence creating a vacuum for social movements to recruit and radicalize the disgruntled entrant members.

Unemployment and poverty are closely knit in that unemployment eventually leads to poverty as it means that people are not able to sustain their living. The unemployed and poverty ridden youths who are aware of the opportunities across Nigeria that are not available to them thus gladly embrace social movement to ventilate their frustration, victimization and humiliation against the government. The scale of youth's frustration as a result of relative deprivation is compounded by weak state capacity and diminishing opportunities. The unemployed and poor youths are target groups by social movement leaders as they are vulnerable and easy to mobilize than other groups. Mbah, et al (2017,Pp.173-190) clearly illustrated that social movement leaders easily recruit and mobilize the youths, especially the poor and downtrodden who have been reduced to street gangsters to cause mayhem. Therefore, increased frustration and disillusionment is closely linked to the growing number of separatist and militant groups being experienced in Nigeria. The failure of the state to meet people's basic needs and relative deprivation enhance the acceptability of the people to join social movement to fight their legitimate grievances.

### **1.4 Conclusion and Recommendations**

In conclusion, unemployment is said to be a situation where an individual remains jobless while poverty is lack of capacity to earn a living. The nexus between unemployment, poverty and social movements, is observed in their interactions affecting peace and security of the country. The major social movements mentioned above have no doubt decried rising unemployment and poverty which generated them. Therefore, to proffer solutions to this menace, government at all levels should make adequate policies for the acquisition of trade by youths base on fitness of the individuals and the needs of the environment. Those interested in agriculture should be giving soft loan depending on the type of farming the prospective

farmer wants to reduce poverty to the lowest ebb. Government should prioritize education and provide employment for school leavers because an educated youth that is gainfully employed has no reason to be recruited into violent groups. The rights of every Nigerian should be respected regardless of the social class or ethnic background to which he or she belongs. This will agreeably persuade the majority of Nigerians to be nationalistic and also place the preservation of the country at top priority in their daily activities rather than engage in loathsome social movement activities. Finally, social movement groups should engage government more constructively than by kidnapping, killing, and destroying government's strategic assets.

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## Use of Student-Centered Learning as Stimulus for Creating Situational Interest in Adult Learners – A Case Study in a Vocational Education Institute in United Arab Emirates

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### Abstract

*Interest has been identified as a significant motivational factor in learning for its positive impact on students' engagement in learning and intention to participate in the future. Scholars have identified two types of interest i.e. Individual and Situational Interest. Individual Interest indicates a relatively long-term orientation of an individual toward a type of object, activity or area of knowledge. Situational Interest (SI) signifies short-term, spontaneous emotional reaction triggered by contextual stimuli. SI is changeable and partially under control of teachers, making it a significant area of research. While the concept of SI suggest that contextual stimuli can lead to student engagement with learning, the concept of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) focuses on creating these stimuli. Existing literature on SI and SCL mostly focuses on younger students in school stage, with limited studies done on adult learners in vocational learning environment. The concept of andragogy (adult learning) states that adults learn differently from children. This study focuses on adult learners in a vocational educational environment in United Arab Emirates and aims at determining impact of adopting teaching strategy, aligned with adult learning characteristics, on SI of adult learners, and their intention to engage with the topic in future. The study measures SI by its 'Feelings' and 'Value' components, and future intention by measuring Behavioral Intention (BI). Comparison of SI-Feelings and SI-Value before and after the teaching session, through paired sample t-test, showed enhanced SI-Feelings and SI-Value after the session. The Linear Regression Analysis indicated significant positive correlations and suggested that SI-Feelings could count for 31.7% and SI-Value could count for 12.3% of the variance in BI to engage with the topic in future. The study recommends that aligning teaching with adult learning preferences has the potential to create SI in adult learners.*

**Keywords:** Individual Interest, Situational Interest, Student-Centered Learning, Adult Learning

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Background of the Study

This research has been conducted on adult learners in a vocational learning institute in United Arab Emirates. The research aims at determining how the interest of adult learners can be enhanced, leading to their active engagement in the learning process. For this purpose, the study adopted a teaching strategy based on real life problem-based autonomous learning, as suggested in adult learning characteristics.

#### 1.2 Significance of the Study

The outcomes of this study are of high importance for educational institutes as well as work organizations, as these will help them in aligning adult learning with the recommendations of this study to create learning interest in adult learners, enhance learning effectiveness and stimulate their intention to engage with their learning in future as well.

### 2 Concept of Interest in Learning

#### 2.1 Role of Interest in Learning

The role of 'interest' as a significant motivational factor in learning and development emerged in the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century from scholarly work of Dewey (1913) and Thorndike (1935). Various studies towards the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century (for example Schiefele, 1991; Krapp, Hidi & Renninger, 1992; Hoffmann et al, 1998) have indicated interest as an important explanatory construct in learning. According to Durik & Jenkins (2020), interested learners are intrinsically motivated, they are more effortful, resistant in the

face of challenges and more often set and achieve goals. Interest has also been identified as an important motivational construct that influences students' learning behaviour and intention to participate in the future (Solmon, 1996; Xiang et al, 2005).

## 2.2 Types of Interest

Researchers have focused on two different concepts of interest i.e. 'Individual Interest' and 'Situational Interest' (Hidi & Baird, 1988; Hidi, 1990).

### 2.2.1 Individual Interest

'Individual Interest' is the relatively long-term orientation of an individual toward a type of object, an activity or an area of knowledge (Schiefele et al, 1983; Hidi, 1990; Renninger, 1990). Researchers have identified two components of Individual Interest i.e. feeling-related valences and value-related valences. Feeling-related valences refer to the feelings that are associated with a topic, object or activities, such as pleasure, excitement and enjoyment, and are intrinsic in nature (Schiefele, 1991; Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Value-related valences refer to the attribution of personal significance to an object, which may be due to a variety of reasons, such as its contribution to one's personality development, competence, or understanding of important problems (Schiefele, 1991; Krapp, 1999; Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Scholars (Schiefele, 1991; Chen & Ennis, 2004; Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Xiang et al, 2005) have noted the positive impact of Individual Interest on learning behaviour and intention to participate in future.

### 2.2.2 Situational Interest

Situational Interest (SI) is spontaneous, transitory and environmentally activated (Krapp et al., 1992). It is an emotional state triggered by situational or contextual stimuli (Anderson et al, 1987; Hidi & Baird, 1986; Hidi, 1990), which may have short-term effect and may marginally influence an individual's knowledge and values (Subramaniam, 2009). According to Schraw, Flowerday Lehman (2001), SI is changeable and partially under control of teachers, and this is what makes SI a significant area of research. Many scholars suggest that SI can be enhanced through modification of aspects of learning context and environment like teaching strategies, task presentation and structuring of learning experiences (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Chen, Darst, & Pangrazi, 2001; Durik & Harackiewicz, 2007). Different studies have suggested activities that trigger SI, for example, inducing suspense (Jose & Brewer, 1984); making task as novel (Hidi, 1990); promoting student autonomy and choice (Deci, 1992); student engagement (Mitchell, 1993); making information relevant to a task or learning goal (Schraw & Dennison, 1994; Shirey, 1992); giving choices to students about what to read (Høgheim & Reber, 2015; Bernacki & Walkington, 2018) and collaborative learning (Shubina *et al*, 2021).

Researchers (Krapp, 2003; Hidi & Renninger, 2006) have shown that SI can grow into Individual Interest. According to Krapp et al. (1992), SI often precedes and facilitates development of Individual Interest. Hidi and Renninger (2006) proposed a four-phase sequential model of interest development (Figure-1).

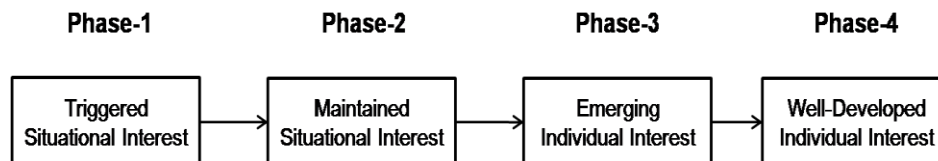


Figure-1: Four-phase Sequential Model

Triggered SI denotes sparking of a person's interest for a particular topic due to a contextual stimulus. Maintained SI implies sustenance of SI by consistent presentation of the trigger. Emerging Individual Interest is the stage that marks transition of SI to Individual Interest and leads to a person's interest for the topic and tendency to seek frequent engagements with the topic. The last phase, Well-

Developed Individual Interest, signifies a person's deep-seated interest for the topic over longer periods of time (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Garcia et al. (2010) have suggested that if SI can develop into Individual Interest, it is possible that SI is structured similarly to Individual Interest i.e. having 'feeling' and 'value' components.

### 3. Student Centered Learning

Learning has traditionally been centered on teacher, where teacher decided on 'what to teach', 'how to teach' and 'how the students will be assessed' on their learning. In this model, students act as passive receivers of information flowing from teachers, participating actively only when asked by the teacher. Unlike the traditional model, Student Centered Learning (SCL) keeps students' interests at the focus and makes students' voice as central to the learning. In SCL, students choose what they will learn, how they will learn and how they will assess their learning (Rogers, 1983; Hannafin & Hannafin, 2010). According to Weimer (2002), role of teacher in SCL changes from 'sage on the stage' to 'guide on the side' who views the students not as empty vessels but as seekers to be guided along their intellectual developmental journey. SCL suggests putting responsibility for learning in hands of students (Hannafin & Hannafin, 2010; Johnson, 2013), giving learners autonomy and independence (Jones, 2007), allowing them control over their learning process (Slunt & Giancarlo, 2004; Tärnvik, 2007) and requiring a fundamental shift in approach to innovate, not simply replicate existing practices either online or in person (Pickering, 2021).

### 4. Conclusions from Literature

Research on SI and SCL so far mostly focuses on students in school/university stage, with limited studies done on adult learners in vocational learning environment. The concepts of andragogy (adult learning) state that adult learn differently from children; they are self-directing, motivated by self-interest, life centered and pragmatic, rely on change as the primary driver to learn, rely on experience to learn (Knowles, Holton & Swanson, 1998). Therefore, there is need for integrating and studying adult learning characteristics as triggers or stimuli of SI when dealing with adult learners.

### 5. Research Methodology

#### 5.1 Research Objectives

RO-1: Determine whether the Situational Interest of adult working professionals can be significantly increased with adoption of a teaching strategy based on real life problem-based autonomous learning in group settings.

RO-2: Determine whether the Situational Interest of adult working professionals would lead to their intention to engage with the topic in future.

#### 5.2 Conceptual Framework & Hypotheses

This study uses SCL, in that the adult learning characteristic, as a trigger to enhance SI of students in the topic, measured through 'Feelings' and 'Value' for the topic, and then determining the impact of 'Feelings' and 'Value' on intention of students to engage with the topic in future (Figure-2).

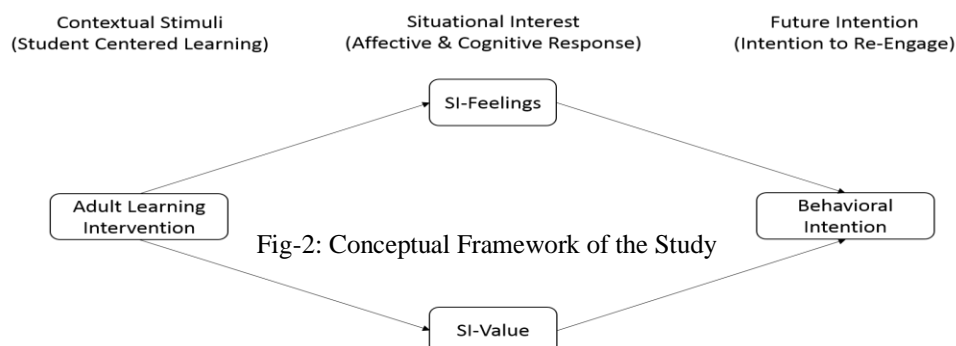


Fig-2: Conceptual Framework of the Study

H-1: Adoption of teaching strategy based on real life, problem-based autonomous learning will significantly increase adult learners' Situational Interest (SI)-Feelings for the topic.

H-2: Adoption of teaching strategy based on real life, problem-based autonomous learning will significantly increase adult learners' Situational Interest (SI)-Value for the topic.

H-3: Adult learners' Situational Interest (SI)-Feelings aroused due to adoption of teaching strategy based on real life, problem-based autonomous learning will lead to their Behavioral Intention to engage with the topic in future.

H-4: Adult learners' Situational Interest (SI)-Value aroused due to adoption of teaching strategy based on real life, problem-based autonomous learning will lead to their Behavioral Intention to engage with the topic in future.

### **5.3 Research Design & Sampling**

This research adopts deductive approach, which involves testing theory by generating and testing hypotheses (Robson, 2002) and explaining causal relationships between variables by collecting and analyzing quantitative data. However, this research, being a case study with limited sample size, is not aimed at generating generalizable outcomes; it rather aims at getting insights into the matter that can guide future research with a larger sample size. The sampling frame of this study comprised students in a vocational training institute in United Arab Emirates. At any given time, average number of students is around 300. A complete class of 33 students was used as sample, yielding a sample size of 10% of the total sampling frame (N=33).

### **5.4 Data Collection Instrument**

In order to measure interest in academic settings, this study uses two-component measures comprising 'Feelings' and 'Value' (Schiefele et al., 1988; Linnenbrink-Garcia et al., 2010; Maurice et al., 2014; Høgheim & Reber, 2015). For determining the impact of 'Feelings' and 'Value' on predisposition to engage with the particular content, the study uses the construct of 'Behavioral Intention' from Khalid (2014) and Rotgans (2015). From these studies, this study adopts phrases "interested", 'excited', 'enjoy' to measure SI-Feelings, adopts phrases 'useful', 'important', 'helpful to measure SI-Value, and adopts phrases 'plan', 'intend' to measure Behavioral Intention. The questionnaire comprised 9 statements; 3 statements each on SI-Feelings, SI-Value and Behavioral Intention, on Likert's 5-point scale ranging from Strongly Agree=5 to Strongly Disagree=1. Reliability of the questionnaire was measured by using Cronbach's Alpha Method and standard values suggested by George & Mallery (2003). Cronbach's Alpha values for all the variables were greater than 0.7, indicating good internal consistency (Table-1):

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha Value</b>
SI-Feelings	0.756
SI-Value	0.831
Behavioral Intention	0.852

Table-1 – Cronbach's Alpha Values



## **6. Findings**

### **6.1 Situational Interest – Feelings**

In order to compare the SI-Feelings before and after the learning session, paired sample t-test was carried out. Descriptive statistics showed that participants reported higher SI-Feelings ( $M=4.44$ ,  $SD=0.48$ ) after the session as compared to SI-Feelings ( $M=3.66$ ,  $SD=0.52$ ) before the session. T-test results ( $T(32)=9.783$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) indicated statistically significant difference. Result proves Hypothesis-1.

### **6.2 Situational Interest – Value**

In order to compare the SI-Value before and after the learning session, paired sample t-test was carried out. Descriptive statistics showed that participants reported higher SI-Value ( $M=4.67$ ,  $SD=0.33$ ) after the session as compared to SI-Value ( $M=3.83$ ,  $SD=0.49$ ) before the session. T-test results ( $T(32)=10.53$ ,  $p<0.001$ ) indicated statistically significant difference. Result proves Hypothesis-2.

### **6.3 Impact of SI-Feelings on Behavioral Intention (BI)**

In order to determine the impact of SI-Feelings after the session on BI to engage with the topic in future ( $M=4.40$ ,  $SD=0.10$ ), Linear Regression Analysis was carried out. Pearson's  $r$  indicated a significant positive moderate correlation between SI-Feelings after the session and BI ( $r = 0.582$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $N=33$ ). Regression results ( $F(1, 31)=15.859$ ,  $p<0.001$ ,  $R\text{ Square}=0.338$ ,  $\text{Adjusted } R\text{ Square}=0.317$ ) indicated that SI-Feelings aroused due to the session could count for 31.7% of variance in BI to engage with the topic in future. Result proves Hypothesis-3.

### **6.4 Impact of SI-Value on Behavioral Intention**

In order to determine the impact of SI-Value after the session on BI to engage with topic in future ( $M=4.40$ ,  $SD=0.10$ ), Linear Regression Analysis was carried out. Pearson's  $r$  indicated a significant positive weak correlation between SI-Value after the session and BI ( $r=0.388$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $N=33$ ). Regression results ( $F(1, 31)=5.496$ ,  $p<0.05$ ,  $R\text{ Square}=0.151$ ,  $\text{Adjusted } R\text{ Square}=0.123$ ) indicated that SI-Value aroused due to the session could count for 12.3% of variance in BI to engage with the topic in future. Result proves Hypothesis-4.

## **7. Discussion**

Comparison of SI-Feelings and SI-Value before and after the session, through the paired sample t-test, indicated statistically significant differences, with SI-Feelings and SI-Value enhancing after lesson delivery aligned with adult learning characteristics suggested by Knowles, Holton & Swanson (1998). This outcome is also in line with the assertions that SI can be enhanced through modification of aspects of teaching strategies, task presentation and structuring of learning experiences (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000; Chen, Darst, & Pangrazi, 2001; Durik & Harackiewicz, 2007). The finding of this study, that SI has positive correlation and predictive impact on students' intention to engage with the topic in future (Behavioral Intention), is in line with the earlier research findings on role of interest in influencing students' engagement (Hidi & Harackiewicz, 2000) and intention to participate in the future (Solmon, 1996; Xiang et al, 2005). Overall, this study supports the assertion that Situational Interest is changeable and partially under the control of teachers (Schraw, Flowerday Lehman, 2001).

This study has an implicit implication with regard to the 4-phase model of interest development by Hidi and Renninger (2006). Since Situational Interest is spontaneous and transitory (Krapp et al., 1992; Anderson et al, 1987; Hidi & Baird, 1986; Hidi, 1990), Triggered Situational Interest and Maintained Situational Interest can be measured and confirmed in a shorter span of time. However, Individual Interest

being a relatively long-term orientation of an individual toward a type of object, an activity or an area of knowledge (Schiefele et al, 1983; Hidi, 1990; Renninger, 1990), measurement of Emerging Individual Interest requires observations and measurements over a relatively longer duration. The construct of 'Behavioral Intention' used by this study, has the potential to be seen as an intermediate step that can be measured simultaneously with SI-Feelings and SI-Value for indicating likelihood of development of Emerging Individual Interest in future (Figure-4).

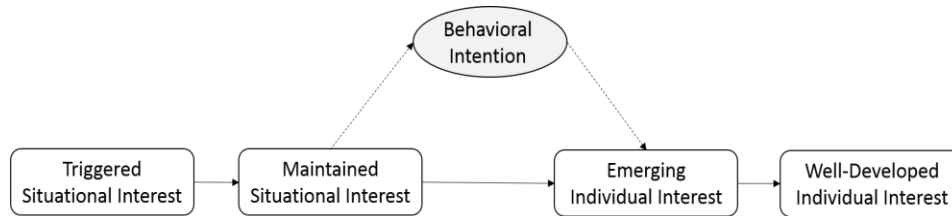


Fig-4: Inclusion of BI into 4-Phase Model

## 8. Conclusion & Recommendations

Employing the concepts of Student-Centered Learning (SCL) and Situational Interest (SI), this study employed teaching strategy based on real life problem-based autonomous learning to see whether such a strategy created SI for adult working professionals in the topic. The study further explored whether this SI of adult learners would give rise to their intention to engage with the topic in future as well. Measuring SI through its 'Feelings' and 'Value' components, the study has shown that teaching strategy that is aligned with adult learning characteristics does create SI in adult students. By bringing in the construct of Behavioral Intention, the study has further proved that the SI impacts intention of adult learners to engage with the topic in future as well. Implicitly, the study has also proposed that the construct of 'Behavioral Intention' could help as an intermediate measure to determine likely transformation of Maintained SI to Emerging Individual Interest. Based on the outcomes, this study makes the following recommendations:

- a. When teaching adult learners, adopting a teaching strategy based on real life problem-based autonomous learning is likely to act as a stimulus for creation of Situational Interest for the topic and impact their intention to engage with the topic in future as well.
- b. With regard to 4-phase model of interest development, construct of Behavioral Intention has potential to act as an intermediate step that can be measured simultaneously with SI-Feelings and SI-Value for indicating likelihood of development of Emerging Individual Interest in future.
- c. This research, being a case study with limited sample size, needs to be conducted with a larger sample size using probability sampling to ascertain generalizability of its outcomes.

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## Motivations and Methodologies for European Exploration

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### Abstract

*This chapter examines the motivations and methodologies for European voyages of exploration. It notes that beginning in the early fifteenth century, Europeans embarked on a series of voyages of discovery which inaugurated a new chapter in World History. This period spanned the fifteenth to the early seventeenth century during which the European expansion all over the world flourished. The European age of exploration developed alongside the Renaissance. Both periods in western history acted as transitional moments between the Middle Ages and the early modern period. Competition between Europeans empires such as Spain and England fueled the evolution and advancement of overseas exploration. Between 1420 and 1620 European learned that all seas are one that seamen, given adequate ships and stores, skill and courage, could in time reach any country in the world which had an ocean coast and what was more return home. This is a remarkable period in the history of the western world. Which saw the demolition of geographical theories that had prevailed in Europe since classical antiquity? Once rulers and financiers understood that more efficient ships, more accurate instruments and the use of cartography and navigation had made long ocean passages possible, they invested in exploration. Through the use of primary and secondary sources it is the intention of this chapter to unravel what prompted Europeans to condemn themselves to long and dangerous voyages of discovery. As well as the extent to which such motives were combined or, at least to some extent, masked by the quest for knowledge both of the natural and human world. In this chapter the ways in which such proclaimed goals shaped the actual practice of exploration are explored.*

### Introduction

The objective of this work is to examine the motives and methodologies of European exploration. It unveils the circumstances that propelled the Europeans to try to condemn themselves in search of the unknown world and the method they adopted in achieving this feat.

### Background

The history of exploration is about men challenging the unknown, while displaying heroism and endurance, or, meeting death in the course of their journey. It presents the human dimension of exploration, but it does not tell it all, for the story of the physical journey is only the beginning. In reality European exploration during what is called the classical period between 1500 and 1900 is the story of the growth of knowledge, geographical knowledge that was recorded, centralized and used as never before.<sup>1</sup>

Historically, this explosion of knowledge must be seen in the context of the intellectual revolution referred to as the renaissance, but the immediate motives of the explorers were overwhelmingly worldly-rapacious, mercenary, military and imperial. The purely intellectual impact of the new discoveries was less than can be imagined.<sup>2</sup>

The history of exploration can be told in several ways. It can be told as a narrative of adventure and endurance concentrating the human drama in the exploratory journey there is the technical history of navigation, for that of the complex commercial networks which brought the worlds goods to Europe there is the political history of the overseas empires which Europeans powers built up in the wake of the explorers, each one of these is an enormous field of study.<sup>3</sup>

However, it is important to note that all these aspects of the history of exploration are not easy to comprehend. There are very few eyewitnesses on account of major voyages and fewer still written by leaders of expeditions. The reports of Vasco da Gama, of Ferdinand Magellan, of Sebastuan del Cano, have disappeared. Columbus's journal survives, but only in an abstract made by another hand, and even so it describes as much what Coloumbus wished to see as what he actually saw. Most explorers were practical men, little given to writing. They saw no reason to give away valuable information except to their employers. The employers encouraged this taciturnity, because they hoped to monopolize the profits of the newfound lands. The details of discovery therefore have often to be inferred from writing of chroniclers and armchair amateurs of travel, which were based upon classical theory and cosmographical conjecture as well as upon experience.<sup>4</sup>

Once rulers and financiers understood that more efficient ships, more accurate instruments and better methods of cartography and navigation had made long ocean passages possible, they invested in exploration. Their object was not discovery for its own sake that was incidental but the opening up of ocean routes to distant India, China, Japan and Africa, countries known to exist and believed to be of commercial importance. The men who did the work were tough professionals, willing to serve and ruler who would employ them, really to go anywhere and investigate anything if they were suitably rewarded. They were the maritime counterparts of the mercenary captains who made a profession of the land fighting of Europe skillful, imaginative and bold they drew the map of the world known today.<sup>5</sup>

### **Brief History of Exploration**

The history of exploration is the process by which the world's isolation from each other was broken down and the process by which the world which mankind now inhabits was created. In this process it is not the act of travel that is decisive. But man's developing knowledge of the world, knowledge that became recorded, permanent and above all centralized into one systematic view of the world.<sup>6</sup>

It is important to note that, however great the geographical spread of earlier cultures- Romans, Arab, Mongolor Inca-Vast areas of the world, indeed most of the world had always remained unknown and inaccessible. It was the navigators of the sixteenth century who changed that narrative. In the renaissance period the sudden explosion of geographical knowledge found its perfect expression in a newly created icon the map. For the Monarch and the navigator, the merchant and the scholar, the map became a mirror of the world, both a symbol of knowledge and an instrument of power, and it now acquired an importance in European intellectual and political culture. It became a record of what was known and a spur to probe the unknown. Its roots lay partly in science and partly fable, and it promised both wealth and knowledge. The map was a meeting place between the known and the unknown. Only when the limits of geographical knowledge had been defined on a map could explorers set out in search of new lands, new routes and new knowledge.<sup>7</sup>

### **Motivations for European Exploration**

In analyzing the motivation or the lure for European exploration few questions are necessary. Why did the explorer decide to condemn themselves to hardship, suffering and death in the search for an unknown land? Did the motivation of the explorers really matter?

In the first place, it is important to note that there was a special quality about the need, the skills, and the imagination of European in this age that sent them searching the globe. Renaissance Europe needed precious metals and spices. While individual merchants had sought for gold and silk, pepper and cloves in the Far East during the Middle Ages, it was only in the 15<sup>th</sup> century that governments joined in the search. This was not due to merely to greed. Europe was genuinely desperate for metal to make into coin, its own gold deposits, such as those in Ireland were exhausted, and the silver mines of Germany, though rich, were unable to cope with the demand.<sup>8</sup>

Together with the need for precious metals and spices there was the desire to please God by converting the heathen. The crusading motive was perfectly genuine though it, too, had its practical side; converted natives were more docile, converted chiefs were more co-operative, this holy zeal also led to a certain belief in a divinely inspired mission. King Manuel of Portugal, writing to the ruler of Calicut in India, explained that men had always wanted to get to India, but “as long as God did not wish it to take place and so the men of past times were unable to accomplish it”. But now He did it, “and it is now..... a wrong and injury to God to wish to resist His manifest and known will” government and individual alike sincerely believed that it was Europe’s manifest destiny to convert the infidel.<sup>9</sup>

### **Methodologies of European Voyages of Exploration**

By methodology is meant to show the various methods employed by the explorers in their voyages of discovery. It is important to stress that development in ship building enabled captains to sail faster and closer into head winds, but hardly enhanced the seaworthiness of their craft.

While in the voyage, in a severe storm, captains had to lower some or all sails to let the gale blow its where it would. It was not until the introduction of better small sails in the 19<sup>th</sup> century could ship ride” out a storm with a fair chance of staying on course.<sup>10</sup>

For coastal explorations, once the new land was reached, explorers needed small, shallow draught vessels called pinances, equipped with oars for progress against head winds, or for going up rivers. These boats were usually taken along either as deck cargo or stored in pieces for later assembly overseas. Sometimes, however, they were constructed on the spot. It is important to note that much of the Central American coastline was explored by boats built in the West Indies although explorers could have used the small craft made by skilled native craftsmen, they rarely did so.<sup>11</sup>

The explorer also made use of table. This table explained how to measure and translate the angle between the horizon and the North Star or the noonday sun into degrees of latitudes in order to determine how far north or south of the equator the ship was.

There was also the use of compass. This is perhaps, the most trustworthy instrument at sea which the mariner used constantly. The compass had become accurate enough by about A.D 1300 to allow ships to ply. Mediterranean and cross the Bay of Biscay even in winter, when visibility was poor.<sup>12</sup>

Dread Reckoning was also employed. This is a fool proof technique involving estimating a position in terms of distance sailed along a known compass bearing. But to know how far a ship has sailed in a day requires knowing its speeds, and the long line, a simple speed measuring device, did not come into use until the late 1500’s.<sup>13</sup>

Another method employed by the explorer involves the use of sounding line. This was used especially when a captain suspected that from one or another of these signs such as “if the sea appears greasy, with leaves of tress, grass, herbs, wood, branches, palm nuts, and other things which the waves caring from the shores and rivers send down when in flood, which is a sign of land being near, he made

constant use of sounding line, a cord weighted with a lead Plummer. With the line, the explorer is able to measure depths of as much as 200 fathoms (1,200 feet) and successive soundings would indicate whether the sea bed was shelving up towards a coastline still over the horizon.<sup>14</sup>

The other method which was also employed by the explorers was that of regulation to maintain formations on the high seas by day or rough or in fog week. This was taken seriously, for loss of contact with the other vessels often leads to disaster. The instructions dealing with signal were especially thorough. In these were given by blasts on a trumpet or a horn, by beating the drum or by firing again. On clear days orders to alter course or lower sails were given by one or more flags on clear nights lanterns were used. With these means, it was possible to create a rudimentary code for sending and acknowledging such signals as come aboard for conference enemy ship. I am in distress come near; I want to speak to you.<sup>15</sup>

### **Methods and Materials for the Study**

The study adopts the quantitative research method based on the historical and analytical approach. This method was chosen for the study because it allows the researcher to analyse data. The secondary sources in the form of journal articles, books unpublished manuscripts, and internet source was used and was gotten from public and private libraries. This source was adequately scrutinized using the basic steps in historical research.

### **Results and Discussion**

Evidence so far, discovered in this study presents the following findings of the research work first, the motivation for European voyages of exploration can be located in the context of intellectual movement at the time. Findings from the study also show that the lure for exploration was motivated not necessarily by greed but by lure of precious metals and conversion of heathen to God. The study also discovered the method adopted by the Europeans in their voyages of exploration. These include the use of shallow draught vessels, table and compass, droud reckoning, sounding line, regulation to maintain formations of high seas by day in fog week. These findings present the significant aspect of the study in that it unveils the unfolding dramas of the European voyages of exploration.

It is important to note that the research on the history of exploration is not an easy one to understand because most of the eyewitness accounts are no longer there and what is left are fragment of facts that is left for historical interpretation. The argument that the European exploration was motivated by economic and religious motives cannot be said to be accompanied by greed as some scholars try to portray, Europe it must be said was also motivated by the search for knowledge.

It is important to understand that there was in the renaissance no governmental interest in exploration merely for the sake of knowledge. When enough gold and silver and spices has been found, and enough Europeans were stationed in overseas post to exploit the routes and guard the trade routes renaissance government lost interest in exploring. For instance in 1602, when Pero Ferrandes de Queries was trying to obtain backing at the Spanish court for his great voyage into the pacific, he found that "some answered him that sufficient lands had been discovered for His majesty, and that what signified was to settle them, rather than go in search of those he saw were new".<sup>16</sup>

Taken the period of discovery as a whole it could be said that it was not for money, the gold the captain sought for would always go to the crown and at the same time the crusading motive could not have stirred the ordinary seamen who were illiterate and uninterested in theology. Since no common seamen left an account of the motives that led him to sign one can only guess about them. The pay was frequently somewhat higher than for an ordinary trading voyage in familiar waters, soundly backed by a royal treasury or a group of prosperous merchants.



As for the commanders of the expeditions the hope of riches might have been one of their motives, but none of the great explorers, even Columbus himself died a wealthy man. Only the conquistadors and the great administrators who ruled in India for Portugal and in the Americas for Spain died with great fortunes. The trail blazers' reward was in the less tangible form of honor and fame.

It is also important to stress the desire for personal glory as one of the driving forces of the exploration and renaissance endeavor. Men wished to become famous renowned for wisdom for munificent patronage or for valor.

Similarly, it must be said that no great endeavor can be sustained without the fuel of ideology. Europe ideology was compounded by various elements. Psychologically, Europeans as a whole were distinguished from other people of this time by an individualism that promoted action. Europe was higher than elsewhere. Revolutions therefore, are the works not of the cowed and starving but of those who have enough to want more.

## **Conclusion**

The work had examined the motives and methodology of European voyages of exploration. The history of exploration like the history of science or of art, acts as a window into the fundamental problem of man's relationship with his world, in what can be called the classical period of European exploration from the renaissance to the late 19th century, that relationship was essentially a quest for dominance, the dominance of nature and of other nations. The immediate motive as clearly enunciated in the work was overwhelming mercenary, the pursuit of gold spices or converting pagans to Christianity, prestige culture of crude and conquest. European domination was first achieved through military means, although indigenous social systems also found it virtually impossible to survive the pressure of European commerce. In exploring the unknown land, the Explorers adopted so many methods which can be aptly summarized ranging from the observation of the storm, the use of vessels, tables, compass dread recroming, sound line, regulation to maintain formations on the high seas, the use of sealed orders in times of dangers and the reliance on rain to replenish their water supply. Through courage and doggedness, the European explorers inaugurated a new chapter in world history. There was a discovery of the outer world and of personally, this they pursued in the solitude of the mountain, deserts or Polar Region, seas, oceans, rivers in an experience described by Nansen as:

This dark, deep, Jilent Void like the mysterious, unfathomable well into which you look for that something which you think must be there only to meet your own eyes.<sup>17</sup>

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## The Crisis Study: COVID-19 & Reading Impairments - Survey Investigating Socializing

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### Abstract

*Reading impairments can negatively influence one's academic and mental health; however, social interaction may act as a buffer. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on social participation in adults with and without reading impairments (e.g., dyslexia) is explored. Participants (N = 53; Mean Age = 26) completed a survey with questions targeting socio-demographics, health and reading history, and perceptions of the pandemic. Standardized questionnaires of anxiety and depression and social measures (National Institute of Health Toolbox Emotion Battery) assessed social participation habits and social relationships. Social participation decreased during the pandemic, for both individuals with and without reading impairments (RIs) ( $p = .002$  and  $p = .026$ , respectively). Adults with RIs reported lower instrumental support during the pandemic ( $p = .007$ ), greater depression scores ( $p = .041$ ), and lower life satisfaction scores ( $p = .030$ ) in comparison to adults without RIs. Social participation during the pandemic was positively correlated with life satisfaction scores ( $r_s = .319$ ,  $p = .026$ ), and emotional ( $r_s = .501$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and instrumental support scores ( $r_s = .466$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Loneliness was negatively correlated with social participation before the pandemic ( $r_s = -.358$ ,  $p = .011$ ). These findings underscore the differential impacts of social participation for individuals with and without disabilities and, overall, underscores the impacts of a global crisis on the mental and social health of individuals.*

**Keywords:** Social Participation, COVID-19, Dyslexia, Reading Impairments, Invisible Disabilities

### 1. Introduction

Invisible disabilities are non-discernible disabilities that may impair daily functioning<sup>1</sup>. Reading impairments (RIs) are one such invisible disability that affects life satisfaction, happiness, socializing, education, and self-esteem<sup>2,3,4,5,6,7</sup>. While it is well understood that the social participation restrictions of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic negatively impacted the psychological health of many, the disparate impacts of the pandemic for individuals with RIs, specifically in the context of social health, need further exploration<sup>8,9,10,11</sup>.

#### COVID-19 and Social Participation

For most individuals, social participation with friends and family has been an effective method for reducing stress, feelings of loneliness, symptoms of anxiety, as well as increasing overall well-being during the pandemic<sup>4,9,12,13,14,15</sup>. These effects can be understood using the buffer model, which states that social support, including positive social interactions, serve to make us feel cared for, loved, valued, a sense of belonging, and can protect us against a host of negative emotions related to life stress, change, and the outcomes of crisis situations<sup>16</sup>. During the pandemic, an increase in social participation using mediated communication (i.e., communication that uses a technological medium) was observed for adults<sup>11,12,15</sup>. However, adults with intellectual and/or learning disabilities reported increased isolation, resulting in a loss of social and emotional connections with friends and family<sup>17</sup>. The Scottish Commission for People with Learning Disabilities (SCLD) outlined common concerns in individuals with learning disabilities during the pandemic, including changes to one's support system, increased social isolation, and worsening mental health<sup>18</sup>. Positive social participation with family and friends has been frequently reported as an effective coping mechanism<sup>15</sup>. To compound matters further, RIs impact social participation directly, as adults with

RIs who experience higher rates of social anxiety minimize their frequency of interactions, and subsequently, any negative social experiences may lead to increased avoidance of social participation<sup>19, 20, 21</sup>. The extent to which a global crisis exacerbates this isolation and the extent to which the presence of social support provides a protective barrier was explored.

Our hypotheses were as follows:

1. *Social participation during the pandemic will decrease for both groups.*
2. *Adults with RIs will report lower quality of life scores, lower levels of perceived emotional and instrumental support, and higher anxiety and depression scores, compared to adults without RIs (both before and during the pandemic).*
3. *Greater levels of social participation, regardless of having a RI, will be associated with a higher quality of life, greater emotional and instrumental support, and lower anxiety and depression scores (both before and during the pandemic).*

## 2. Methods

### 2.1. Participants

Participants were included in the study if they were 18 years of age or older and were able to participate in the survey in the written format or using speech-to-text tools. We recruited 53 participants ( $N_{RI} = 19$ ;  $N_{non-RI} = 34$ ). Ages ranged between 18 and 61 years. Mean ages were comparable ( $M_{RI} = 28$  years;  $M_{non-RI} = 25$  years). Our samples consisted of primarily females for adults with RI (10 females, 4 males, 2 gender-fluid, 2 non-binary) and without RI (30 females, 3 males, 1 gender-fluid). Participants were assigned to the non-RI group if they self-reported typical reading history and/or scored  $<.32$  on the Brief Adult Reading History Questionnaire (ARHQ-B)<sup>22</sup>. They were assigned to the RI group if they self-reported a RI and/or scored  $>.32$  on the ARHQ-B.

### 2.2. Materials and Procedures

A cross-sectional study was conducted between May and November 2021. Participants were recruited by email and through social media groups (e.g., Facebook, Reddit). They were instructed to download study materials (i.e., consent and information form, how to listen to audio questions, etc.) via tutorial videos. A survey was designed based on previous work<sup>12,13</sup>. Open-ended survey questions were accessible through speech-to-text software. A dyslexia-friendly font was chosen for the survey (i.e., sans-serif)<sup>23</sup>. All questions were accompanied by embedded audio-files. [www.google.ca/forms](http://www.google.ca/forms) was used.

### 2.3. Screening Measures

**Socio-Demographic Information.** Participants were asked to report their age, sex, gender, ethnicity, marital status, spoken language(s), geographic location, place of residence (i.e., city or rural), living arrangement, and socioeconomic status (educational level, employment status, and household income).

**Health History.** This included prior health diagnoses, daily physical health burdens, and the impact of these on participants' daily lives.

**RI Screening.** To date, there is no consensus on the best approach to identify/classify individuals with a RI as they are a highly heterogeneous group. Thus, we included three valid measures, to ensure we captured individuals who struggled with reading. Risk of reading impairment was measured using the ARHQ-B and self-report of a reading impairment, both of which are reliable and valid ways of assessing reading difficulties<sup>22,24</sup>. We also used a 3-item general reading history questionnaire.

**Perceptions of the COVID-19 Pandemic.** Perceptions of COVID-19 were measured using the School of Public Health at the Imperial College London's survey on COVID-19 reflecting worry, susceptibility, and severity<sup>25</sup>.

**Social and Emotional Measures.** The following social and emotional measures were asked twice in the study to reflect two time periods, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic (section 3 and 4 of the survey).

**Social Participation Habits.** Questions reflected the weekly frequency of social participation with friends and family, either virtually or in-person.

**Anxiety.** Anxiety symptoms were measured using the 7-item Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7 (GAD-7) scale, which is reliable and valid across different sociodemographic groups<sup>26,27,28</sup>.

**Depression.** Depression symptoms were measured using the 9-item Patient Health Questionnaire 9 (PHQ-9)<sup>29</sup>, another valid and reliable measure<sup>30,31,32</sup>.

**Emotional Measures.** The NIH Toolbox Emotion Battery measured general life satisfaction, stress, emotional support, instrumental support, and loneliness<sup>33</sup>.

## 2.4. Procedure

Participants completed the survey online, which took approximately 30 minutes. When participants did not answer a question, data was treated as missing and analyses were completed without the participant for that question. Mental health resources were provided at the end of the survey.

## 3. Data Analysis

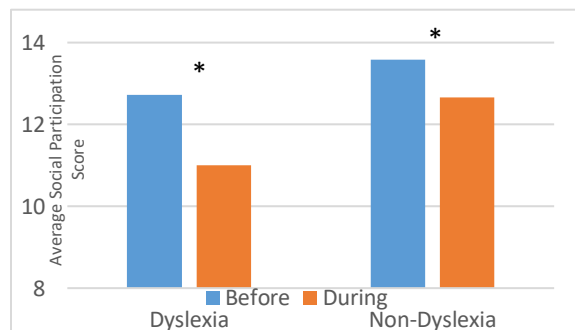
Descriptive analysis of the demographic and emotional factors was completed in JASP<sup>34</sup> and Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 28 (SPSS)<sup>35</sup>. Non-parametric tests were chosen because of design and statistical consideration like Likert scales, the increased likelihood of non-normality, unequal sample sizes and the subsequent violations of homogeneity of variance. The Mann-Whitney and Wilcoxon Sign non-parametric tests compared between groups and time periods, respectively. The Spearman's Rho correlation was used for relationships within groups.

## 4. Results

The sample consisted of primarily English first language speakers, living in Alberta. Most participants in the RI group and the non-RI group were single (56%; 74%, respectively). Most participants in the RI group and the non-RI group were European (72%; 68%, respectively).

### 4.1. Hypothesis 1

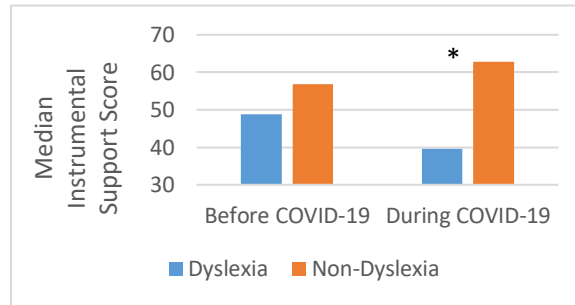
The reported *p*-values correspond to a directional test. Social participation significantly decreased for both participants without RI (Median before pandemic = 13.50; Median during pandemic = 12.00, *p* = .026) and participants with RI (Median before pandemic = 13.00; Median during pandemic = 10.50, *p* = .002) (see Figure 1).



**Fig.1. Social participation for adults with and without RI (Non-RI) before and during COVID-19. \* Significant effect  $p < 0.05$ .**

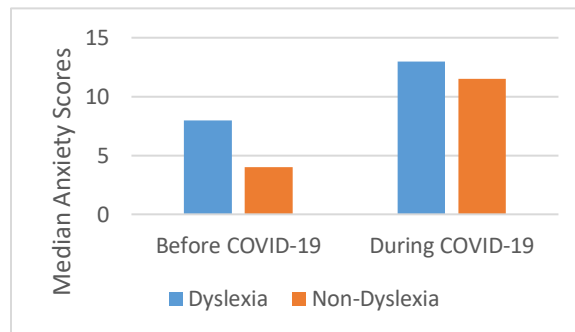
#### 4.2. Hypothesis 2

Adults in the RI group reported less instrumental (i.e., tangible or physical) support during the pandemic (Median = 39.65) than adults without RI (Median = 62.80;  $p = .007$ ; Figure 2).



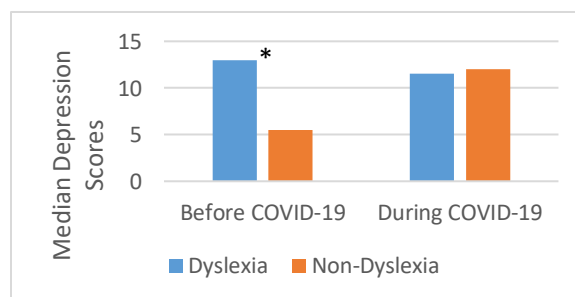
**Fig.2. Instrumental support for adults with and without RI before and during COVID-19. \* Significant effect  $p < 0.05$ .**

During the pandemic, adults without RI reported increased anxiety levels (Median<sub>before</sub> = 4.00, Median<sub>during</sub> = 11.50), as did adults with RI (Median<sub>before</sub> = 9.50, Median<sub>during</sub> = 13.00), but these results were not statistically significant between groups ( $p_{\text{before}} = .36$ ;  $p_{\text{during}} = .10$ ; Figure 3).



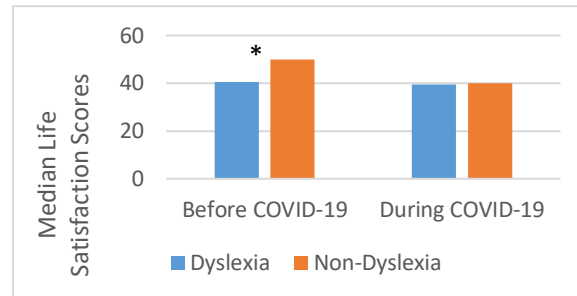
**Figure 3. Reported anxiety for adults with and without RI before and during COVID-19.**

Adults with RI reported greater depression scores (Median = 13.00) in comparison to adults without RI (Median = 5.00,  $p = .041$ ), before the pandemic only (Figure 4).



**Figure 4. Depression scores for adults with and without RI before and during COVID-19. \* Significant effect  $p < 0.05$ .**

Adults with RI reported lower life satisfaction scores (Part A) (Median = 40.45), in comparison to adults without RI (Median = 49.30) before the pandemic only ( $p = .030$ ; Figure 5).



**Figure 5. Life satisfaction (Part A) scores for adults with and without RI before and during COVID-19. \* Significant effect  $p < 0.05$ .**

### 4.3. Hypothesis 3

In general, adults who had higher social participation during the pandemic also had higher scores on the life satisfaction questionnaire ( $r_s = .319$ ,  $p = .026$  on part A;  $r_s = .304$ ,  $p = .040$  on part B), as well as on the emotional ( $r_s = .501$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and instrumental support scales ( $r_s = .466$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Loneliness was significantly negatively correlated only with social participation before the pandemic ( $r_s = -.358$ ,  $p = .011$ ; i.e., as loneliness increased, social participation decreased)

## 5. Discussion

We explored changes in social participation and the factors that are related to social participation, before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, for adults with and without RI. Four major findings emerged. All participants reported decreased social participation during the pandemic, and adults with RI reported greater depression scores and lower life satisfaction scores (part A), compared to adults without RI, before the pandemic only. Adults with RI reported less instrumental support during the pandemic compared to adults without RI. Thirdly, we found that participants who engaged in increased social participation during the pandemic, regardless of reading abilities, had higher life satisfaction scores, higher emotional support scores, and higher instrumental support scores. Loneliness was significantly negatively correlated with social participation for all participants before the pandemic only. The implications of these findings in the context of the buffer model are discussed below.

### *Social Participation, Depression, and Instrumental Support: Negative Impacts of Pandemic*

Adults with RI engaged in less social participation, compared to adults without RI, which is supported by previous work<sup>1,19,20,21</sup>. This finding was previously ascribed to increased social anxiety and depression, and social barriers such as invalidation of RIs by society. Individuals with RI in the current study also reported greater levels of depression (and anxiety, although not statistically significant) compared to skilled readers. In the context of the buffer model, social support can serve as a protective factor against life crises and facilitate adaptations to life changes. One could predict that increased social participation would be associated with better adaptation to such changes. As such, resources/remediation that target social participation for adults with disabilities is a potential avenue of rehabilitation that may mitigate the disparate short- and long-term effects resulting from life crises. Notably, recent work on the buffer model has further underscored that the quality of relationships is pivotal to the effectiveness of the

protective properties<sup>36</sup>. This warrants the exploration of the quality and quantity of social participation during the pandemic.

Interestingly, while adults with RI had higher rates of depression (i.e., pre-pandemic) compared to non-RI individuals, the rate of depression did not change as a function of the pandemic. This finding extended to life satisfaction. This is contrary to previous work that linked the physical restrictions of the pandemic to an increase in depression and anxiety symptoms in individuals with learning and intellectual disabilities<sup>17</sup>. It is well-established that higher reports of depression and negative emotional experiences are common among individuals with disabilities<sup>4,5,21,37,38</sup> and our findings represent a chronic state of poor well-being. In contrast, depression scores of adults without RI increased as a function of the pandemic, while life satisfaction scores decreased. This implies that for adults with RI, 'baseline' levels of depression and life satisfaction were sufficiently poor prior to the pandemic, therefore a significant life crisis did not change these levels. This points to a chronic state of depression that warrants substantial investigation and remediation.

Second, adults without RI saw a marked increase in depression scores, and a marked decrease in life satisfaction, signifying an acute bout of mental health challenges that warrant intervention. These findings beg the question about impacts on mental health between stability in a negative state vs. a change from a comparatively better state to one that is more negative. Longitudinal reports of life satisfaction in both groups would help us understand the extent to which the situational impact of the pandemic lingers.

Adults with RI reported less instrumental support during the pandemic compared to adults without RI. Previous literature pointed to the positive impact of instrumental support in individuals with RI in adulthood, through the provision of guidance and emotional support from others<sup>37</sup>. A decrease in instrumental support for individuals with RI during the pandemic could be related to a lack of availability and/or an avoidance to reach out for support for fear of stigmatization. Instrumental support is beneficial for both individuals with and without RI and providing increased access may produce significant improvements in overall wellbeing.

#### *Relationships with Social Participation: Life Satisfaction, Emotional Support, Instrumental Support*

We found that adults who increased their social participation during the pandemic, regardless of reading history, reported increased life satisfaction, and emotional and instrumental support. Previously, adults with RI who sought several forms of social support (i.e., instrumental support from therapists/family physicians, emotional support from peers) were successful in life satisfaction, education, and employment<sup>37</sup>. This finding is significant as much of the pre-pandemic literature concluded that individuals with learning disabilities had decreased life satisfaction<sup>1,3,4</sup>. Therefore, social participation could be a protective factor for adults with RI during a pandemic. The same may also be true for adults without RI, as increased social engagement during the pandemic was positively correlated with life satisfaction and positive emotions<sup>12</sup>. These findings reinforce the recommendations of the International Classification of Functioning, that social participation plays a vital role in the physical and mental well-being of all individuals, and thus should be a key consideration in holistic treatment modalities.

Interestingly, loneliness scores were negatively correlated with social participation for all participants pre-pandemic only. This is in line with the literature on the inverse relationship between social participation and loneliness<sup>12,13,9</sup>. This relationship did not hold true during the pandemic, which may be due to the extreme and uncertain nature of the type of event. This explanation is supported by the buffer model as the buffering effects of social support do not result in major effects on significant life transitions rather social support primarily aids in the adaptation to these transitions<sup>16</sup>. Others came to the same conclusion when exploring the effects of mediated communication on well-being during the pandemic<sup>12</sup>. Specifically, it was proposed that social support was sought when negative emotions were high, then once



support was obtained, these emotions decrease, resulting in null relationships at certain stages in the pandemic<sup>12</sup>. In the context of our study, participants likely completed the questionnaire at different stages of the support process, eventually balancing out the negative and positive changes in emotions during the pandemic. Another explanation that could apply to our findings is that negative emotions, stemming from an uncontrollable and extreme crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, may be resistant to the effects of the social buffer model<sup>12</sup>. An area of further research that could help us understand this outcome is the exploration of the quality of social participation undertaken by participants. Because our questionnaire did not delve into the qualitative aspects of social relationships, we have insufficient evidence to conclude that social participation was not effective against loneliness during the pandemic.

Overall, our results indicate that there is a need for further research on the similarities and differences between individuals with and without invisible disabilities. The implications for healthcare professionals are far-reaching, as mental health professionals working with individuals with invisible disabilities need to consider the quality vs. quantity of social participation, the acute vs. chronic effects of mental health, and the access to/willingness to seek out instrumental support, to name a few. Focusing on methods to increase instrumental support may lead to increased wellbeing for adults with RI. It is worthwhile to determine how social support can be used as a tool to increase instrumental support in adults with RI, and how we can increase life satisfaction for typical readers, as life satisfaction and symptoms of depression changed significantly for these individuals.

## **6. Conclusions**

Understanding the impact of a pandemic on social and mental health factors is imperative, specifically for individuals with invisible disabilities. Overall, our findings suggest that social participation decreased during the pandemic for both individuals with and without RI. Adults with RI are at a higher risk of experiencing decreased instrumental support and had been experiencing heightened depression symptoms and decreased life satisfaction before the pandemic, in comparison to adults without RI. Though some individuals with RI may have been reticent about their personal experiences with RI prior to the pandemic due to fears of stigmatization, this survey ultimately revealed the contrast between the emotional states of individuals with and without this invisible disability. The exploration of factors that can ameliorate and exacerbate the socioemotional health of individuals with RI is scarce and this paper serves to create more discussions about factors. Lastly, these findings have hopefully provided insight for professionals working with individuals who may/may not have an invisible disability regarding potential protective factors against the negative social and emotional consequences of a pandemic.

## **Acknowledgments**

We thank Prof. Helen WARD, Dr. Christina ATCHISON and the research team in the Patient Experience Research Centre (PERC) of Imperial College London, School of Public Health for permission to use their survey instrument. Imperial College London, in turn, thanks Prof. Kin On KWOK, Ms. Wan In WEI, Prof. Samuel Yeung Shan WONG and the research team in the Division of Infectious Diseases of JC School of Public Health and Primary Care, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, China for permission to use their survey instrument and translating it into English ([https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/7/20-0500\\_article](https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/7/20-0500_article)).

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**The Shamrock and the Thistle: The Impact of Scottish and Irish Settlers on  
Their communities in Saskatchewan, 1905-1929**

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This paper's purposes are to explore in the impact that Irish and Scottish had on their communities in Saskatchewan between 1905 and 1929, to further the understanding of the social and cultural changes brought about by their involvement in their communities, and the struggles they faced before, during and after the war years in terms of the adjustments they had to make on many fronts. Through the examination of historical documents as well as pursuing genealogical aspects of the lives of Irish and Scottish settlers, this project adds to our knowledge about the growth of the province, the communities they developed, and those who lived here.

The history of the creation, development and growth of a province has been the focus of numerous essays, papers, theses and books. While broad exploration of the history of Saskatchewan has been fairly well established, what has been neglected is the contributions of two groups of people to the province, that of the Irish and the Scottish. What this project sets out to explore is the importance of examining the role of both Irish and Scottish in Saskatchewan between 1905 when the province was established and 1929 before the great depression of the 1930s. Furthermore, the purpose of this project is to point out potential gaps in and places where the historiography of Saskatchewan still needs further examination. It is believed that by placing Irish and Scottish immigrants in their communities and their participation in the social and cultural aspects of society, it will add to a greater understanding of how these groups created a positive contribution to rural and urban Saskatchewan's sociocultural growth. The themes discussed in this thesis are significant to the understanding of the topic of how Irish and Scottish immigrants impacted the communities they settled in. These themes include topics such as immigration, education, the economy, politics and gender issues, and of equal importance to establishing themselves, the networks they developed in a community. However, the themes that are in this current project are not explored in as much depth as they should be, but show a general understanding of support networks for communities and the Scots and Irish involvement in them.

While the texts examined as part of the historiography of the thesis are valuable, they fail to explore in depth why the contributions of these two groups are important in terms of the overall development of the province. When it comes to the theme of immigration, within the context of British emigrants, settlers of Scottish and Irish origin, or their descendants, were considered in available literature as a subset of the broad classification of British, not as separate ethnic groups. An exploratory historiography of immigration/migration of these two groups and the themes that authors have examined is important to understanding the overall impact of immigration and placing Canadian policies in context of the development of Saskatchewan in the early twentieth century. In search for answers to at least part of the question of the impact that Irish and Scots immigrants had on the sociocultural growth of communities in Saskatchewan between 1905 and 1929, the historiography in this area is lacking for either group.

The largest bodies of works found from an historical perspective, are focused predominantly on immigration and the role that the federal government had on who was encouraged to apply. General studies into the establishment of homesteads, and who was considered a preferred immigrant have also been examined by numerous academics. A variety of sources such as family histories written for community history books, exploring local newspapers, and official documents such as the censuses, parliamentary and

official departmental reports, develop a fuller understanding and appreciation for the people, their lives and their involvement in the community.

While there are a few academic authors who have worked in the area of Irish and Scottish settlement in Canada, there seems to be a lack of recent academic writing, particularly in relationship to Western Canada. Extensive work has been published in articles and books on the nineteenth century and emigration from Britain to its colonial branches of the British Empire and the impact that had on where Irish and Scottish people went. For Canada, the eastern part of the country's settlement by Scots and Irish has been well documented. However, any discussion of immigration to Canada in the early twentieth century, and the development of the prairies into provinces, has to begin with the exclusionary immigration policies of Frank Oliver, starting with the Immigration Act of 1906 and further development of these policies with the Immigration Act of 1910.

Any movement in large numbers can be linked to such nineteenth century phenomena as the Great Famine in Ireland, and the removal of crofters from their homes in Scotland. These, combined with an agricultural depression at the end of the nineteenth century, and the impact of the industrial revolution leading to an economic decline for both countries became strong incentives to leave Britain. Part of the drive to bring Irish and Scottish settlers from Britain was directly related to the encouragement of emigration recruiters. Marjory Harper's article (2004), "Enticing the Emigrant: Canadian Agents in Ireland and Scotland, c. 1870-1920", offers considerable analysis of the techniques used by Canadian recruiters to entice Irish and Scottish farmers to go to Canada and specifically to the prairies. The government of Canada waged an intensive promotional campaign to entice people from Ireland, Scotland, England and the United States to Canada. Using posters, pamphlets, presentations and newspaper advertisements in both the United States and Britain, Canada was quite successful in persuading people to emigrate. What was not mentioned in the recruitment process was the challenges that lay ahead for new emigrants.

While some historians have emphasized the occupations available to Irish and Scottish immigrants, the assumption has been that the Irish, especially Catholics, were restricted to manual labour positions, whereas Scottish immigrants were more prominent in business. This assumption has been challenged by Donald Akenson (1996), stating that "The Irish migrants to the various New Worlds were not all Catholic or protestant, not all from Connaught or Munster or Ulster or Leinster, not all working class or rural labourers or domestic servants, or all single women or single men." Those who were not considered to be as desirable were artisans, wealthy unskilled, or who were politically questionable. Further study of who was involved in the trades, and who was involved in manual labour strongly indicates that there were as many Irish in business and Scots in more manual labour jobs according to Canadian census information on occupation, disabusing the assumption that Scots were more inclined to become businessmen than the Irish.

Insight in relation to the historical base of these groups and where they settled, as well as what impact they had on the social, political and cultural growth of their communities in the province is important because as with many of the invisible groups who were lumped together under broad ethnic banners, their contributions are largely ignored. There are numerous publications and journal articles that deal broadly with the question of immigration and who was targeted by recruiters, but not many academics have examined in much detail these two groups, or within the chronological framework of pre-depression years when immigration was at its peak.

The question that comes to mind is why have so many historians predominantly ignored early twentieth century documentation, where there is so much that needs to be understood in the context of the immigrant experience in Canada in general and in particular that of pioneer settlers in a new province such as Saskatchewan? One possibility is that the history of the prairies of Canada as provinces is still relatively new. The three prairie provinces have only existed as such for one hundred and seventeen years. However, within this very short time frame, much has changed. Within the first twenty-four-year period for the three

prairie provinces, the prairies had gone from basic farming using oxen or horse and plow, and transportation by rail to major points, then by cart to the homestead, to mechanized planting and harvesting systems by 1914 with automobiles and some paved roads.

The advent and expansion of the used of mechanized methods for planting and harvesting meant that crews were hired to assist with farming. In addition, Grain Growers Associations in all three provinces as well as the development of co-operatives became a way for farmers to ensure a fair deal when selling their agricultural produce. At the same time there was a shift to city development and businesses, incorporated towns and a telephone system.

To better understand what academics have explored in depth, it will be necessary to filter out who has focused on which group in particular, and who has explored both groups as factors in changes to the political, social, economic and cultural shaping of the province. In terms of analysis of the Scottish experience, there is considerably more literature written than on the Irish. All authors bring out specific themes that are predominant in most available literature and include some personal commentary by individuals that were part of the immigrant experience. (Harper,2004, Waiser, 2007).

Academics who have spent considerable time in analysis of the emigrant movement cover much the same territory for the nineteenth century, of government policy, challenges faced by new immigrants, the shift in settlement and specific development of places with groups. However, so few have examined the Irish in context of immigration/migration to the prairies that there doesn't appear, on the surface, to be much that separates their experiences from those of the Scottish. According to the 1926 census for the prairie provinces, by origin of the population, there were 314,514 Scottish and 233,611 Irish in the province. By comparison for this same census, there were 557,808 English, 138,079 Scandinavian, 169,147 German and 150,506 Ukrainian. What the census doesn't indicate in these numbers is how many were also Canadian or American born. Closer evaluation may show that there were a number of differences between the emigration/migration experiences of Scottish and Irish settlers through in-depth exploration of personal accounts of emigrants. Those differences may have impacted the way that each ethnic group responded to their new surroundings. Where a person settled, the land that was available for homesteading and the success or failure of those homesteads has always been an issue for those who were not used to the conditions of prairie land. Many who settled in Saskatchewan came, not directly from Britain, but through migration across Canada and/or up from the United States. Where they came from coloured their view of how they could connect to others and their experiences within a culturally similar background. An example of this is the experiences of Scots or Irish who were direct immigrants and those who migrated from Eastern Canada. Those who were already in Canada had adapted to the climate, methods of farming and so were more experienced with dryland farming and its challenges than those who came from Scotland or Ireland. What both those who immigrated directly and those who migrated were not expecting was the isolation due to the vast distances between homesteads and towns. Related to the need to connect, there are specific themes that emerged from all writing on both groups. One of the key themes is networking and the importance of accessing groups and organizations in order to aid with establishing connections with others for both business and social relationship and the impact these events had on new settlers.

The development of education within the province and the emphasis on British education had a direct correlation in how the Scottish and Irish played a role in both areas. The impact that World War One had on all settlers and their families, as well as the number of immigrants from Britain in general greatly influenced who emigrated and when. Other areas that lack in-depth research are in the discussion of World War One, especially outmigration of new male settlers, and the impact it and the Spanish Influenza pandemic had on communities, education, economy, and the role of women in the provinces' development. These events and the resettlement policies of the Canadian government through the Empire Settlement Act of 1920, meant that soldiers who returned or were sent to Canada, Australia and New Zealand as emigrants were expected to become the farmers, business men and political leaders that had been lost to war. This

Act shifted the balance of who and how many were able to become settled immigrants based on how many the Government of Canada was willing to accept.

It would appear that any discussion of the experiences of women assumes that because their roles were of wife, mother or child, their experiences are of less value. Since many came with families or were married, much of their story is missing. This is an area that really should be explored further. Most authors of prairie history mention the role of women and their importance, but don't go beyond a few paragraphs of why or what that impact was. Where there is evidence of a woman's influence is the arrival of young, single women who were sent over as domestic servants, teachers and nurses. The impact that women and their organizations had, especially during and after World War One in Canada, and the efforts to successfully bring the vote for women in Saskatchewan and Alberta is another area that needs to be noted more fully.

Education and its development in the province is a theme that is not discussed in any detail when it comes to the exploration of community development, especially in the prairies, and its importance of the very British curriculum for all students. Each province was expected to develop their own curriculum which resulted in each province having diverse requirements depending on the situation. Teachers were, in the beginning, direct immigrants from Britain or from eastern Canada, predominantly Ontario, and for the most part single females, many who were of Irish or Scottish descent. However, by 1913, Saskatchewan was developing and training teachers at the Normal Schools in Regina and Saskatoon, and by 1929 had trained over 2000 teachers. The responsibility for setting up schools was determined through the Provincial legislative act that established Saskatchewan as a province. farmers and businessmen.<sup>5</sup>

Two further themes for both Canada and Saskatchewan that should be examined in much more detail beyond the scope of this project are the role of Scottish and Irish in health care during this time period, and the importance of religion. Changes to medicine and its delivery occurred partially as a result of World War One and the medical issues that were dealt with in combat zones, as well as the Spanish Influenza epidemic at the end of the war, had a major impact on public health care as the country moved forward in the 1920s. The work done by Scottish and Irish settlers in order to have community doctors, and the changes that a push from communities made to public health care in Saskatchewan is vitally important.

## **Methodology**

"Every family study produced by a skilled genealogist provides data for economic, ethnic, political, and social history – genetic trends and social patterns historians need to reweave the fabric of society." (Mills, 2004) The question of how the Irish and Scottish navigated social and cultural challenges, addresses their ability to adapt to their new environment and the importance of belonging to a community. While some communities were fairly homogenous in terms of ethnic origins, most were mixed ethnic settlements. Ties of kinship became exceptionally important in order to offset the sense of isolation many early settlers felt, particularly when an individual or group was separated from others of similar cultural background.

For the purposes of this research, I chose a limited mixed method of quantitative and qualitative methodology. I define limited only in relation to statistical numbers gleaned from the censuses between 1906 and 1929. With a majority of analysis related to a more qualitative methodology. Analysis of the entire census from all five censuses for all districts would have been useful if that was the main focus of this project, but this is not about demographics. There were issues with censuses that precluded the use of them in any depth, including time restraints. The 1906 census only held names of heads of families, his country of birth, and how many persons were male or female within age categories. The 1911 census lists country of birth, racial or tribal origins and religion. The 1916 census continued this trend in determining who was from where for the prairie provinces. The 1921 Census of Canada continued to define a person by race/tribe and religion. There were no changes to the 1926 prairie census that made it different from the 1921 census of Canada. In order to establish where Irish and Scottish settlers were located in the province,



a sample of census data related to demographics was conducted. There were some issues within the censuses, such as the 1911 census for Canada, whereby the writing had faded to obscurity in many pages making it difficult at times to determine the place of birth that a person identified with. On other censuses, the race/tribe of origin or location of birth were crossed out to the point of obliterating that information, again making it difficult to determine which race/tribe they were identified with. Using names found in the quantitative analysis to determine the location of groups of settlers, I was able to find both community histories and small-town newspaper accounts of the involvement of many settlers in a given region. In addition, it is interesting to note the number of intermarriages that appear in the censuses of Irish or Scottish marrying within their own groups, between Irish or Scottish and other western European ethnicities, and between Irish and Scottish members of a community. In order to explore communities where there are relatively large numbers of Irish and Scottish, contact with institutions that could hold records is important. Being able to access the documentary evidence through specialized archives such as the University of Saskatchewan's archives and special collections, or the archives of major centres in the province beyond the Provincial Archives, added to layers of understanding in how these settlers were actively involved in their communities. In Saskatchewan most towns and cities have their own local museum, which also doubles as an archives in some places. These small museums also tell the story of settlers in the province through both written formats and artifacts related to the area the museum is in. Each museum is a physical reminder of what pioneering families used on a daily basis, as well as how a town might have looked at the beginning of its development. In addition, Emails were sent to thirty of these local museums, and roughly half responded to an inquiry of what their museum might contain related to Irish and Scottish settlers for their area. Of those who responded, four of the museums returned a negative response long the lines of having no information. In addition, I posted a request on the Old Saskatchewan Facebook page related to my quest. The response was impressive, though some of those responses related to a family history were inconclusive. Of those who were willing to supply information, further follow-up has been required. The use of social media such as Facebook is another means of acquiring information related to social history connections. It should be noted that while it has its uses, it also has drawbacks, the most important is how much is shared and how accurate it is. Beside the more formal records and documents held by these institutions, newspapers hold the more human side to stories of settler experiences. Most large towns had their own newspapers that covered news from the town and surrounding district. One of the challenges of exploring newspapers, especially from cities, but found in small-town newspapers as well, is a bias against particular ethnic groups and often the activities of a Catholic church was ignored. What is generally missing from smaller newspapers are editorials found in city newspapers. What is equally interesting is coverage of social and cultural events and general news rather than more political issues as found in city papers. The one exception was the war as many young men left their communities and the loss of these men was felt directly. This is a valuable resource that adds layers to the story of how the province developed and the Irish and Scottish impact. What is not available digitally for now are papers from 1920 to 1929.

## **Conclusion**

Through the analytical lens of social history, the use of genealogical methodology and historical analysis combined aids in the reconstruction of every day lives of settlers opens the history of the province further. As one of the many invisible ethnic groups who were lumped together under broad ethnic banners, their contributions are currently ignored. It is the small stories of how involved families were in the growth and development of not only their farms and towns, but how they added to the complexity of the province and its growth that adds another layer to our understanding of the experiences of these specific settlers. Much more needs to be done in this area, but by touching on the main themes, exploring both formal and informal sources of information, a more rounded understanding of the Irish and Scottish in Saskatchewan is developing.

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## **Communalism: Moderate or Critical? Rethinking Africa in the emerging World Order**

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### **Introduction**

Communalism (or communitarianism employed interchangeably) is a socio-political theory that underscores communal living over that of individualist ideals. As a principle of social ordering, particularly in terms of the relationship between the individual and the community, the community's interest is held superior. Although there are other variants of communalism which have been propounded over the years some of which include African socialism by Julius Nyerere, advocated primarily for the people of Tanzania, Negritude by Leopold Senghor, Consciencism by Kwame Nkrumah, Afro-communitarianism chiefly defended by Matolino Bernard, Afro-relational ontology of Thaddeus Metz, etc., my primary objective is to interrogate what I take as the two dominant views of this social theory with the hope of addressing its shortfall. This objective is so crucial in the consideration of how Africa can be an active participant in the global politics particularly in the emerging world order. This study does not dwell on the emerging world order as much as it seeks to investigate the nature of communalism, first in its unrestricted form, and subsequently in its restricted version. This paper argues that both versions are fraught with some difficulties in placing Africa on a good pedestal, particularly in her drive toward meaningfully contributing to the emerging world order. By emerging world order, it is meant a representation of a new spirit or method of cooperation amongst nations of the world directed toward the attainment of sustainability of world peace. The paper further argues that communalism utilizes the critical or rationalist attitude best provides the platform for Africa as a major player in world politics. Two predominant variants of communalism extant in Africa will be discussed.

### **Communalism in its unrestricted form (Radical)**

The work of Mbiti on African Religion and Philosophy, written at the end of the sixth decade of the twentieth century, marked a reference point in literature for Africa as a communal or communitarian state. Having examined African religious beliefs beginning with God through the Spirit and arriving at men, Mbiti presents the place of man, as an individual being within the corpus of the existential reality of Africa. According to him, the individual is a corporate being without which he ceases to be an individual. Mbiti writes.

*In traditional life, the individual does not and cannot exist alone except corporately. He owes his existence to other people, including those of past generations and his contemporaries. He is simply part of the whole. The community must therefore make, create or produce the individual; for the individual depends on the corporate group. Physical birth is not enough: the child must go through rites of incorporation so that it becomes fully integrated into the entire society<sup>33</sup>.*

From the above, there may be no individual, in traditional African conception according to Mbiti, independent of the social environment which produces him. This is commonality of a preponderant

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<sup>33</sup> Mbiti, J. S. 1969. *African religions and philosophy*. London: Heinemann. 108.

magnitude. Mbiti sums up this position in a cardinal point namely, 'I am, because we are, and since we are, therefore I am'<sup>34</sup>.

An affirmation of radical communalism is equally expressed by Jomo Kenyatta when he asserts that in "Gikuyu ways of thinking, nobody is an isolated individual. Or rather, his uniqueness is a secondary fact about him; first and foremost, he is several people's relative and several people's contemporary...individualism and self-seeking were ruled out.... The personal pronoun 'I' was used very rarely in public assemblies. The spirit of collectivism was [so] much ingrained in the mind of the people"<sup>35</sup>.

Although Kenyatta did not express his communal concern in the famous cliché, his position substantially pre-empted Mbiti's four years later. Menkiti, years later, re-echoed this idea when he argues that the African communal universe is ontologically prior to the individual pointing to the ontological derivativeness of individuals. He maintains that, "the reality of the communal world takes precedence over the reality of the individual life histories, whatever these may be. [For him], it is the community which defines the person as person, not some isolated static quality of rationality, will, or memory..."<sup>36</sup>.

Gyekye agrees with the theses of Mbiti and Menkiti and unequivocally perceives them as candidates for providing the ideological groundwork for African socialism represented in the works of Leopold Senghor, Kwame Nkrumah, and Julius Nyerere. All these are a strong affirmation of the African communitarian social arrangement which conceives of the self as embedded or constitutive of its ends involving the conception of the common good and shared meaning. This implies that the idea of self-determination of an individual, independent of the conception of the intrinsic good, and the autonomy of the individual to potentially and rationally revise his projects are considered a social absurdity. This temperament towards communalism Gyekye considers misleading and attempts to proffer an alternative which he calls 'restricted or moderate' communalism

### **Communalism in its restricted form (Moderate)**

Gyekye attempts to reconstruct a model of communalism which elevates the condition of the individual within the conception of the African communal universe. Implied in this position is a restricted version that acknowledges the rationality, intrinsic worth and dignity of the individual, while appreciating his/her responsibility to the attainment of goals and tasks. Considering the relationship between the individual and the community, he advocates a position that recognizes them as having a 'status of equal moral standing'<sup>37</sup>. In the pursuance of this, Gyekye invokes certain African proverbs, particularly in the Akan language, which suggest that, though Africa is communal, an individual's responsibility and initiatives needed to attain his goals and ends are not completely ruled out. According to him, proverbial such as, "Life is as you make it yourself" or "It is by individual effort that we can struggle for our heads", and that "The lizard does not eat pepper for the frog to sweat"<sup>38</sup> are all indicative of the initiatives and expectations of the individual in the attainment of his/her goals in social environment.

By these statements, the idea of an individual's efforts in the exercise of autonomy is forthwith revealed. This, in a way, presents an account of causality as a prevalent condition of an individual's self-determination particularly in relation to the proposition "as you lay your bed, so you lie on it". The fulfilment of our needs

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<sup>34</sup> Mbiti, J. S. 1969 108-109.

<sup>35</sup> The radical form of communitarianism, though has been hitherto expressed by Mbiti, is equally underscored by (Jomo Kenyatta, 1965: 188 & 297. Gyekye, in attempting to formulate a moderate version, distinguishes his conception of communalism from those of the radicals as contained in his work *Tradition and modernity*, 36).

<sup>36</sup> Ifeanyi Menkiti (1984), 171-180, discusses the reality of African communal experience and the idea of personhood as acquired. It is equally contained in Gyekye, K. 1997. 1997: 37.

<sup>37</sup> Gyekye, K.1997. 41.

<sup>38</sup> Gyekye, K.1997. 40-41.

and goals in life largely depends on the responsibility an individual takes towards his condition. Our lives are defined by certain conditions of continuous struggles involving success, failures, frustration, and expectations, which require individual's responsibility and accountability for reasonable attainment of his/her well-being. Gyekye summarizes his restricted or moderate version of communalism roughly in the following lines.

*The view seems to represent a clear attempt to come to terms with the natural sociality as well as the individuality of the human person. It requires recognizing the claims of both communality and individuality and integrating individual desires and social ideals and demands...But, in view of the fact that neither can the individual develop outside the framework of the community nor can the welfare of the community as a whole dispense with the talents and initiative of its individual members, I think that the most satisfactory way to recognize the claims of both communality and individuality is to ascribe to them the status of an equal moral standing<sup>39</sup>.*

Underlying this assumption is an individual who is responsible for his ends, particularly in ways continuous struggles are defined by a commitment to, and fulfillment of these goals and tasks. However, there may not be a fulfillment of an individual's goals or self-determination outside the enabling environment provided by the community. This is in two ways: either the community provides a credible environment for the individual's autonomy to thrive, or the individual's autonomy will not thrive unless and until it is brought under state perfectionism or recognition of the intrinsic goods. Both ways appear to stifle the idea of autonomy. Moreover, how the tenets of the restricted version of communalism would be achieved remains a dubious claim if examined within the position which, according to Oladipo, denies limit to self-sacrifices and the extent an individual is willing to take full moral responsibilities<sup>40</sup>. Gyekye, in a discourse of supererogationism and the nature of moral conduct, writes as follows.

*"...What all this means surely is that the field of our moral acts should be left open: the scope of our moral responsibilities should not be circumscribed. The moral life, which essentially involves paying regard to the needs, interests, and well-being of others, already implies self-sacrifice and loss, that is, in my view, no need, therefore, to place limits on the form of the self-sacrifice and, hence the extent of our moral responsibilities<sup>41</sup>.*

If there is no limit to the call of moral duty and responsibility one may have toward the other, it can be deduced that the moderate version is not as moderate or restricted as it is presented and so not different from its radical model particularly in the idea of unrestricted self-sacrifice and moral responsibilities as prescribed in the last part of the above quote. Moreover, it might be argued that if the communitarian principle, both in its unrestricted and restricted versions, discourages an individual's right to rational revisability, then ascribing status of equal moral standing between the individual and the community seems inappropriate. This resonates a sort of conspiracy theory advocated by the restricted-minded communitarians for such a position cannot be committed to individuality in a sense relating to their conclusion. In the absence of a liberalist outlook to this debate, an individual cannot be recognized as having any moral standing in the first place. A new understanding of communalism must then supplant its present version to place Africa on the right path toward the emerging world order.

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<sup>39</sup> Gyekye, K.1997. 41.

<sup>40</sup> Oladipo, O. 2009. 121.

<sup>41</sup> Gyekye, K.1997. 73.

## Critical Communalism

Communalism, in these two variants, seems to be committed to ‘undifferentiated holism’ suggesting that the individual is located in the mix and concealed in the blanket of collective identity resulting in a consciously dependent, intimidated, self-degrading individual with little or no inkling to self-determination and having a complete loss of dignity and identity. In order to reconstruct communalism to provide a viable template for Africa as a credible political actor in the world arena, this paper finds useful intellectual resources in the works of Karl Popper and Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger. Popper first alludes to this axiom as early as in his 1932 publication, *Open Society* under the rubrics of ‘the revolt against reason’, with this theme recurring in his later works such as *Myth of the Framework*, *Conjectures and Refutations*, *Logic of Scientific Discovery*, etc. The rationalist or critical attitude, prevalent in Popper’s work, admits that “*I may be wrong, and you may be right, and by an effort, we may get nearer to the truth*”. ‘Critical rationalism’ is an attempt to provide a common path between two opposing forms of authoritarianism that have defined rationalist discourse such as in science and society. Within the discourse of politics, scholarship has focused on the sort of relationship that may exist between the self and the community with minimal success. A major aspect of this concern refers to the rights the individual has to self-realization and rational revisability of ends without being unnecessarily sucked-in by communal ethos and principles (an individual unencumbered by social circumstances), on the one hand and the quest for a sustainable social order on the other. Either of these extremes is capable of engendering a form of authoritarianism, perhaps dogmatism of the community and relativism of the individual. A major concern of Popper’s philosophy then is to unveil a thesis that seeks to curb the excesses in the sciences and the society in a formulation of a rationalist or critical attitude required of every rational being involving the interrogation of the world as an individual on the one hand, and for the society to cede her values and practices to further strictures on the other. The method of rationalist attitude which describes all rational discussion is that which utilizes the ideals of criticism toward resolutions of our problems. This, for Popper, is to argue that the growth of knowledge consists in conjectures and refutations of our hypotheses, theories, and traditions involving subjecting every attempt at solving problems to severe criticism. With such a bold attempt at solving problems often checked by a series of criticism, no authority remains an authority anymore both in science and socio-political environment. An individual can no longer see him/herself as an atomized, impenetrable windowless self nor should the community insist on its feature of perfectionism; for either of these can at best lead to a state of dysfunctional bureaucracy. Contrarily, both must relinquish their authorities since human fallibilism is a given, but the need for a critical attitude is a requirement of truth for it is in the awareness of our fallibility and deliberate criticism of solutions to our problem that we move nearer the truth. Although the pursuit of truth is a commitment, achieving it is a myth. No wonder Popper maintains that clarity and distinctiveness are not clear criteria of truth, but obscurity and confusion are indicators of error<sup>42</sup>.

How then should this attitude impart on our practices, attitudes, values, and traditions? How can an individual, though embedded in social values, distance himself from them? Popper invites us to consider the tradition of the Greeks, which over the years, can be said to inform the rationalist tradition. In the consideration of tradition as myths according to Popper, the ancient Greek philosophers did not just replicate the thoughts and myths of the primitive and pre-scientific mythmakers by accepting their religious traditions uncritically. On this score, Popper argues for an analysis of tradition involving an attitude of discussing and challenging the matter in order to accept or reject the myth which is in contention. This is to suggest that the understanding and explanation of nature are usually formulated as myths and the rationalist tradition requires that a myth is challenged and discussed not necessarily to supplant the tradition of mythmaking for the outcome of this is represented by another myth, but to eliminate the taboos embedded in them. Eliminating taboos embedded in our myths then requires the adoption of the tradition of a critical attitude toward them involving telling the myth first, understanding them, then discussing and challenging them with the view to improving upon them. This then presupposes that, theories in science, as well as

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<sup>42</sup> Stefano, G. 2009. 3.

traditions, are mere guesses and hypotheses involving myths that must be constantly discussed, challenged, and revised. Just as in the natural sciences, social sciences ought to entrench a tradition of critically discussing the myth involving a process of interrogating a story or narrative handed on but accompanied by a second-order tradition of criticism which is, in itself, a myth. Often, this rationalist tradition entails that the man to whom a myth is handed on, reserves the right to criticize it in order to improve on what has been handed on to him. He, in turn, hands-on the myth upon the same clear mandate. A continuous and sustaining attitude of discussing and challenging a myth in this manner over time draws us nearer to the truth though it may, by an inch, elude us. This then is the basis for the rationalist tradition<sup>43</sup>.

The critical attitude described above, forming an integral part of the ontology of the individual dictated by the rational nature of man, is very important in the reconstruction of communalism. Rationality, though essential to the being of the individual, does not only define the constitution of this ontology, for a community of rational people can still be oblivious of the conditions applicable for sociality. Sociality does not just emerge because there are rational people in a community, nor is it manifested solely on the account that an individual is born into society; a process over which he possesses no control. These conditions are not sufficient, though necessary. Such a community constituted under the conditions described above can at best produce a community of people who are rationally sensitive to, but socially intolerant of one another. Another crucial element seems necessary for the proper unveiling of a community whose sensibilities would provide a win-win situation between it and its members in such a manner as to make common good less controversial. A reconstituted order must equally utilize the resources of dialogue that is capable of engendering credible sociality culminating in the enthronement of critical or rational communalism for Africa. This paper now turns to Ratzinger's principle of rational dialogue as a blueprint, in addition to the above, for the appreciation of critical communalism.

Ratzinger asserts that prior to any dialogue is the recognition of the individual who, in his 'individualness', possesses a being that is distinctive from the other. This is to affirm the ontological precedence of the individual in such a way as to deduce a mind free from all constraints and encumbrances external to it. It is then upon this clear understanding of an individual with ontological independence and separateness that meaningful dialogue can emerge amongst two interlocutors who are persuaded by the interior master namely, "truth" in order to reach consensus. In dialogue, Ratzinger avers that the art of listening is fundamental. To listen implies to be open to the reality of other things or people, knowing, acknowledging, and allowing them to step into one's realm of being. The idea of mutuality and reciprocity here potentially leads to the unity of beings of interlocutors in a process in which the "I" of the individual is now concealed and suppressed. Cardinal to a process of aggregating individuals in the society in their bid to reach consensus is the place of truth. Obedience to this interior master, and being guided and purified by it, unify the society and through this, credible interactions and sociality are achieved, Ratzinger concludes. The absence of it forecloses such relationality and makes a community a congregation of the deaf, and so, efforts toward social cohesion<sup>44</sup> becomes a mirage.

Critical communalism then derives from the tradition of critical rationalism involving the embracement of the rationalist attitude which describes all rational discussion in the African communal universe while employing the ideals of criticism toward the resolutions of African problems. The core beliefs of critical communalism must then include an attitude that recognizes and holds as sacrosanct the willingness to listen to critical argumentations with a view to eliminating or reducing the excesses of the individual on the one hand, and the ceding of communal ethos and norms to public scrutiny as the case is warranted without jeopardizing the commonality of the people on the other. It is an explicit formulation of a process involving

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<sup>43</sup> Popper, K. 1963. 120-135.

<sup>44</sup> Ratzinger, C. J. 1995. *The Nature and Mission of Theology*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, pp. 31-39

openness to the reality of others supported by mutual reciprocity ultimately conducing to the unity of beings and credible sociality.

### **Conclusion: Rethinking Africa in the emerging world order**

World order is defined as the “governing arrangements” amongst states on the one hand, and a consideration of the socio-political conditions within a state on the other<sup>45</sup>. Reading from Sorensen, Fukuyama conceives the new world order to imply the unveiling of liberalism which would translate to the embracement of peaceful cooperation amongst nations of the world, enhancement of security and order, reinvention of common values, and a life of well-being for the peoples of the world<sup>46</sup>. However, the experiences of the post-cold war, within the last thirty or more years, have shown otherwise. These experiences have substantially defined the outlook of our world according to two major orientations, particularly in terms of the theoretical consideration of the debate concerning the world order. While the liberalist predicted the possibility of global cooperation, convergence, and shared values, the skeptical realists argue that the elimination of perceived common enemy which provided for the enthronement of socio-economic freedom would result in fresh hostility between old allies. Everything around us seems to point toward this direction. In addition, Samuel Huntington avers that a form of liberal universalism flaunted by the liberal democracies would ultimately engender imperialism, producing a clash of civilization between the West and “the others”, thereby creating some implications for the emerging world order.

The shaping of Africa in terms of her readiness in the emerging world order requires a re-examination of the condition of ‘Fragile States’, involving frail economies and policies with corrupt and incompetent political actors. Toward this direction, I note that the existential problems confronting Africa are internally induced as much as the handful caused from outside of Africa. I do not intend to dwell on the significant effects of colonialism and slavery as conditions imposed on Africa for doing so would be tantamount to saying very little. The stagnancy of Africa in terms of its political inactiveness in the international arena is considerably reverberated by its state of governance. At the core of democratic governance is an affirmation of the rights and well-being of the people without which democracy loses its glamour. The failure of leadership on the African continent has heralded untold hardship and provided a fertile ground for a severe condition of deprivation to flourish leaving its people in a despicable state of depersonalized normlessness. Reading through a text by a unanimous writer concerning democracy in Africa, I note that there is a gross misconception of democracy, particularly in the underlying assumption that everyone in a democratic setting is a critical individual. This is not so since the contrary is the case in most democracies in Africa. If democracy is a government driven by the people, then it is assumed that the people must be critical for it to be rational. This is very pivotal in an electioneering process that is often marked with fraud. The Democratic process would be more credible and justified in Africa if its populace for whom it is sought were better enlightened. The internal cause of the African condition is then obvious in the dearth of the rationalist attitude among Africans in interrogating their conditions involving their traditions and policies. A capacity for individuals to interrogate the myth of tradition which seems to stifle spirit of enlightenment, must inundate Africans’ consciousness for Africa to ascend a level of credible political activeness in world politics. This, I believe, would provide valuable resources for Africa in the emerging world order

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<sup>45</sup> Sorensen, G. 2016. *Rethinking the new world order*, 1

<sup>46</sup> Francis Fukuyama conception of the new world order is equally contained in Sorensen, G 2016, 1



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## The Effect of Ownership Structure on Leverage of the Listed Companies in Oman

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### Abstract:

*Financial scandals have shaken the world and call all stakeholders to keep an eye on a firm's capital structure decisions. It is imperative for businesses to keep an optimal capital structure to avoid any type of capital cost and maximize a firm's market value. The best mix of debt and equity financing offers a variety of benefits to firms. Strong corporate governance is accepted as a robust mechanism to keep an optimal capital structure. Under corporate governance mechanism ownership structure works as a controlling mechanism to monitor and control management activities and decisions about capital structure. This study explored the influence of ownership structure on a firm's leverage. The objective of this study is to examine the relationship between ownership structure and leverage. Government ownership, foreign ownership, and domestic ownership are used as proxies of ownership structure in this paper. While debt to asset ratio is used to determine the leverage level of a company. The study used panel data of non-financial companies listed on the Muscat stock exchange from 2016 to 2019. The result of the study indicates that government ownership works as an important tool to control leverage in the context of Oman. Whereas foreign ownership and domestic ownership do not show any association with leverage. The findings of this study suggest that government ownership is an effective tool to lower leverage levels, especially for those firms which are highly exposed to bankruptcy. Thus, this provides a clear picture of corporate governance mechanism effectiveness in lowering and controlling leverage.*

**Keywords:** *Government ownership, foreign ownership, domestic ownership, leverage*

### 1. Introduction

Financial scandals have diverted the stakeholder's attention towards the need for a strong corporate governance structure. Conflict of interest between shareholders and managers has been identified as one of the main issues which influence business structure (Wellalage & Locke, 2015). Thus, a strong corporate governance mechanism is required to mitigate the risk of agency costs. Agency theory suggests that ownership structure could be used to moderate and neutralize the conflict of interest between managers and shareholders (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Ownership structure determines the organizational structure of the corporation and different shareholdings parts play a different function in corporate governance. Thus, the firm's capital structure choice depends on who controls the firm (Gurusamy, 2018). Ownership structure plays a prime role in corporate governance as it supports decision-makers to spend efforts on enhancing the corporate governance system. In many developed countries, the ownership structure is highly dispersed but in developing countries with an ineffective and developing legal system, the ownership structure has a high concentration (Al-matari et al., 2017).

Many types of research have been conducted to study the relationship between corporate governance and capital structure in developed countries as well as developing countries (El-Habashy, 2018). Mostly, the studies cover board composition, board size, CEO duality, board characteristics with firm performance, and capital structure (AlHares et al., 2019; Chin & Zakaria, 2018; Fernandez et al., 2013; Khan & Wasim, 2016; Kyere & Ausloos, 2020; Mwambuli, 2018; Njuguna & Obwogi, 2015; Purag & Abdullah, 2016; Tarus & Ayabei, 2016; Tawfeeq et al., 2018; Thakolwiroj & Sithipolvanichgul, 2021). The research on ownership structure is limited, specifically in the Oman context. In recent years, two studies

have been conducted to study the relationship between ownership structure and financial performance (Al-matari et al., 2017; Yilmaz, 2018) but the relationship between ownership structure with capital structure is less explored. The ownership structure of Omani listed companies is interested because of its unique nature and types of structure in Oman. This includes government ownership, foreign ownership, and domestic (Omani) ownership.

The main objective of this study is to expand the body of knowledge on the ownership structure and leverage. A paper serves to communicate an original contribution to the research community about how leverage is influenced by ownership structure. The first section of this paper focuses on the introduction of ownership structure and leverage. An overview of the prior literature, discussion on the theoretical framework, and hypothesis development are discussed in section two. Section three provides the details about the sample, measurement of variables, and research design. Section four presents the results and findings, and finally, section five focuses on the summary and conclusion.

## **2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development**

### **2..1 Government Ownership and Leverage**

In many emerging countries where systems are not fully privatized and the state tends to invest heavily in listed firms, for political or other reasons, government ownership can be considered as an influential factor that affects firm decisions in general and specifically on firm leverage (Shahzad & Amin, 2017). Researchers suggest that government ownership is negatively related to leverage for three reasons. First, firms with a high percentage of government ownership may have a better position and gain more public confidence, and able to get more equity through initial public offering because they usually have less chance of insolvency due to the guarantee of the government. Second, representatives of government ownership might prefer a low level of leverage in order to avoid unnecessary pressure from lenders. Third, agency problems between owners and managers tend to be less severe in firms with a high level of government ownership because the public relies on government organizations (Fayez et al., 2019). Moreover, government involvement in the ownership structure allows better access to the capital market (Hermassi et al., 2015).

Khaki and Akin (2020), studied the relationship between government ownership and leverage in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries with a total of 329 non-financial firms' data from the period 2009 to 2017. The finding suggests that government ownership affects the leverage negatively on the data collected from GCC countries, which means that increase in government ownership will provide better opportunities to firms for equity financing, and as a result, firms are less dependent on debt financing. In addition, Huang et al. (2018), reported an inverse relationship between government ownership and leverage on Chinese listed firms.

On the other hand, Amin et al. (2019), reported major influences on leverage from the selected G-20 economies with 252 state-owned and 6503 nonstate-owned firms for the period 2011–2015. An increase in government ownership is also providing a high level of protection to creditors due to which creditors lend more debt with high government holdings firms. Moreover, Fayez et al. (2019), reported no association between government ownership and the leverage of top 50 non-financial firms listed in the Egyptian stock exchange from 2012 to 2017.

In Oman, the government has a considerable number of shares in listed firms in different industries, such as basic materials, telecommunications, oil and gas, and financial service (Elghuweel, 2015). The government involvement in listed firms is high which makes it desirable to test this relationship in the context of Oman. Thus, to study the leverage of Omani listed firms is interesting and it is imperative to find the government ownership influence on it. Thus, based on the above discussion the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 1: There is a significant negative relationship between government ownership and leverage.**

## **2.2 Foreign Ownership and Leverage**

Foreign ownership refers to the percentage of shares owned by foreign investors. Foreign ownership is considered the most important part of the ownership structure that affects the capital decisions of firms (Thota & Griridhar, 2016). There are key arguments for the relationship between foreign capital and funding choice. Firstly, some studies provide evidence of the positive impact of foreign investment on the level of debt because asymmetric information was a big problem for foreign investors, so using more debt is a good way to improve the monitoring role. Information disadvantages for foreign owners are also found in the studies (Mansur, 2018). Furthermore, foreign investors tend to minimize their risks, at both micro and macro levels, by improving firm operation and management through contributing technology and the ability to acquire cheaper sources of debt (Thai, 2019). The risk of information asymmetric is higher for foreign investors because of distance and language obstacles. This may suggest that they may require greater disclosure in order to reduce information asymmetric and monitor managements' actions. In this aspect domestic firms with foreign investors are motivated to increase leverage to check the position of leverage by a third party (Fayez et al., 2019).

Contrary to above, an inverse relationship between foreign ownership with leverage is reported in the literature in a different business environment. (Pham & Nguyen, 2019). It is assumed that the firms with higher foreign ownership perform better than firms with domestic ownership by keeping an optimal capital structure (Sivathaasan, 2013). Thai (2019), suggested that an increase in foreign ownership in capital structure will help to control the debt ratio on listed companies at the Vietnamese stock market. Chatterjee et al. (2019), reported that foreign ownership reduces the cost of debt which is due to a decrease in debt level as well. Moreover, Bamiatzi et al. (2017) acknowledge that the presence of foreign ownership leads to a reduction in debt level evidenced by Spain and Italy. Furthermore, Gupta et al. (2020), argued that an increase in foreign ownership helps to reduce the leverage of the firm and better performance by maintaining a good mix of debt and equity in the capital structure. Thus, based on discussion the following hypothesis can be proposed:

**Hypothesis 2: There is a significant negative relationship between foreign ownership and firm leverage.**

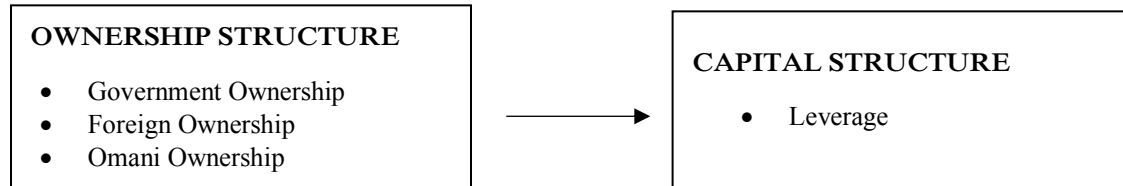
## **2.3 Omani Ownership and Leverage**

The term 'Omani Ownership' is used here to present domestic ownership. Domestic or Omani ownership refers to shares owned by citizens. Muscat securities market and Muscat Clearing and Depository used the term Omani Ownership to define the Domestic Ownership. The domestic ownership structure has significant implications on firm structure and further on its level of leverage (Mallingu et al., 2020). The results of domestic ownership with leverage are still mixed. It is commonly taken that high domestic ownership minimizes the agency problem. A study conducted by Bamiatzi et al. (2017), reported an inverse relationship between domestic ownership and leverage for the period 2002 – 2010 on firms listed in the Italy and Spain stock exchange. Moreover, Setiany et al. (2020) and Sivathaasan (2013) find no association between domestic ownership and leverage.

The relationship between domestic ownership and the use of leverage results is still mixed. This area of research is evidence of less explored in developed and developing countries (Lindemanis et al., 2019). Bamiatzi et al. (2017), argued that domestic ownership minimizes the agency problem, and suggested a negative relationship between domestic ownership and leverage. Similarly, Sivathaasan (2013), reported evidence from Sri Lankan listed firms for the period 2009 – 2011 and argued that an increase in domestic ownership is a helpful tool to control leverage. Whereas, Setiany et al. (2020), is unable to find

any association between domestic ownership and leverage but the study used limited data of 18 companies only. Thus, based on the above discussion it is imperative to test this relationship in developing country context, so the following hypothesis is proposed:

**Hypothesis 3: There is a significant negative relationship between Omani ownership and leverage.**



**Figure 1.** Research Framework - Relationship between ownership structure and leverage

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Sample Size

This study aims to examine the relationship between ownership structure and firm leverage. This study used secondary data gathered from the annual reports of non-financial listed companies at Muscat securities market (MSM) from 2016 to 2019. Using secondary data in research work is considered a valuable tool for developing knowledge, and explaining the research problem (Johnston, 2014). Thus, 291 firm-year observations have been considered for the current study as a sample unit for the period 2016 to 2019. This refers to panel data due to the inclusion of a number of years and a number of firms.

#### 3.2 Measurements

The dependent variable is leverage and it is measured as total debt to total assets. The debt to asset ratio indicates the level of assets financed by debt (Al-Shubiri, 2012). An independent variable is ownership structure which is further divided into government ownership, foreign ownership, and Omani ownership. There are two control variables that are assumed to be constant throughout the analysis. The summary of variables is given in table 1.

**Table 1: Summary of Variables**

Variables	Abbreviation	Description
<b>Dependent Variable – Leverage</b>		
Leverage	LEV	Total Debt divided Total Assets
<b>Independent Variable – Ownership structure</b>		
Government Ownership	GOVOWN	Percentage of government shares
Foreign Ownership	FOWN	Percentage of foreign investors
Omani ownership	OMNOWN	Percentage of Omani shares
<b>Control Variable</b>		
Firm Size	FSZE	Natural log of total assets
Firm Age	FAGE	No. of years since the firm established

#### 3.3 Research Design

It is assumed to have a negative relationship between ownership structure and leverage. To test the hypothesis the following regression model is proposed:

$$LEV_{i,t} = \alpha + \beta GOVOWN_{i,t} + \beta FOWN_{i,t} + \beta OMNOWN_{i,t} + Year\ FE + Industry\ FE + Firm\ FE + \varepsilon_{i,t}$$

Here LEV stands for leverage, which is measured as debt to asset ratio.

a	constant term
$\beta$ :	parameter for the independent variable
Subscript ( <i>i</i> )	number of firms
Subscript ( <i>t</i> )	time
GOVOWN	Government ownership
FOWN	Foreign ownership
OMNOWN	Omani Ownership
Year FE	year fixed effect
Industry FE	industry fixed effect
Firm FE	firm fixed effect

The current study used STATA 15 for statistical analysis of variables and to check the objectives of the study. To solve the problem of outliers, the current study used winsorization of total assets (Lyu, 2015). In order to control the problem of endogeneity, the study used regression analysis with high dimension fixed effect to control the unobserved or omitted firm characteristics which control the firm, year, and industry to provide more accurate results (Correia, 2016). In addition, the Hausman test is performed to select between regression analysis of fixed effect and random effect. The value of the Hausman test is less than 0.05, which recommends a fixed-effect model for the current study data analysis. To assess the normality of data, the skewness and kurtosis test is performed, however, the skewness values are ranged from -0.5 to 0.5 and the kurtosis values are ranged from -1 to 1, which indicated that data is normally distributed (Rani Das, 2016).

## 4. Results and Findings

### 4.1 Descriptive Statistics

The result of descriptive statistics is given in Table 2, which shows the values of mean, median, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum of variables used in this study.

**Table 2: Overall Descriptive Statistical Results**

Variables	N	Mean	Median	Std. Dev.	Min	max
LEV	291	47.58	37.63	40.89	0.34	300.07
GOVOWN	291	10.57	5.90	16.09	0.00	75.26
FOWN	291	25.11	14.14	27.37	0.00	99.33
OMNOWN	291	74.89	85.86	27.37	0.67	100.00
LN_FSZE	291	15.45	16.00	2.55	9.00	20.00
FAGE	291	24.56	22.00	10.06	3.00	45.00

The descriptive statistics show that leverage has a mean value of 47.58. The government ownership with a mean of 10.57 percent, foreign ownership with 25.11 percent of the mean, and Omani ownership mean value is 74.89 percent. These results indicate the mixed ownership structure of listed companies at Muscat Securities Market.

#### 4.2 Regression Result Based on Proposed Hypothesis

The regression result of the proposed hypothesis is shown in table 3. The  $R^2$  of the model is 0.9447 which is considered to be a highly reliable value.

**Table 3** Ownership structure and Leverage

Hypothesis	Variables	Coefficients	Std. Err.	t-statistics	p-value
H1	GOVOWN	-1.745*	0.916	-1.910	0.058
H2	FOWN	-0.118	0.239	-0.500	0.620
H3	LN_OMNOWN	-7.941	11.361	-0.700	0.485
	LN_FSZE	5.042*	2.800	1.800	0.073
	AGE	2.184***	0.734	2.980	0.003
	Firm FE	Yes			
	Year FE	Yes			
	Industry FE	Yes			
<i>R-squared = 0.9339, Adj. R-square = 0.906</i>					

Based on the proposed regression model the result of government ownership shows a significant negative relationship with leverage. This result supported and accepted hypothesis 1. This result confirms the agency theory assumption that ownership structure can be used to restrain the conflict between managers and owners. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Khaki and Akin (2020), Huang et al. (2018), and Hermassi et al. (2015) who found that increase in government ownership helps to reduce the leverage.

Another variable in this study is foreign ownership, which shows a negative relationship with leverage. This result accepts the predicted sign of hypothesis 2, but it is insignificant. The study conducted by Bamiatzi et al. (2017) and Thai (2019) found a significant negative relationship between foreign ownership and leverage. Several researchers suggest that an increase in foreign ownership is helpful in decreasing the leverage level because information asymmetry is the main concern for foreign owners (Gupta et al., 2020).

In addition, Omani ownership which is calculated in the natural log to remove the problem of multicollinearity shows a negative relationship with leverage, but this result is insignificant. However, this result is consistent with the study of Setiany et al. (2020) and Bamiatzi et al. (2017), who found a negative insignificant relationship between domestic ownership and leverage.

Two control variables namely, firm size and firm age show significant association with leverage. The result indicates that as the size of the firm grows the leverage of the company increases, similarly leverage also rises with the life of the business. These results of control variables are consistent with Al-matari et al. (2017).

It has been noted that Omani-listed firms show a significant negative association between government ownership and leverage, whereas the relationship between foreign ownership with leverage, and Omani ownership with leverage is not supported. This supports that Omani-listed firms have a unique ownership structure as all GCC countries practice unique ownership structures. At the same time, CMA Oman realizes that government ownership is the main determinant of leverage as well as other areas, so CMA Oman issued a new Corporate Governance Principles for state-owned firms, which is in effect from 2020.



#### **4.3 Limitations**

The study has a few limitations, first, it covers the annual reports of only non-financial public listed companies. The annual reports of financial public listed companies are not included in the sample because of their different nature of business due to which financial companies have higher leverage. The study covers a limited period from 2016 to 2019 because the updated code of corporate governance was implemented in 2015 and only from 2016 do the annual reports reflect the requirements of the new code. Future research could focus on period 2020 and so on to get confirmation of these findings. Future research could be conducted in other country aspects or consider cross-country comparison specifically GCC countries.

#### **5. Summary and Conclusion**

This study tested three hypotheses, only one hypothesis is accepted and two hypotheses are rejected. Government ownership shows a significant influence on the leverage of listed companies in Oman. Whereas foreign ownership and Omani ownership do not show any association with leverage in Oman. This study follows agency theory and offers a fruitful insight to all stakeholders in Oman. Thus, ownership structure can be used as a limiting and controlling mechanism for leverage. This study fills the gap in the literature in the context of developing countries, particularly in the context of Oman, and provides a vital understanding to regulators on ownership characteristics influence on leverage.

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## **An Exploratory Study of Albert Camus' the Plague: Towards optimism and hope in the pandemic and post pandemic era.**

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### **Abstract:**

The recent pandemic of 2020 has engendered many reactions and questions as regards human development and life during and after the pandemic. Many compared it to a war situation, with the health workers as the front liners and heroes, and the health facilities as the battlefield. Historians react by tracing the menace of pandemics and epidemics at different periods of human existence: The Antonine Plague of 165 AD with the death toll of 5 million, the plague of Justinian of 541-542 AD with the death toll of 25 million, the Black Death of 1346-1353 with the death toll of 75-200 million, the cholera and flu pandemics which have occurred at different times claiming so many lives at each time, The HIV/AIDS pandemic which has claimed more than 36 million lives, the deadly Ebola disease, and of course the most recent COVID-19 pandemic. From the literary viewpoint, *The Plague* is one novel from the last century which aptly captures an after-war pandemic situation. While some analysts see it as a metaphoric representation of the German occupation of French during the Second World War, others see it as a mere expression of the existential philosophy of Camus - the Absurd. But the main event of the work which gave the book its title *The Plague* captures our interest. Using an exploratory and analytical approaches, the paper will highlight the optimistic relevance of the plague as portrayed in the work, so as to give hope to humanity in this post-pandemic era. The paper suggests that modern technology be fully utilized to contend future pandemics in order to evade fear, suffering and death which are the aftermath of pandemics.

**Key words:** *Pandemic, humanity, plague, optimistic*

### **Introduction**

The Epidemics and Pandemics of yesteryears unleashed sorrow, distress and lamentable lethal consequences on their host societies and periods: The Antonine Plague of 165 AD with the death toll of 5 million, the plague of Justinian of 541-542 AD with the death toll of 25 million, the Black Death of 1346-1353 with the death toll of 75-200 million, the cholera and flu pandemics which have occurred at different times claiming so many lives at each time, The HIV/AIDS pandemic which has claimed more than 36 million lives, the deadly Ebola disease, and of course the most recent COVID-19 pandemic.

In his novel *The Plague*, Camus succinctly paints the harrowing picture of a pandemic-ravaged society. Like people, closed-in in a similar walled prison, they watched each other die in a most torturous manner while helplessly awaiting similar or even deadlier fate. The reader is left to participate in the agonizing scenes of the dying and to follow the traumatic psychological and physical experiences of the entire populace. Against this background, *The Plague* as a literary work is often analyzed from the negative point of view: Either as the German Occupation of the French society, or as treating "Absurd" the philosophy of Camus. Revolt, exile and separation, conformism and religion are some interesting themes in the novel which have been analyzed in very many academic papers. Can anything good be born from this pandemic

novel which can be helpful in the post pandemic era? Such is the research question which this academic paper seeks to examine.

Here, we are going to use optimism as the theoretical framework through which the society and the characters therein will be analyzed.

The word optimism is derived from the latin word *optimus* which means the best. The two theories of optimism are : ‘the dispositional model’ and ‘the explanatory model.’ The dispositional theory suggests that our positive disposition leads one to achieve positive results while pessimistic disposition leads to negative and stressful consequences. According to the explanatory model of optimism, people who perceive failure or stressful life events as personal shortcomings are pessimists. Optimism, as Seligman explained, is the cognitive ability to understand the current situation as it is, and work for changing things in favor of ourselves. (Buchanan and Seligman 1995 qtd in Chowdhury 2019). In other words, optimism is a hopeful and confident approach to life situations, believing that things will turn out good.

### **Optimistic trends of an appalling situation.**

“The plague is not a tale of despair, but that of ‘rejuvenation and lesson’ learnt for redemption through the obvious suffering.” (Debanjan B et al: 2). The situation of the city of Oran as presented in the novel may be of woe, wretchedness and indifference to life but Camus did not fail to spice up his tale with dots of hope and confidence. Totten believes that the novel “*The Plague* is almost unrelentingly dreary, but even during major crises, we can find at least fleeting moments of pleasure” (Totten 2020). Already in the first line of the second paragraph Camus writes: ‘the town itself, let us admit, is ugly...’ but by the end of the next paragraph he adds that ‘Only winter brings real pleasant weather.’ (Camus 1948, p.1) He describes the citizens as bored and indifferent people who go on cultivating habits, but he quickly adds that this cultivation of habit is common in other contemporary towns. The second page ended it’s second to the last paragraph by admitting that “at least social unrest is quite unknown among us. And our frank-spoken, amiable, and industrious citizens have always inspired a reasonable esteem in visitors.” (Camus 1948, p.2) The juxtaposition of positive and negative elements at the beginning of the chronicle is not an innocent coincidence. It, like an avant-garde announces the dreadful events that are coming but which did not end up in total nihilism. At the end of it all there was hope for a new future.

After the description of an ugly town, came the separation and exile which was one the most distressing pains people of Oran suffered. The narrator himself “is constrained to admit that ...the chief source of distress, the deepest as well as the most widespread, was separation...” (Camus 1948, p.88) The Dr. Rieux got separated from his wife, Rambert left his wife in Paris hoping to join her soon, but they were going to be separated for a long time. Religious communities were scattered, Fr Paneloux left his community to finish his life in the house one of a believer. Tarrou and Grand were separated from his father and wife respectively. M.Othon and his wife felt the separation that was being imposed on them before the death of their son. Almost every known character was separated from a loved one, however, this separation always came with the hope of making a “fresh start” as Rieux promised his wife. “This ruthless, protracted separation enabled them to realize that they could not live apart, and in the sudden glow of this discovery the risk of plague seemed insignificant.” (Camus 1948, p. 34). This separation helped them to appreciate their loved ones more and lessen the burden and fear of the dreadful disease. For “Sons who had lived beside their mothers hardly giving them a glance fell to picturing with poignant regret each wrinkle in the absent face that memory cast upon the screen.” (Camus 1948, p.34) Obviously this separation is horrifying as it might has a positive side. This awful separation also led them to a new self-discovery “Husbands who had had complete faith in their wives found, to their surprise, that they were jealous; and lovers had the same experience. Men who had pictured themselves as Don Juans became models of fidelity.” (Camus 1948, p.34) The narrator goes on to admit that there was a positive side to this most dreadful exile and separation:

*Nevertheless, and this point is most important, however bitter their distress and however heavy their hearts, for all their emptiness, it can be truly said of these exiles that in the early period of the plague they could account themselves privileged. For at the precise moment when the residents of the town began to panic, their thoughts were wholly fixed on the person whom they longed to meet again. The egoism of love made them immune to the general distress and, if they thought of the plague, it was only in so far as it might threaten to make their separation eternal. Thus, in the very heart of the epidemic they maintained a saving indifference, which one was tempted to take for composure. Their despair saved them from panic; thus, their misfortune had a good side. (Camus 1948, p.37)*

### **Enactment of more reliable and dutiful type of friendship.**

The city of Oran was described as boring and indifferent. People cultivated habits which helped them pull through. Of course, there were friends who “stream out into the open, drug themselves with talking, start arguing or love-making, and in the last glow of sunset the town, freighted with lovers two by two and loud with voices, drifts like a helm-less ship into the throbbing darkness” (Camus 1948, p.59) That was what was presented as relationship at the beginning of the novel. There was a kind of friendship we never got to read about until the plague started and we owe that type of dutiful relationship to the presence of the plague. M. Cottard who wanted to hang himself at first, (Camus 1948, p.9) later found a reason to live, thanks to M. Grand and Dr Rieux. Even though he continued his criminal activities, he was not judged until he was caught towards the end of the story. M. Grand, M. Tarrou, M Rambert and Dr Rieux, who were separated from their loved ones either by death or the plague, became good friends and found consolation in being close and in working with each other. Fr. Paneloux and Dr. Rieux are two opposing characters in the novel due to their divergent beliefs and world views. However, irrespective of their differences, one of the things they have in common is the belief that the pandemic (evil) has a good side. Paneloux opines that “the plague has its good side; it opens men's eyes and forces them to take thought.” The doctor confirms it by saying: “What's true of all the evils in the world is true of plague as well. It helps men to rise above themselves.” (Camus 1948, p.62) Eventually Dr. Rieux goes to church to listen to Fr Paneloux, Fr. Paneloux joins Rieux in his community service of saving lives.

### **Humanitarian Services.**

Any town known for its indifference is hardly involved in volunteer work of humanitarian services. Oran is one of such towns. But thanks to this deadly disease, to the swift action of the medical team and the government, there emerged a humanitarian service team. The journalist who sought every means of escape but could not succeed, joined the fast-growing humanitarian team. The eloquent preacher who at first, distanced himself from the “punishment” sent by God due to sins, joined the medical team to work for the people he once condemned. The police Magistrate who lost his son to the deadly disease, after his quarantine, decided to stay back in the camp and offer his services. M. Tarrou and M. Grand were not only Dr. Rieux's friends but also his fellow humanitarians. Health workers and the government also teamed up to save humanity. This disease did not spare them, yet they were undaunted. No other factor could have created that bond except that conscious effort to fight the plague as a united force.

### **Discovery of the anti-plague serum:**

This is one of the greatest achievements of the medical team. It is in the presence of old Dr. Castel that Dr Rieux pronounced the word “Plague” for the first time. Once it was confirmed, the doctors set to work.

*Thus, it was only natural that old Dr. Castel should plod away with unshaken confidence, never sparing himself, at making anti-plague serum on the spot with*

*the makeshift equipment at his disposal. Rieux shared his hope that a vaccine made with cultures of the bacilli obtained locally would take effect more actively than serum coming from outside, since the local bacillus differed slightly from the normal plague bacillus as defined in textbooks of tropical diseases. And Castel expected to have his first supply ready within a surprisingly short period. (Camus 1948, p.65)*

The menace of the plague continued. "Under the circumstances Rieux had no qualms about testing Castel's serum on the boy." (Camus 1948, p.103) The little boy died, when the first anti-plague serum did not produce the desired effect, they were not demoralized. Rather they shared the same optimistic view that they would succeed. Thus, they were optimistically disposed towards producing a more effective serum. "As for Castel, he confined himself to preparing his serums with the maximum of care." (Camus 1948, p.115). After many efforts, "Castel's new serum, ...indeed, had brought off some quite unlooked-for recoveries. While not dissenting, the old doctor reminded him that the future remained uncertain;" (Camus 1948, p.144). With this milestone, this medical team has been able to produce one of the most effective weapons to fight this war. This achievement was born out of shared optimism. Taking optimism as Seligman explained above, as the cognitive ability to understand the current situation as it is, and work for changing things in favor of ourselves. (Buchanan and Seligman 1995 qtd in Chowdhury 2019) The discovery of this anti-plague serum fits into the above model of optimism.

### **Business opportunity:**

The citizens of Oran were *ab initio* described as businesspeople. Their chief interest is in commerce, and their chief aim in life is, as they call it, "doing business." (Camus 1948, p.2) Every opportunity was of business. So at the onset of the plague, "Cafes and picture-houses did as much business as before." (Camus 1948, p.31). While the plague ravaged the town, which was now locked down, the cinemas found a way to keep their business by exchanging films so that people could come. The cafes closed eventually but not before they explored all possible avenues of business. It is arguably true that at first, the people saw the plague as a business opportunity until it began to claim not only their goods but their lives as well.

M. Cottard's lifestyle was not the ideal, yet his happiness and optimistic acceptance of the plague is noteworthy. This is a man who was saved by M. Grand and Dr. Rieux after a suicidal attempt. He found no reason to live for a crime he committed, and he feared that the police would be after him. Suddenly, during the plague he became friendly, and his illegal business thrived. The sentinels used the opportunity to smuggle people in and out of the town. The desperate Rambert was ready to benefit from his illegal connection if it could get him out of Oran. Though his conduct was outrightly deplorable, in Cottard we see a man who cashed in on the plague.

### **Global unity:**

The city of Oran was locked down and secluded from the rest of the world. The separation and exile which the citizens of Oran felt was also felt by the rest of the world. Families and lovers were separated, there were no fast and dependable means of communication, no business transactions and no trains and ships exited the city. Those parts of the world in which the separated lovers and families lived felt and experienced the pain too. People of the outside world who had businesses in Oran were affected also. Those who read about the situation of Oran in papers were moved to pity. World organizations would also have made it a global affair. Believing that some help might come from anywhere, people did not hesitate to listen to the radio.

*Sometimes at midnight, in the great silence of the sleep-bound town, the doctor turned on his radio before going to bed for the few hours' sleep, he allowed himself.*



*And from the ends of the earth, across thousands of miles of land and sea, kindly, well-meaning speakers tried to voice their fellow-feeling, and indeed did so, but at the same time proved the utter incapacity of every man truly to share in suffering that he cannot see. "Oran! Oran!" In vain the call rang over oceans, in vain Rieux listened hopefully; always the tide of eloquence began to flow, bringing home still more the unbridgeable gulf that lay between Grand and the speaker. "Oran, we're with you!" they called emotionally. (Camus 1948, p.68)*

The expected practical help may not come but, it suits, to know that the whole world is thinking of you. These emotional calls were definitely sources of encouragement.

### **Equity and Virtue.**

The plague with its lethal consequences is the only factor that made everyone equal. The proud was humbled, the learned was humiliated. The learned and influential preacher Fr. Paneloux, had to readjust his views in his second sermon and realized that we are all involved. After watching the little boy die, he learnt that no one is to blame. He not only joined the humanitarian services but also relocated to a parishioner's house, where he died of an unknown disease. The learned and hardworking doctors watched their patients die helplessly. It was definitely a humbling experience to watch one's effort go downhill. With quarantine, turning public places into camps and hospitals, formation of the sanitary squad, incision of the bubou and production the serum, yet people died en masse and were buried in a general grave, others were even burnt. Such humbling experience was enough to discourage people, but these soldiers armed with optimism continued to forge ahead. For the plague indeed helped them to rise above themselves. (Camus 1948, p.62). Some professionals: Rambert (Journalist) and Othon (magistrate) became humanists in the face of the plague. Dr. Rieux rightly stated quite simply that "what we learn in a time of pestilence: that there are more things to admire in men than to despise." (Camus 1948, p.150)

Finally, the novel itself is a book of hope. A classical work which cuts across times, races and places. It made reference to plagues and pandemics which took place at different times in history but have passed. This led the citizens to believe that this too would pass. To reiterate in the words of Owino "But one positive thing about *The Plague* is the timeliness of reading it at this particular moment of COVID-19. It portrays the thought that pandemics are recurrent, thereby giving a sense of hope that just like the previous ones, this one is transient too." (Owino 2020). Camus wrote his work not only to highlight his absurdist existential theory but also to lend hope and optimism to people who suffer death and pain.

The chronicle of the plague of 194... in Oran was not too different from the universal occurrence of 2019-2020. Blackman opines that: "The chronicle of the plague-infested city of Oran, in northern Algeria reflects stark parallels to our "new normal." The dogged heroism of the frontline workers, the daily publicized deaths, the incomplete science, the reckless sociopolitical rhetoric, the desperate hope for a vaccine, are all there." (Blackman: 2020). One major difference is that many countries were affected in the latter. There were forced separations by death and by lock down, businesses and social activities suffered. Inegbedion avers that "Since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, major economic activities have been crippled worldwide, Nigeria inclusive, owing to the lockdown in major economies of the world. The implication is that the circular flow of income has been significantly constrained since a reasonable proportion of the productive factors are currently lying idle." Health workers were over-worked, some even contracted the disease and died, According to Clinical infectious disease correspondence, "Approximately 185 countries have re-ported cases, with 1991562 confirmed cases and 130885 deaths worldwide as of 16 April 2020. In the midst of this pandemic, the commitment, empathy, and human spirit of every single health-care provider is a major source of inspiration and pride." (CID 2020:1). Academic activities came to a halt. Nevertheless, the world of today is more technologically advanced than that of 194... Telephone lines and social media were in full function during the 2020 pandemic. There was a lock down and transportation

was limited but countries had the time to evacuate their citizens from other countries before it shot its gates. Some government and People gave helping hands by sharing food, money and other humanitarian services. It was also a business opportunity for some companies. (Pharmaceutical companies who produced face masks and hand sanitizers for example), The information Technology and internet was more and better used than ever before, people loved more. Homemade remedies were encouraged. These a few of the many positive sides of COVID-19

The lessons of the bubonic and pneumonic plague of Oran is still relevant today for one cannot adequately prepare for a plague. "There have been as many plagues as wars in history; yet always plagues and wars take people equally by surprise." (Camus 1948, p.18)

## **Conclusion**

Using expository and analytical methods, the novel *the Plague* has been dissected. With the dispositional and the explanatory model of optimism as our theoretical framework, this paper has proved that optimism is one efficacious way of fighting not only plague but many other societal evils. Optimism does not grant immunity from harm, but it disposes one favorable towards accepting a situation one cannot change and live through it hoping that something good will triumph in the end. While we recommend optimism as an individual weapon, the advanced technology at our disposal can serve as a common weapon against a pandemic. A forecast into the future can serve as a warning while the production of locally made remedies can be scientifically analyzed and used as cure or prevention of deadly diseases.

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