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ESJ Humanities

## Is There a Gender Imbalance in the Italian Labor Market?

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### Abstract

Women who decide to enter the labor market should, at least in theory, have access to any profession. Actually, it is something that does not always happen and their ambitions are relegated to few jobs (i.e., teachers, nurses, cashiers,) often linked to social stereotypes characterized by low wages, tasks that are inappropriate to their educational qualifications and of course with few career prospects. All that creates a gender imbalance of individuals in the labor market known as *segregation*. The objective of this paper is to focus on the aforementioned issue through a qualitative and quantitative survey based on the analysis of statistical indicators compared in two years (2009 and 2020), taking into account the social variations of the time span that elapses between the two years observed. The results show that gender employment segregation has been opposed over time, but not adequately resolved by concrete policies that can counter the phenomenon under consideration. Therefore, it is not enough to increase women's employment without pursuing a path of qualitative growth in women's work.

**Keywords:** Italy, segregation, indexes, gender, feminization

### Introduction

“*In all its activities, the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women*”. This is Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. There is no doubt that achieving

gender equality is not only a matter of fairness, but it is fundamental in order to achieve the objectives of growth and employment; it is a matter of well-being and, above all, it is essential for a greater social cohesion.

The results of the "Global Gender Gap Report 2020", ranked by the World Economic Forum, analyzed 153 countries on their progress towards gender equality in four dimensions: participation and economic opportunities, school performance, health and survival and political representation. Italy ranks 76th out of the 153 countries, just a single step higher than its ranking in 2006. It is certainly an unsatisfactory result which has a negative impact on the social and economic fabric. In Italy, less than one woman in every two works. According to the latest ISTAT (National Statistical Institute) data (2020) the gap between the employment rate of women and men's is about 17%, and in Europe only Malta has a worse percentage. The achievement of gender equality in the labor market is still a long way off.

The aim of this work is to outline the profile of Italian working women in the labor market during the period (2009-2020) under review and to identify the sectors in which there could be forms of employment gender segregation.

In the literature on employment gender, the expression *horizontal segregation* is used to underline an evident concentration of women's employment in a small number of sectors and professions, while *vertical segregation* occurs when there is discrimination between men and women as far as the Glass ceiling (workers' possibility of achieving positions of responsibility) is concerned.

### **Methodology**

To monitor the gender imbalance the following statistical indicators were used:

- 1) *the coefficient of female representation* (CFR). CFR is a synthetic measure of women concentration within a given sector. It can be quantified by relating women working in a specific sector and women working in all sectors, namely:

$$CFR = \left( \frac{f_i}{t_i} \right) / \left( \frac{F}{T} \right)$$

where  $f_i$  represents the women working in a specific sector while  $t_i$  represents the total number of people working in the same sector, while  $F$  represents the total number of women working in all sectors and  $T$  represents the total number of the people working in all sectors. If the female component is missing in the sector, this indicator assumes a value of 0; it assumes, instead, a value of 1 in the situation of perfect balance between the sexes. In the case of a relative prevalence of women, this indicator becomes greater than 1, and in the case of a prevalence of male employment the indicator assumes values of less than 1.

- 2) *the index of dissimilarity (ID)*: indicates the percentage of women that should be redistributed between occupations in order to get a complete and equal gender employment distribution, namely:

$$ID = \frac{1}{2} \sum_i \left| \left( \frac{f_i}{F} \cdot 100 \right) - \left( \frac{m_i}{M} \cdot 100 \right) \right|$$

where  $f_i$  represents women working in a specific sector while  $F$  represents the total number of women working in all sectors;  $m_i$  represents the men working in a specific sector, while  $M$  represents the total number of men working in all sectors. In the case of complete integration, this indicator is 0; in the case of maximum segregation, it is 100.

- 3) *the entropy or Shannon (H) index*. It enables to evaluate the heterogeneity of the distribution, namely:

$$H = - \sum_i \left( \frac{f_i}{F} \right) \cdot \log \left( \frac{f_i}{F} \right)$$

where  $f_i$  represents the women working in a specific sector, while  $F$  represents the total number of women working in all sectors. This indicator can be normalized, thus obtaining the *relative entropy index (H')*, by dividing it by its maximum, that is  $\log K$ , where  $K$  represents the number of cases, i.e.:

$$H' = \frac{H}{\log K}$$

The relative entropy index assumes a value of 0 in the case of minimal heterogeneity, when there is substantial gender segregation between sectors, while it assumes a value of 1 in the case of gender employment homogeneity between sectors.

The data used concern the working people in Italy. The data are the result of the surveys that ISTAT carried out in 2020 to gain the " data collection of the labor force" in the years 2009 and 2020.

## **Achieved results**

### ***Employment situation by gender***

In the Italian labor market, the increase in employment (204,000), recorded between 2009 and 2020, depends entirely on the positive dynamics recorded by the female component. In the period of time under observation (2009-2020), female employment in Italy increased grew by 465,000 units versus a decrease of about 261,000 thousand male jobs (see Table 1). In general, however, when a comparison is made between two or more

populations, at two different times, it is not correct to take the absolute difference as a reference measure but it is necessary to use an indicator that, disregarding the number of populations to be compared, establishes the extent of the increase or decrease suffered.

In order to make a comparison between two or more populations which are different in numerical numbers, it is necessary to calculate a rate: in this case, *the average annual rate of population change*. It provides the rate at which the population varies over time. The average annual rate of change has been used and adapted to the male and female working populations, since it assumes that the change is continuously updated, moment by moment. It is known that

$$P_t^{occ} = P_0^{occ} \cdot e^{rt}$$

where  $P_t^{occ}$  is the working population at the time  $t$ ,  $P_0^{occ}$  is the working population at the time  $0$ ,  $e = 2.71828...$  is the basis of Napierian logarithms,  $r$  is the average annual rate of change in the working population and  $t$  is the time variable. After performing statistical calculations, the average annual rate of change in the working populations is obtained, namely:

$$r = \frac{1}{t} \cdot \ln \left( \frac{P_t^{occ}}{P_0^{occ}} \right).$$

In this context, the average annual rate of change is defined as the "*average employment rate*" of the period (2009-2020) and expresses the working units that are added or subtracted on average during the observed time interval.

Thus, by eliminating the influence of the population number, an average female employment rate of about 4.13‰ (an increase in the female working population of about 4 units on average per year) compared to the even negative average annual rate of male variation of 1.62‰ (a decrease in the male working population of about 2 units on average per year) is found (see Table 1).

The increase in female employment is also reflected in the increase in the percentage of the female component in the total working population: in Italy, from 2009 to 2020, this percentage rose from 40.3% to 42.0%, thus leading to an increase of about two percentage points.

This increase has consequently reduced the difference in the employment imbalance between the two sexes from 19.4 to 16.0 percentage points (see Table 1).

**Table 1: Working people by sex (data in thousands). Italy 2009 and 2020**

Gender	Years		Absolute variation	r (%)	Percentage values		Employment imbalance	
	2009	2020			2009	2020	2009	2020
Males	13,541	13,280	-261	-1.62	59.7	58.0		
Females	9,158	9,623	465	4.13	40.3	42.0	19.4	16.0
Total	22,699	22,903	204	0.75	100.0	100.0		

Note: Personal data processing based on Istat data

*Is there a real a trend towards the feminization of the Italian labor market?*

A further confirmation of this perceptible employment gender difference is also visible by analyzing the individual years in the period under observation (2009-2020).

In Table 2, and represented in Figures 1 and 2, there are the data concerning the working people, broken down by sex, counted in the time span enclosed between 2009 and 2020. In addition, there are the masculinity ratios calculated at the different years constituting the period under observation (2009-2020) and obtained through the

$$R_m = \frac{P_m^{occ}}{P_f^{occ}} \cdot 100$$

This indicator assumes values above 100, if there is an excess of male employment compared to the female component.

From Table 2 and Figure 1, it is deduced that, over the period considered (2009-2020), male employment shows a downward trend until 2013, when it reaches the level of 12,914 (in thousands) working people and with a decrease, compared to 2009 of 4.6%. As of 2013, however, male employment tends to increase continuously, reaching, in 2019, a level of 13,488 (in thousands) working people, with an increase of 4.4%. In the last year (2019-2020); however, for the well-known pandemic events, male employment has had a decline of 1.5%.



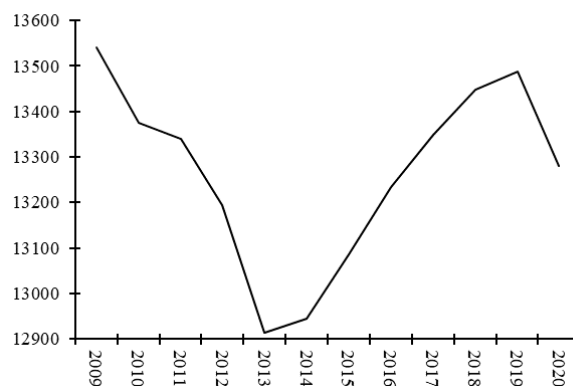
**Table 2: Working people (in thousands) and masculinity ratio. Italy 2009-2020**

<i>Years</i>	<i>Males</i>	<i>Females</i>	<i>Masculinity ratio</i>
2009	13,541	9,158	147.9
2010	13,375	9,152	146.1
2011	13,340	9,258	144.1
2012	13,194	9,372	140.8
2013	12,914	9,276	139.2
2014	12,945	9,334	138.7
2015	13,085	9,380	139.5
2016	13,233	9,525	138.9
2017	13,349	9,674	138.0
2018	13,447	9,768	137.7
2019	13,488	9,872	136.6
2020	13,280	9,623	138,0

*Note:* Personal data processing based on Istat data

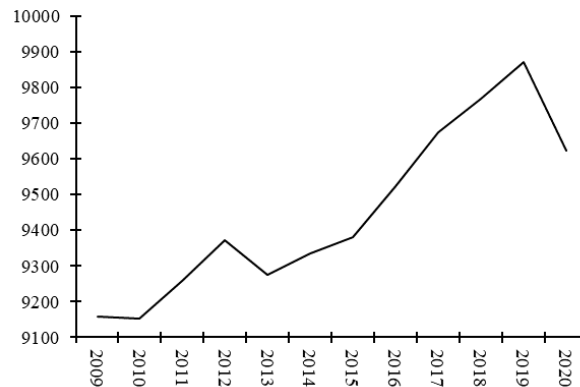
**Figure 1:**

**Males**



Analyzing, instead, the female employment (see Table 2 and Figure 2), it is deduced that the number of working women tends to grow with a certain regularity (except a slight decline in the years 2012 and 2013) until 2019 with an increase, compared to 2009 of 7.8%. Conversely, in the last year (2019-2020), the decline in female employment was greater than that of men and reached 2.5%.

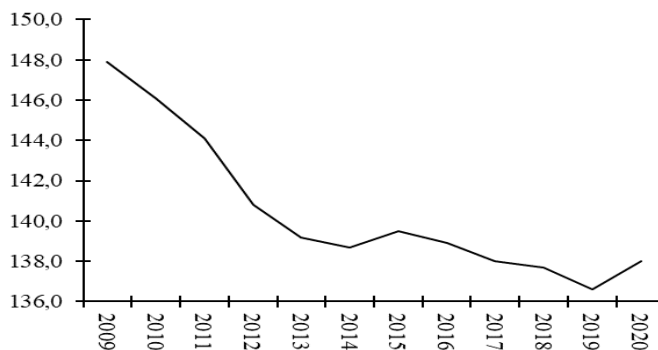
**Figure 2:**  
**Females**



Ultimately, through a comparison of absolute values between the various years, male employment is greater than female employment, but the comparison through the employment relationship between sexes, reveals that the employment relationship of masculinity decreases as time increases.

The comparison between the two sexes is observable from Table 2 and from Figure 3, which relates to the masculinity ratios. In fact, the masculinity ratios have always a value of more than 100: for this reason, there is an excess of working males compared to the female component, but this excess decreases over time except for a small rebound in 2020.

**Figure 3:**  
**Masculinity ratio**



Despite this upward trend in female employment, the labor market indicators such as activity rate, employment rate and unemployment rate<sup>1</sup> still

---

<sup>1</sup>*Activity rate*: ratio between people in the labor force and the population over 15 years. *Employment rate*: ratio between working people and the population over 15 years. *Unemployment rate*: ratio between people seeking employment and people in the labor force.

show a disadvantaged number of women when compared to that of men. These indicators and the masculinity ratios are reported in Table 3.

The *rate of female activity*, which is an essential measure of the labor supply, is lower than that of men in both periods compared (2009-2020), which is a sign of a low female employment.

The masculinity ratio of the activity rate is decreasing over time, which denotes a progressive participatory gender alignment in the labor market.

Over time, the *employment rate*, which is an indicator of the system's capacity to use human resources, develops in the same way as the activity rate.

As a result, the *unemployment rate* – an indicator of the percentage of the labor force that cannot find a job because of an excess of supply (by workers) compared to demand (by companies) – is at odds with both the activity and employment rate. Despite the growth in female employment over the period under review, the female unemployment rate still shows a significant gap with the corresponding male data in the two periods compared, which highlights an evident criticality in the encounter between female demand and supply. Over time, however, there is an increasing trend of the masculinity ratio, which is the symptom of an increase in male unemployment compared to that of women.

**Table 3:** Indicators by sex and masculinity ratio. Italy 2009 and 2020

Labor market indicators	Males		Females		$R_m$ 2009	$R_m$ 2020
	2009	2020	2009	2020		
Activity rate	59.6	57.8	38.2	39.8	156.0	145.2
Employment rate	55.6	52.9	34.7	35.8	160.2	147.8
Unemployment rate	6.7	8.4	9.2	10.2	72.8	82.4

Note: Personal data processing based on Istat data

### **Older women in the labor market?**

As far as age is concerned, there is a change of the age structure of the female presence in the Italian labor market.

The greatest increase in employment has occurred in the females over 45 years of age; thus, showing a need to enter or re-enter the labor market at a more mature age because of family economic needs or to increase and maintain their independence.

As a result of this move forward in the years of the integration or reintegration of women into the labor market, there is also a clear increase in the median age<sup>2</sup> over time, increasing by five years from 2009 to 2020.

On contrast, the confirmation of the change in the working life of women is demonstrated by the decrease in female employment in the youth

<sup>2</sup> The *median age* is the value that occupies the central position and divides into two exact parts the ordered age series of the population members. It is to be preferred to the average age as its calculation is more accurate in the presence of both multiannual age groups and a large final age group.

and central groups. This occurs most likely due to a delayed entry into the workplace because of different reasons such as the need of completing studies, the difficulty of finding a job or getting a job that valorizes their educational degree (see Table 4).

**Table 4:** Working women (in thousands) by age groups and percentage composition - 2009 and 2020

Age group	Working women		Composition %	
	2009	2020	2009	2020
15-24	494	362	5.4	3.8
25-34	2,217	1,650	24.2	17.1
35-44	2,980	2,411	32.5	25.0
45-54	2,439	3,025	26.6	31.4
55-64	941	1,950	10.3	20.3
65+	87	225	0.9	2.4
Total	9,158	9,623	100.0	100.0
Median age	41.3	46.3		

Note: Personal data processing based on Istat data

### **Better educated women in the labor market?**

Table 5 shows the distribution by sex of the working people classified by educational degree in the years (2009-2020) under review.

**Table 5:** Working people (in thousands) by educational level - 2009 and 2020

Educational level	Males		Females	
	2009	2020	2009	2020
Elementary degree, no degree	946	430	417	174
Junior high school degree	4,796	4,176	2,265	2,004
High school diploma	5,912	6,151	4,440	4,447
University and post-graduate degree	1,887	2,523	2,036	2,998
Total	13,541	13,280	9,158	9,623

Source: Istat (2020)

Starting from the same data, the percentage composition of female employment was obtained on the basis of their educational degree (see Table 6).

By analyzing the data in Table 6 concerning the percentage composition of female employment on the basis of their educational qualifications, it can be seen that the level of education of working women has increased.

In particular, from 2009 to 2020, there is an evident percentage increase of working women with a university and post-university degree, but, on the other hand, in the same period there is a sharp decline of working women who have a very low level of education.

This increase in the level of education has improved the composition of female employment throughout the country, which currently comprises over 77% of women having earned a High School and or university degree.

**Table 6:** *Percentage composition - 2009 and 2020*

<i>Educational level</i>	<i>Composition %</i>	
	<i>2009</i>	<i>2020</i>
Elementary degree, no degree	4.6	1.8
Junior high school degree	24.7	20.8
High school diploma	48.5	46.2
University and post-graduate degree	22.2	31.2
Total	100.0	100.0

*Note:* Personal data processing based on Istat data

In this regard, in order to identify the presence of women in the total labor market in the various levels of education, the synthetic discrimination indicator was used, namely the female representation coefficient (CFR).

In Table 7, the female representation coefficients concerning the various educational degrees are reported in comparison in the years under observation (2009-2020).

The coefficient values of less than 1, both in jobs with a very low qualification (elementary and no degree) and in those with an average qualification, show the low presence of female employment and its decrease over time. On the contrary, in jobs with a higher degree, the coefficient value is, in 2020, equal to 1, which is therefore a situation of perfect balance between sexes as far as having diploma is concerned. The level of female representation coefficient of working women with a university degree is greater than 1 (1.29), which means that there is a higher and stable female presence over time.

**Table 7:** *Coefficients of female representation - 2009 and 2020*

<i>Educational level</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2020</i>
Elementary degree, no degree	0.76	0.69
Junior high school degree	0.80	0.77
High school diploma	1.06	1.00
University and post-graduate degree	1.29	1.29
Total	1.00	1.00

*Note:* Personal data processing based on Istat data

### ***Employed or self-employed?***

Table 8 shows the distribution, by sex, of working people classified by type of employment in the years (2009-2020) in question.

**Table 8:** *Working people (in thousands) by type of employment*

<i>Type of employment</i>	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>	
	<i>2009</i>	<i>2020</i>	<i>2009</i>	<i>2020</i>
Employed	9,566	9,729	7,464	8,017
Self-employed	3,975	3,551	1,694	1,606
Total	13,541	13,280	9,158	9,623

*Source:* Istat (2020)

What can be learned is that, from 2009 to 2020, there is an increase in employed women and a decrease in female self-employment of just over one percentage point. At present, over 80% of women are employed throughout the Italy. It is very likely that this growth in female employment in the employee sector is due to the new forms of flexibility, which have found more and more room in the labor market.

Due to data in Table 8, the percentage composition of female employment according to the type of employment was obtained (see Table 9).

**Table 9:** *Percentage composition*

<i>Type of employment</i>	<i>Composition %</i>	
	<i>2009</i>	<i>2020</i>
Employed	81.5	83.3
Self-employed	18.5	16.7
Total	100.0	100.0

*Note:* Personal data processing based on Istat data

By calculating the segregation indices, shown in Table 10, it is possible to make a comparison on the evolution of the type of employment in observation. Table10 considers the female coefficient of representation and its data show that the situation has remained unchanged with regard to self-employment (0.74) where men are the majority, while, in proportion, there are more women employed than men (CFR values above the unit).

In the period under review (2009-2020), however, *the dissimilarity index* decreased slightly from 10.86 in 2009 to 10.06 in 2020. This means that in 2020 approximately 10% of the female component should move from being employed to self-employment in order to achieve an equal distribution between the two types of employment for men and women. There is also a slight decline of the relative entropy index, which shows the female concentration in the two types of employment, resulting in 0.698 in 2009 and 0.664 in 2020, a small sign of the concentration of women in the same type of employment.

**Table 10:** *Discrimination indicators - 2009 and 2020*

<i>Type of employment</i>	<i>2009</i>			
	<i>CFR</i>	<i>ID</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>H'</i>
Employed	1.09	5.43	-0.07	0.698
Self-employed	0.74	-5.43	-0.14	
Total	1.00	10.86	0.21	
<i>Type of employment</i>	<i>2020</i>			
	<i>CFR</i>	<i>ID</i>	<i>H</i>	<i>H'</i>
Employed	1.08	5.03	-0.07	0.664
Self-employed	0.74	-5.03	-0.13	
Total	1.00	10.06	0.20	

*Note:* Personal data processing based on Istat data

The distinction between employed and self-employed, for both sexes, allowed to build Table 11 containing the type of occupation carried out.

**Table 11:** *Type of occupation (in thousands) - 2009 and 2020*

Type of occupation	Males		Females	
	2009	2020	2009	2020
<i>Employed</i>				
Manager	335	257	128	126
Executive	703	657	487	532
Employee	3,184	3,326	4,068	4,487
Worker	5,226	5,396	2,683	2,823
Trainee	117	92	91	46
Homeworker	1	1	6	3
<i>Total</i>	<i>9,566</i>	<i>9,729</i>	<i>7,463</i>	<i>8,017</i>
<i>Self-employed</i>				
Entrepreneur	205	207	54	58
Independent professional	815	900	320	498
Own-account worker	2,611	2,216	885	782
Family helper	154	120	202	149
Cooperative member	22	15	12	11
Freelancer	168	93	222	108
<i>Total</i>	<i>3,975</i>	<i>3,551</i>	<i>1,694</i>	<i>1,606</i>

Source: Istat (2020)

Table 11 gives the percentage composition of female employment by type of occupation (see Table 12).

In general, there is a trend in the female workforce, which is not yet fully established in the most qualified positions. As far as employed people are concerned, there are no substantial changes during the period under review (2009- 2020) except in the clerical sector, which accounts for more than 50% of female employees: in 2020 the proportion of female workers increased by 1.5 percentage points, while the percentage in the apprenticeship sector was halved. In the self-employed component, however, from 2009 to 2020, the number of independent professional women increased by 12 percentage points, thus confirming, as previously seen, the percentage increase of working women with a university and post-university degree. On the other hand, the percentage of freelancer qualification was halved in the period under review, passing from 13% in 2009 to 6.7% in 2020.

**Table 12: Percentage composition - 2009 and 2020**

Type of occupation	Composition %	
	2009	2020
<i>Employed</i>		
Manager	1.7	1.6
Executive	6.5	6.6
Employee	54.5	56.0
Worker	35.9	35.2
Trainee	1.2	0.6
Homeworker	0.1	0.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<i>Self-employed</i>		
Entrepreneur	3.2	3.6
Independent professional	18.9	31.0
Own-account worker	52.2	48.7
Family helper	11.9	9.3
Cooperative member	0.7	0.7
Freelancer	13.0	6.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

*Note:* Personal data processing based on Istat data

By analyzing the discrimination indicators (see Table 13), it is observed that the female representation coefficients, wider than the equilibrium one (CFR=1), can be found in 2020 only in executive and home-based employees as regards paid employment.

As far as self-employed workers are concerned, the types of activities that show an increase in percentage terms are the increasing activities of independent professional (1.14 in 2020 and 0.94 in 2009) and cooperative member (1.36 in 2020 and 1.18 in 2009). The activities of family helper and freelancer have a CFR greater than one but in decrease regarding 2009.

Unfortunately, in the qualifications of entrepreneur and manager, the best type of occupation of both self-employed and employed people, there are minimum values of the CFR and precisely 0.70 for entrepreneurs and 0.73 for managers. However, analyzing the temporal course, the CFR of the entrepreneur occupation remained unchanged, while the CFR of the managerial activity, passing from 2009 to 2020, increased from 0.63 to 0.73. These are encouraging signs that give hope.

The dissimilarity index in terms of employed people remained unchanged over time. It means that in 2020 about 22% of the female component should switch from employee activity to all other activities in order to achieve an equal distribution between all types of occupation.

This is not the case for self-employment where, over time, the dissimilarity index decreases from 17.08 in 2009 to 15.94 in 2020, which denotes a lower concentration of women.



The same applies to the relative entropy index: as for employed people, its value in 2020 is 0.540, which is sign of an unfair distribution between the analyzed types of occupation; as for self-employed people in 2020 the value 0,720 denotes a greater division between the studied occupations but it is less than 1, the value that should indicate the perfect distribution of women among all types of activities.

**Table 13:** *Discrimination indicators - 2009 and 2020*

<i>Employed</i>								
<i>Type of occupation</i>	<i>CFR</i>		<i>ID</i>		<i>H</i>		<i>H'</i>	
	2009	2020	2009	2020	2009	2020	2009	2020
Manager	0.63	0.73	-0.90	-0.54	-0.03	-0.03		
Executive	0.93	0.99	-0.41	-0.06	-0.08	-0.08		
Employee	1.28	1.27	10.62	10.89	-0.14	-0.14		
Worker	0.77	0.76	-9.34	-10.1	-0.16	-0.16		
Trainee	1.00	0.74	0.00	-0.19	-0.02	-0.01		
Homeworker	1.96	1.66	0.04	0.02	0.00	0.00		
<i>Total</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>21.31</i>	<i>21.83</i>	<i>0.43</i>	<i>0.42</i>	<i>0.553</i>	<i>0.540</i>
<i>Self-employed</i>								
<i>Type of occupation</i>	<i>CFR</i>		<i>ID</i>		<i>H</i>		<i>H'</i>	
	2009	2020	2009	2020	2009	2020	2009	2020
Entrepreneur	0.70	0.70	-0.99	-1.11	-0.05	-0.05		
Independent professional	0.94	1.14	-0.81	2.84	-0.14	-0.16		
Own-account worker	0.85	0.84	-6.73	-6.86	-0.15	-0.16		
Family helper	1.90	1.78	4.03	2.95	-0.11	-0.10		
Cooperative member	1.18	1.36	0.08	0.13	-0.02	-0.01		
Freelancer	1.90	1.73	4.44	2.05	-0.12	-0.08		
<i>Total</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>1.00</i>	<i>17.08</i>	<i>15.94</i>	<i>0.59</i>	<i>0.56</i>	<i>0.758</i>	<i>0.720</i>

*Note: Personal data processing based on Istat data*

### **Sectors of economic activity with a female prevalence**

In Table 14, there is data concerning the male and female working people in the years 2009 and 2020, in the various sectors of economic activity. What can be learned in Table 15 is the percentage change, between 2009 and 2019, of female employment in the various economic sectors.

**Table 14:** *Activity economic sectors (in thousands)*

<i>Activity sectors</i>	<i>Males</i>		<i>Females</i>	
	2009	2020	2009	2020
Agriculture	593	679	244	233
Industry	3,470	3,495	1,250	1,187
Construction	1,805	1,255	112	103
Services	7,673	7,851	7,552	8,100
<i>Total</i>	<i>13,541</i>	<i>13,280</i>	<i>9,158</i>	<i>9,623</i>

*Source: Istat (2020)*

As for the percentage composition of female employment in the various economic sectors from 2009 to 2020, there was an increase only in the

services sector by almost 2 percentage points, while decreases are seen in the other sectors.

**Table 15: Percentage composition**

Activity sectors	Composition %	
	2009	2020
Agriculture	2.7	2.4
Industry	13.6	12.3
Construction	1.2	1.1
Services	82.5	84.2
<i>Total</i>	100.0	100.0

*Note:* Personal data processing based on Istat data

Table 16 data covers the level of gender segregation in employment based on the economic sector.

It is immediately clear that in the economic sectors under observation the gender equality is very far from being reached. In the two years (2009-2020) compared, the female representation coefficients for the agricultural sector, industry and construction are much lower than the value of gender balance and indicate an unfavorable situation for women. In the tertiary sector, however, it is the female component that prevails, with a female representation coefficient greater than 1 in the services sector, both in 2009 (1.23) and in 2020 (1.21). Quite evidently, this situation was favored by typically feminine attitudes and skills: attention to personal relationships, ability to communicate and listen and above all the predisposition to assistance and care. The picture, in terms of female segregation between sectors, was confirmed by the dissimilarity index that remained unchanged in the two years under observation (2009-2020): in both years about 25% of women should redistribute between sectors; in particular, they should exit services and enter agriculture, industry and construction in order to equalize the male distribution. The relative entropy index, an indicator of the concentration level of female employment, also assumes critical values. The distribution of women between sectors is far from a fair distribution level as the entropy index is far from value 1. Moreover, despite the low values of the relative entropy index, 0.415 in 2009 and 0.382 in 2020, in the last year it is still decreasing, which shows a higher concentration between the activity sectors.

**Table 16:** *Discrimination indicators – 2009 and 2020*

Activity sectors	2009			
	CFR	ID	H	H'
Agriculture	0.72	-0.86	-0.04	
Industry	0.66	-5.99	-0.12	
Construction	0.14	-6.06	-0.02	
Services	1.23	12.90	-0.07	
<i>Total</i>	1.00	25.81	0.25	0.415
Activity sectors	2020			
	CFR	ID	H	H'
Agriculture	0.61	-1.35	-0.04	
Industry	0.60	-7.00	-0.11	
Construction	0.18	-4.19	-0.02	
Services	1.21	12.53	-0.06	
<i>Total</i>	1.00	25.07	0.23	0.382

*Note:* Personal data processing based on Istat data

## Conclusion

The concluding considerations lead to the assertion that the higher female employment growth found through this survey has not had a positive impact on segregation levels. However, it has been possible to observe the growth in the level of education of working women in the Italian labor market. For instance, in 2020, in occupations requiring a university degree, the value of the CFR is greater than 1, which means a greater presence of women.

A very small number of women have managed to break through the most prestigious and best paid professions. This is the case of the increased participation of women as independent professionals in 2020 (CFR=1.14) also due to the increase in the level of education.

Conversely, few men undertook the most feminized professions, that is the services sector where, again in 2020, there is an CFR=1.21.

On the one hand, the development of the professions linked to the services sector has fostered the impressive growth of women in the Italian labor market, thus partially filling a historical gap accumulated by the country, but, on the other hand, it turns to be a factor which can lead to higher levels of segregation.

Ultimately, increasing female employment is necessary but not sufficient to achieve equal opportunities in the workplace: a qualitative increase in female employment has to be pursued as well.

The interventions to be implemented should go in several directions: 1) first of all safeguarding the female permanence to a job through the development of suitable support services in family and care activities and also developing a true "culture" of sharing the family work load; 2) combatting employment gender segregation in relation to activity sectors and professions, trying to overcome the stereotypes regarding the choice of women's education

and career paths; but above all, company recruitment decisions must enable women to combine work and family life efficiently.

Gender equality is a right. Ensuring it must be a duty of every nation. However, this principle has not been fully understood by all countries. Unfortunately, the issue of gender equality is very articulate, complex and it cannot always be influenced. A Government can try to reduce inequalities, but there will always be elements and dynamics that do not depend on the Government intervention and, therefore, they cannot be modified at will. These are individual, personal and cultural aspects that the law cannot control, such as the will of a mother to stay at home to take care of her children rather than working elsewhere.

To be more precise, the differences observed so far shift attention to other factors, starting from the concept of work. What is evident is a disruptive (and dissociating) model that affects many women who devote themselves to work, reproductive activity and family care during their lives.

It is therefore needed transversal interventions aimed at achieving a humanized vision of work, which focuses on the person and not on tasks or roles. A vision of the world of labor as time and space of new skills: the human skills that, to be implemented, require sharing, participation, and the overcoming of hierarchical rigidities and centralizing styles of leadership. A new inclusive and sustainable sociality is at stake.

Therefore, in the future, monitoring and investigating the factors that affect the fragility of women's work will be fundamental to neutralize the gender imbalance existing in the Italian labor market.

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## A Word Visualization Observation: The Hidden Meaning of the Words in Work Environments

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### Abstract

The aim of this study is to illustrate and semantically explain how the visualization of words is helpful to create word trees, showing the connection between various, synonym words and to explore the hidden meanings behind each word in the tree, particularly to provide a true message in work environments. To do this, the authors have chosen one main word “lying” and two connected, synonymous words to it “fabrication” and “prevarication”. The words have been chosen spontaneously, by considering their employment in communications, particularly in work environments. To uncover the variety and implication of these words the study is divided into two sections: a short secondary data collection and an observational part. The short literature review accomplished by a secondary data collection highlights the importance of word visualization through different methods and tools through communications in, particularly, workplaces. And the observations in the methodology bring complimentary proof after the secondary data collection. With the use of word visualizations such as mind maps and word clouds, this study illustrates the further importance of word visualizations which opens new perspectives upon other words for diverse studies and fields as seen in the

glossary, a dictionary of the words, employed in Picture 1 which is provided as an example of source presentation for future works in similar studies.

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**Keywords:** GraphWords, visualization, lying, fabrication, prevarication

## Introduction

According to Merriam-Webster online dictionary to visualize is “to see or form a mental image of “ENVISAGE” and “to make (an internal organ or part) visible by radiographic visualization” (Merriam-Webster, 1). This means that words can be visual through a picture or illustration. Indeed, through the fast developments of technology and the digital age, there are a number of software applications providing new concepts for creative illustrations. One of these applications is the “word cloud (or *tag cloud*), which is a word visualization that displays the most used words in a text from small to large, according to how often each appears” (MonkeyLearn, 1). There are also visual dictionaries and Thesaurus’s, interactive lexicons that represent language visually.<sup>1</sup> In this study, the visualization of a word and its connections are illustrated in the form of a mind map. Tony Buzan (2018) who promoted mental literacy was the inventor of the mind map. By introducing the mind map in the 1960s as an effective way for memorizing and note-taking “he helped millions of people around the world to structure their thoughts, reach their learning goals, and unleash their creativity” (Brandner, 2019). Xiaojun Wang (2018) explains that the mind map is

based on a hierarchy and classification of information, stretches out branches from a central topic by certain association. It can be seen as a radiating graph composed of a central topic and several branches. The way the brain thinks can be represented by the structure of the Mind Map. (2)

It is not a coincidence, therefore, that the mind map and mind mapping is popular among students, business people, artists, lecturers, writers, academicians, and many others. This study does not only illustrate but also explains the fascinating connection between the words “lying” and “fabrication”, via mind mapping.

## Research Focus

The focus is to practice mind mapping as word visualization to illustrate how far a speaker or a writer of a text could lead in the expressions by exploring the various notions and branches of a word. The focus is limited to “lying and fabrication” with the objective of providing clear

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<sup>1</sup> For more please visit <https://visuwords.com/>

recommendations about work and work environments where these words might be misunderstood or misinterpreted during oral or written communications. The authors of this paper realize regular studies in these domains. This work will bring a complementary approach to their previous works (Güneri and Hayırcıl, 2021) where they identified main issues about workplaces. This study's contribution to these identifications is about the usage of these words with their other meaning in a workplace that will change the understanding of messages between two parties.

### **Research Objectives**

1. Providing some real cases within a secondary data collection in order to highlight the importance of workplace experiences with word visualization (Figure 1, page 4).
2. Doing an experiment to bring a complimentary proof following secondary data collection (Picture 1, Methodology, page 5).
3. Providing a multi-disciplinary study (linguistic, text visualization, and work environments) to target different populations who would inspire from this study for future research and implications.

### **Short Literature Review**

#### **1. Semantic Approach to the Relation Between “Lying” and “Fabrication”**

In many cultures, the word as well as the activity of “lying” has many negative connotations, since the meaning of a word depends on and reflects human experiences. Lying suggests not telling the truth and, therefore, is a vague statement. Paul Egge and Benjamin Icard argue in their article “Lying and Vagueness” (2018):

In situations in which a cooperative speaker is uncertain about the world, vagueness offers a resource for truthfulness: it avoids one's having to commit oneself to more precise utterances that would be either false or unjustifiably true, and it is arguably an optimal solution to satisfy the Gricean maxims of Quality and Quantity. (1)

Similarly, the word prevaricate is defined as “to deviate from the truth” (Merriam-Webster). Although Coleman and Kay (1981) note that a prototype theory is needed to explain the meanings of the word “lie” and, therefore, of “prevaricate”, this work presents that lying and prevarication leads to creativity, which is underlined by the word and semantic meaning of fabrication. While to fabricate may have the meaning of fake and forge for example a document or a signature, the first definition that fabricate carries is that of making art and labor as well as to construct something. The visual work here is a wonderful presentation of how the words “lying”, “prevarication”



and “fabrication” are connected to each other and construct creative work. More than that, the mind mapping of these words presents and opens a new perspective towards words that are usually associated with a negative connotation. Lying, therefore, does not only have to carry a burdening, stereotypical meaning but is also presenting a construction of imagination or original ideas in the production of artistic work.

## **2. Mind Mappings And Word Clouds**

Mind mappings and/or word clouds are mainly used in text mining studies, sentiment analysis (Younis, 2015), brief presentations of long texts (Figure 1), and brainstorming ideas (Karim and Abu, 2016). The difference between a mind map and a word cloud is that the objective in a mind map is to show the various connections between a main word/theme/expression/subject and related words/theme/expression/subjects. A mind map might be really short or long depending on the depth of the research done about the main word. However, a word cloud represents a basket of words, which are not always linked to each other, to brief principal information about a subject or issue. Several former studies were done approaching the mind map as an interactive visualization of natural language text (Elhoseiny, 2014). According to M. Nikolic (2014) the mind map is considered as a good “drafting strategy” which is “more appreciated and better received by students who are better able to structure their ideas and produce coherent texts” (Nikolic, 316). The mind map is also a “teaching and learning” tool, especially for learning vocabulary (Wang, 2018). Furthermore, in politics, work environments, community management, and in any other domains where speaking or writing to the public is required particularly word clouds are often used (Figure 1). By visualizing, the related words from one or many texts, scientists create topic modeling of words (Smith, Chuang, Hu, Boyd-Graber and Findlater, 2014). On the other hand, web-based software such as InfraNodus, which builds graphs and represents any text as a network, can be studied in detail due to the text network algorithm that the software creates (Paranyushkin, 2019).



Figure 1: Speech briefing via Tag Clouds (Heer, 2009)

## Methodology

### 1. Research Story

This study is evolved by a spontaneous finding after the hazardous exploration about the words on Graphwords. This online dictionary provides the synonym of words. “Lying” was one of the words that the authors of this study tried to explore how Graphwords functions. The result was surprising, since “lying” didn’t present only a negative meaning or activity. The word is linked directly to fabrication and prevarication where the sense of the word completely changes.

### 2. Word Visualization

According to GraphWords (free English dictionary and thesaurus), “lying” is connected to two words: “fabrication” and “prevarication”. By referring to GraphWords, the authors identified 40 words associated directly with “lying”, “fabrication” and “prevarication”. However, the word visualization via GraphWords was not possible. The authors looked for another software via which they could represent the bridges between “lying” and “fabrication/prevarication”. They used EdrawMax Software which is providing a free web tool for word visualization. On the screen, they entered the words manually where the software is helpful with different services in writing and drawing.

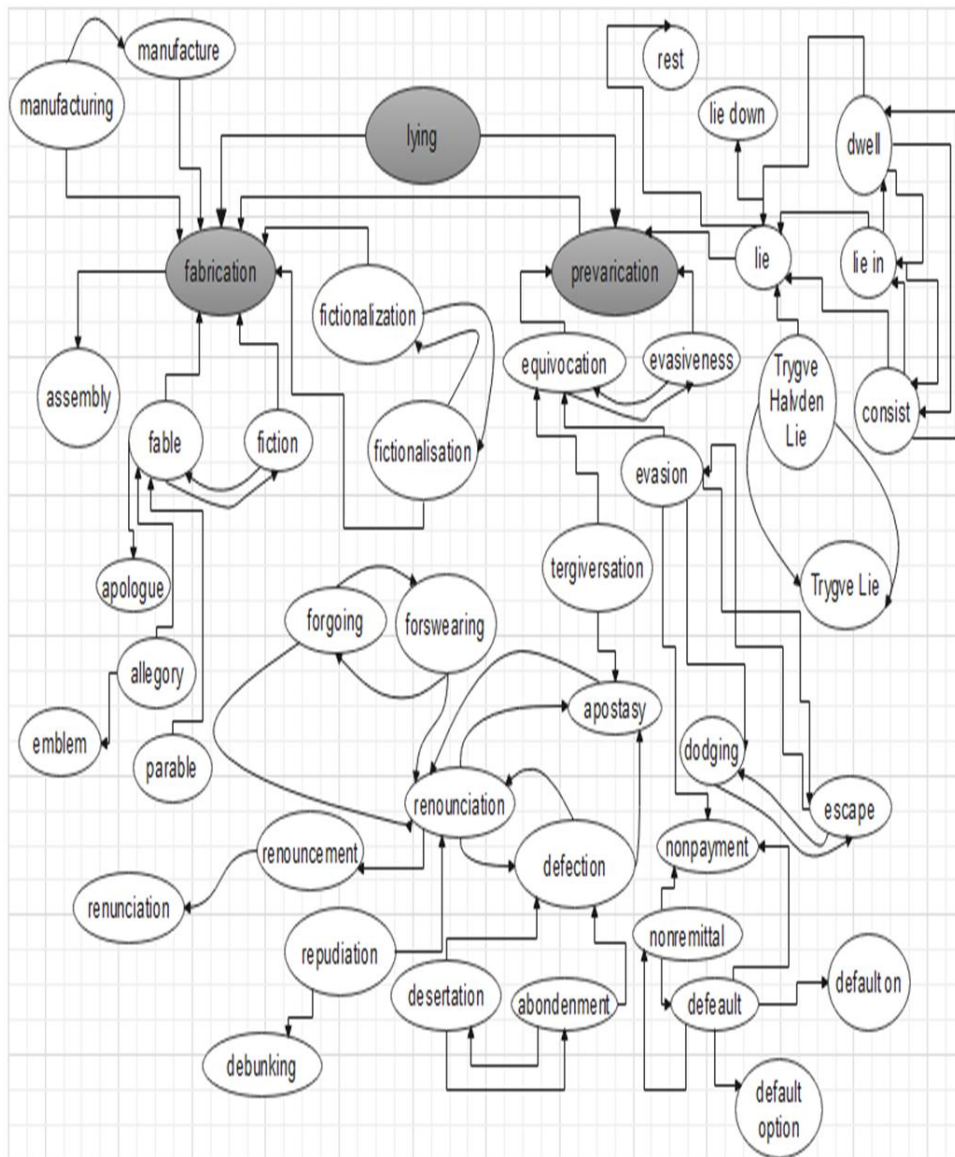
Although this illustration may well be combined in infinitive variations, the work is limited through the screen limit due to the Wondershare EdrawMax Software (Free Version). After identifying the visual links between the words, it is prepared with the mind map illustrated below by Wondershare (Picture 1). The picture on the next page has been interpreted with a sematic approach.

As it's seen the picture starts with the main words: Lying, Fabrication, and Prevarication. In the first stages of the picture, the only common point between fabrication and prevarication seems to lie. In the next stage, prevarication brings long connections with the words forgoing and forswearing which are the branch of another central word "renunciation", in other words, which means stopping an engagement.<sup>2</sup> At any stage, there is not any bridge between fabrication and prevarication. They stay as separated words. On the other hand, both represent two different meanings of lying. At this point this study uncovers some research propositions for future researches:

1. What are the challenges for managers and public speakers when they use these kinds of words which seem to have different meanings but are connected to each other?
2. What are the risks of employing these kinds of words while communicating in work environments?

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<sup>2</sup> <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/fr/dictionnaire/anglais/renunciation>



**Picture 1:** Mind map of the meanings of “lying”

## Discussion

Similar to Younis’s (2015) definition of text mining which “is the automated process of detecting and revealing new, uncovered knowledge and inter-relationships and patterns in unstructured textual data resources”, the visualization of words helps to construct new perspectives and potentials of a concept or idea that may have remained concealed to the reader or the

audience (Younis, 44). Since presentations play a crucial role not only in academics and business but also in TV and social media or digital platforms, visualization of words for a wider and especially multicultural audience requires further attention.

One of the most important benefits of visualization of words is effective communication between the speaker and the audience. The ability to communicate not only verbally but also with a depiction helps the listener to understand quickly and clearly the idea that is delivered. According to the Office of Training and Education of the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration “Clear pictures multiply the audience’s level of understanding of the material presented” and “with pictures, the concepts or ideas you present are no longer simply words - but words plus images” (Martinez and Monge, 2006). Many people in the audience in an international academic or business conference may well be from another culture. The idea is kept simple and clear and concentrates on the message rather than dwelling upon unnecessary word formations. In this way, it explains abstract ideas and can help to draw conclusions.

More than that, a visualization of the word is more engaging and interesting. While visual aids serve a unique role in a presentation, such as a picture, photos, videos, handouts, etc., visualization of words is also visible and very memorable. Indeed as K Sharma Suresh (2012) notes “psychologists and educators have found that the use of visual tools led to a retention of information rate three days after a meeting or other event that was six times greater than when information is presented by the spoken word alone” (Suresh, 294). Rather than to hear or read words, phrases, and sentences the audience is able to see the word within a new perspective, which may also give rise to further ideas. Therefore, the visualization of words is a tool for invention making it able to move beyond the use of synonyms and the standard way of thinking.

## **Recommendations**

Visualizations are strongly recommended for explaining sophisticated texts. The examples might be from institutional documents, law, books, and research papers. They will be very helpful to help people with diverse education, culture, or perspective.

In work environments, visualization will be a motivational factor to facilitate the communication between employees and managers. Long e-mails and reports are considered as time-consuming, particularly in immediate decision takings. Future strategies of the company should be visualized to make them clear for any employee at any level. In other words, visualization provides better comprehension and learning.

Finally, the visualization is improving the way of creative thinking. Exploring the words' connotations will permit the professionals to express their ideas by using a wide vocabulary. Like in the case of lying and fabrication, metaphors will lead audiences and readers to develop the eighth sense in reading and listening.

### Conclusion

This study illustrated and explained the connection between the word "lying" and "fabrication" through the visualization of the words via a tree depiction of "lying" and its branches "fabrication" and "prevarication". And provided a semantic approach to the relationship between "lying" and "fabrication". It also presented the benefits of visualization of words, such as a better understanding of a document or text, how the words are grouped, and compared patterns in a text. This study, therefore, does not only present an artistic connection between the words "lying" and "fabrication" but also offers a new perspective into diverse studies and approaches.

### GLOSSARY<sup>3</sup>

WORD	TEXTUAL THESAURUS
ABANDONMENT	<i>(noun) "defection, desertion; withdrawing support or help despite allegiance or responsibility his abandonment of his wife and children left them penniless."</i> <i>(noun) "forsaking, desertion; the act of giving something up."</i>
ALLEGORY	<i>(noun) "apologue, parable, fable; a short moral story (often with animal characters)."</i> <i>(noun) "emblem; a visible symbol representing an abstract idea."</i>
APOLOGUE	<i>(noun) "apologue, allegory, parable, fable; a short moral story (often with animal characters)."</i>
APOSTASY	<i>(noun) "tergiversation; the act of abandoning a party for cause."</i> <i>(noun) "defection, renunciation; the state of having rejected your religious beliefs or your political party or a cause (often in on-pe of opposing beliefs or causes)."</i>
ASSEMBLY	<i>(noun) "fabrication; the act of constructing something (as a piece of machinery)."</i> <i>(noun) "gathering, assemblage; the social act of assembling; they demanded the right of assembly."</i> <i>(noun) "forum, meeting place; a public facility to meet for open discussion."</i>
CONSIST	<i>(verb) "comprise, be composed of, The land he conquered comprised several provinces; What does this dish consist of?"</i>

<sup>3</sup> The words and their meaning are cited from GraphWords.

	<i>(verb) “dwell, lie, lie in, originate (in), The problems dwell in the social injustices in this country.”</i>
DEBUNKING	<i>(noun) “repudiation the exposure of falseness or pretensions the debunking of religion has been too successful.”</i>
DEFAULT	<i>(noun) “default option; an option that is selected automatically unless an alternative is specified.”              (noun) “on-perform, nonremittal; loss resulting from failure of a debt to be paid.”              (noun) “on-perform, nonremittal; act of failing to meet a financial obligation.”              (verb) “default on; fail to pay up.”</i>
DEFAULT ON	<i>(verb) “default, fail to pay up”</i>
DEFAULT OPTION	<i>(noun) “default, an option that is selected automatically unless an alternative is specified.”</i>
DEFECTION	<i>(noun) “desertion, abandonment; withdrawing support or help despite allegiance or responsibility;              his abandonment of his wife and children left them penniless.”              (noun) “apostasy, renunciation; the state of having rejected your religious beliefs or your political party or a cause (often in on-pe of opposing beliefs or causes).”</i>
DESERTION	<i>(noun) “defection, abandonment;              withdrawing support or help despite allegiance or responsibility his abandonment of his wife and children left them penniless.”              (noun) “forsaking, abandonment; the act of giving something up.”</i>
DODGING	<i>(noun) “shunning, turning away, avoidance; deliberately avoiding; keeping away from or preventing from happening.”              (noun) “evasion, escape; on-performance of something distasteful (as by deceit or trickery) that you are supposed to do; his evasion of his clear duty was reprehensible; that escape from the consequences is possible but unattractive.”              (noun) “scheme, dodge; a statement that evades the question by cleverness or trickery.”</i>
DWELL	<i>(verb) “brood, think moodily or anxiously about something.”              (verb) “harp, come back to, Don’t dwell on the past; She is always harping on the same old things.”              (verb) “live, inhabit, populate, inhabit or live in; be an inhabitant of, People lived in Africa millions of years ago; The people inhabited the islands that are now deserted; this kind of fish dwells near the bottom of the ocean; deer are populating the woods.”              (verb) “consist, lie, lie in, originate (in), The problems dwell in the social injustices in this country.”              (verb) “inhabit, exist or be situated within, Strange notions inhabited her mind.”</i>

EMBLEM	<i>(noun) "allegory, a visible symbol representing an abstract idea."</i>
EQUIVOCATION	<i>(noun) "tergiversation; falsification by means of vague or ambiguous language."                  (noun)" evasiveness, prevarication; intentionally vague or ambiguous."                  (noun) "evasion; a statement that is not literally false but that cleverly avoids an unpleasant truth."</i>
ESCAPE	<i>(noun) "flight, the act of escaping physically, he made his escape from the mental hospital; the canary escaped from its cage; his flight was an indication of his guilt."                  (noun) "escapism, an inclination to retreat from unpleasant realities through diversion or fantasy romantic novels were her escape from the stress of daily life; his alcohol problem was a form of escapism."                  (noun) "dodging, evasion, on-performance of something distasteful (as by deceit or trickery) that you are supposed to do his evasion of his clear duty was reprehensible; that escape from the consequences is possible but unattractive."</i>
EVASION	<i>(noun) "dodging, escape; on-performance of something distasteful (as by deceit or trickery) that you are supposed to do; his evasion of his clear duty was reprehensible; that escape from the consequences is possible but unattractive."                  (noun)" on-perform; the deliberate act of failing to pay money; his evasion of all his creditors; he was indicted for non-payment."                  (noun) "equivocation; a statement that is not literally false but that cleverly avoids an unpleasant truth."</i>
EVASIVENESS	<i>(noun) "equivocation, prevarication ; intentionally vague or ambiguous."</i>
FABLE	<i>(noun) "legend, fable; a story about mythical or supernatural beings or events."                  (noun) "apologue, allegory, parable, fable; a short moral story (often with animal characters)."                  (noun) "fable, fabrication, fiction; a deliberately false or improbable account."</i>
FABRICATION	<i>(noun) "prevarication, lying, the deliberate act of deviating from the truth."                  (noun) "assembly; the act of constructing something (as a piece of machinery)."                  (noun) "manufacture, manufacturing; the act of making something (a product) from raw materials the synthesis and fabrication of single crystals; an improvement in the manufacture of explosives; manufacturing is vital to Great Britain."                  (noun) "fictionalisation, fictionalization; writing in a fictional form."                  (noun) "fable, fiction; a deliberately false or improbable account."</i>
FICTION	<i>(noun) "fiction; a literary work based on the imagination and not necessarily on fact."                  (noun) "fable,</i>



	<i>fabrication, fiction; a deliberately false or improbable account.</i> ”
FICTIONALISATION	<i>(noun) “fabrication, fictionalization; writing in a fictional form.” (noun) “fictionalization; a literary work based partly or wholly on fact but written as if it were fiction.”</i>
FORGOING	<i>(noun) “renunciation, forswearing; the act of renouncing; sacrificing or giving up or surrendering (a possession or right or title or privilege etc.).”</i>
FORSWEARING	<i>(noun) “renunciation, forgoing; the act of renouncing; sacrificing or giving up or surrendering (a possession or right or title or privilege etc.).”</i>
LIE	<i>(noun) “prevarication, a statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.” (noun) “Lie, Trygve Halvden Lie, Trygve Lie, Norwegian diplomat who was the first Secretary General of the United Nations (1896-1968).” (verb) “lie down, assume a reclining position lie down on the bed until you feel better.” (verb) “dwell, consist, lie in, originate (in)The problems dwell in the social injustices in this country.” (verb) “rest, have a place in relation to something else. The fate of Bosnia lies in the hands of the West; The responsibility rests with the Allies.”</i>
LIE DOWN	<i>(verb) “lie, assume a reclining position lie down on the bed until you feel better.”</i>
LIE IN	<i>(verb) “dwell, consist, lie, originate (in), The problems dwell in the social injustices in this country.”</i>
LYING	<i>(noun) “fabrication, prevarication; the deliberate act of deviating from the truth.”.</i>
MANUFACTURE	<i>(noun) “industry the organized action of making of goods and services for sale; American industry is making increased use of computers to control production.” (noun) “fabrication, manufacturing; the act of making something (a product) from raw materials; the synthesis and fabrication of single crystals; an improvement in the manufacture of explosives; manufacturing is vital to Great Britain.” (verb) “cook up, fabricate, invent, make up; make up something artificial or untrue.” (verb) “construct, fabricate; put together out of artificial or natural components or parts; the company fabricates plastic chairs; They manufacture small toys; He manufactured a popular cereal.”</i>
MANUFACTURING	<i>(noun) “fabrication, manufacture; the act of making something (a product) from raw materials; the synthesis and fabrication</i>

	<i>of single crystals; an improvement in the manufacture of explosives; manufacturing is vital to Great Britain.”</i>
NONPAYMENT	<i>(noun) “evasion; the deliberate act of failing to pay money; his evasion of all his creditors; he was indicted for non-payment.”          (noun) “default, nonremittal; loss resulting from failure of a debt to be paid.”          (noun) “default, nonremittal; act of failing to meet a financial obligation.”</i>
NONREMITTAL	<i>(noun) “default, on-perform; loss resulting from failure of a debt to be paid.”          (noun) “default, on-perform; act of failing to meet a financial obligation.”</i>
PARABLE	<i>(noun) “apologue, allegory, fable; a short moral story (often with animal characters).”</i>
PREVARICATION	<i>(noun) “fabrication, prevarication, lying; the deliberate act of deviating from the truth.”          (noun) “equivocation, evasiveness, prevarication; intentionally vague or ambiguous.”          (noun) “prevarication, lie; a statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.”</i>
RENOUNCEMENT	<i>(noun) “renouncement, renunciation; an act (spoken or written) declaring that something is surrendered or disowned.”</i>
RENUNCIATION	<i>(noun) “forgoing, forswearing; the act of renouncing; sacrificing or giving up or surrendering (a possession or right or title or privilege etc.).”          (noun) “repudiation; rejecting or disowning or disclaiming as invalid; Congressional repudiation of the treaty that the President had negotiated.”          (noun) “renouncement;          an act (spoken or written) declaring that something is surrendered or disowned.”          (noun) “apostasy, defection; the state of having rejected your religious beliefs or your political party or a cause (often in on-pe of opposing beliefs or causes).”</i>
RENOUNCEMENT	<i>(noun) “renouncement, renunciation; an act (spoken or written) declaring that something is surrendered or disowned.”</i>
REPUDIATION	<i>(noun) “debunking; the exposure of falseness or pretensions; the debunking of religion has been too successful.”          (noun) “renunciation; rejecting or disowning or disclaiming as invalid; Congressional repudiation of the treaty that the President had negotiated.”</i>
REST	<i>(noun) “relaxation, repose, ease, freedom from activity (work or strain or responsibility), took his repose by the swimming pool.”</i>

	<p>(noun) “balance, residual, residue, residuum, remainder, something left after other parts have been taken away, there was no remainder; he threw away the rest; he took what he wanted and I got the balance.”</p> <p>(noun) “sleep, quietus, eternal rest, eternal sleep, euphemisms for death (based on an analogy between lying in a bed and in a tomb), she was laid to rest beside her husband; they had to put their family pet to sleep.”</p> <p>(noun) “respite, rest period, relief, a pause for relaxation, people actually accomplish more when they take time for short rests.”</p> <p>(verb) “remain, stay, stay the same; remain in a certain state, The dress remained wet after repeated attempts to dry it; rest assured; stay alone; He remained unmoved by her tears; The bad weather continued for another week.”</p> <p>(verb) “take a breather, breathe, catch one’s breath, take a short break from one’s activities in order to relax”.</p> <p>(verb) “pillow, rest on or as if on a pillow, pillow your head.”</p> <p>(verb) “roost, perch, sit, as on a branch, The birds perched high in the tree.”</p> <p>(verb) “repose, reside, be inherent or innate in;”</p> <p>(verb) “lie, have a place in relation to something else, The fate of Bosnia lies in the hands of the West; The responsibility rests with the Allies.”</p>
TERGIVERSATION	<p>(noun) “apostasy; the act of abandoning a party for cause.”</p> <p>(noun) “equivocation; falsification by means of vague or ambiguous language.”</p>
TRYGVE HALVDEN LIE	<p>(noun) “Lie, Trygve Halvden Lie, Trygve Lie, Norwegian diplomat who was the first Secretary General of the United Nations (1896-1968).”</p>
TRYGVE LIE	<p>(noun) “Lie, Trygve Halvden Lie, Trygve Lie, Norwegian diplomat who was the first Secretary General of the United Nations (1896-1968).”</p>

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## Gender Performativity and Conceptual Metaphors in the Presidential Campaign Discourse: A case study from Georgia

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### Abstract

Gender Performativity defines politicians' verbal repertoire in accordance with the social context and expectations. Social actors construct their identities in the discourse through *the work of words*. Conceptual metaphors are supposed to be the cognitive models of linguistic metaphoric expressions manifested in the political discourse which tend to play a significant role in the social construction of gender. The present study focuses on the use of metaphors in two presidential candidates' (Salome Zurabishvili and Grigol Vashadze) English interviews made during 2018 presidential election campaign in Georgia. Conceptual Metaphors: *Politics is Journey*, *Politics is Sport* and *Politics is War* are investigated in Salome Zurabishvili's and Grigol Vashadze's political speeches. The metaphoric choices the politicians make are socially determined and later on ascribed to their gender which may not be as binary as it is traditionally perceived. In today's competitive world of politics women tend to manifest their agency through the language which is rendered masculine. Therefore, critical discourse analysis (CDA) is applied to investigate the discursive construction of gender and agency through conceptual metaphors.

**Keywords:** Political discourse, CDA, conceptual metaphors, gender performativity

## Introduction

Language and gender research covers a wide array of scientific questions based on certain theoretical premises, shifting the research from investigating the different communicative styles of male and female discourse participants to the most up-to-date direction of the performative model of gender. The aim of the present paper is to explore and hereby, identify how gender is performed in Georgian political discourse. For this particular purpose, I make an endeavor to scrutinize Georgian Politician's discourse elections (Grigol Vashadze and Salome Zurabishvili) in relation to the 2018 Georgian presidential election. Obviously, the number of candidates was more than mentioned above; however, there was a sole female candidate and to maintain gender balance, a male candidate has been chosen in accordance with final political rivalry.

Grigol Vashadze was appointed the chairman of the United National Movement after Mikheil Saakashvili had stepped down. Vashadze's career as a leader of the party came to an end when he left the party on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December 2020 as a response to the political turmoil that developed between the Georgian Dream and the consolidated opposition. Prior to the chairman's position, Grigol Vashadze used to hold other high-ranking positions – Deputy to the Foreign Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia.

Salome Zurabishvili born in Paris into a family of Georgian immigrants held senior diplomatic positions over three decades in France as well as being the Ambassador of France to Georgia. Later on, he was appointed the Foreign Minister of Georgia. After Mikheil Saakashvili's and her ways departed, he founded *the Way of Georgia* political Party which she led until 2010. Following the resignation from the party's leadership, she became a member of Georgian Parliament. Ultimately, she was nominated as an independent presidential candidate supported by the Georgian Dream in 2018. Salome Zurabishvili is involved in promoting women's opportunities. On October 5, 2019 he hosted the Georgian, Belgian and French women leaders' meeting: "The role of women in our society is crucial and their contribution to our political, cultural, entrepreneurial and educational circles is key to our development" (Twitter).

Both presidential candidates have been prominent in the Georgian political arena. Therefore, it is a challenge to explore and analyze how they express their political attitudes and standpoints through linguistic lenses.

The discourse may be manifesting a varied use of conceptual metaphors. However, the difference does not come as an inherent marker of female and male speech patterns; on the contrary, it is more about the social constructivist view which considers the gendered language use as the capacity for representing oneself either as a man or a woman (Cameron, 2007). This view rejects the essentialist notions of gender which establishes a clear and

direct connection between biological sex and gender identity; the process of socialization attributes men and women to different subcultures which define their verbal repertoire (Tannen, 1991). As opposed to this viewpoint, the social constructivist approach posits that discourse participants opt for certain language patterns in order to come across either as masculine or feminine conditioned by the cultural and social context. Before the theoretical and methodological sections of the paper, the background information of the presidential candidates in the 2018 elections is presented below.

Conceptual metaphors are supposed to be the subject of the research which represent the powerful tool for establishing cognitive comparisons as well as promoting the social actors' sense of agency. In this paper, *it is argued that a female politician constructs herself in the discourse through the use of conceptual metaphors that emphasize her agency. Therefore, it is of importance to reveal how the above-mentioned agency could be socially determined. At this point, a performative model of gender takes over – women, especially in politics, have a faculty to shift their roles to serve the successful agency regardless of the features that are traditionally ascribed to either femininity or masculinity.*

### ***Gender, Political Discourse and CDA***

Female Politician's agency is clearly manifested in the discourse they create, and within this discourse, they are born as subjects. Their agency to some extent is represented through the use of conceptual metaphors which may highlight the intrinsic aspect that could later serve as the basis for the instrumental agency. Therefore, Critical Discourse Analysis comes into play to uncover subtle ways in which power and ideology could be scrutinized for which the text/talk is crucial. Texts are rendered as products of linguistic actions (Wodak, 2001, p.66) which represent reality through the agency. 'Agency' *per se* is associated with Fairclough (2003, p.22) who defines the concept as certain faculty of people to act deliberately with the realization of certain limitations though "social agents are not 'free agents', they are socially constrained, but nor are their actions totally socially determined". As it is observed, the power which is an inseparable part of social relations and the agency of social actors is also revealed through linguistic options.

Nevertheless, there is the case of linking power with a female politician. Could a female political leader be associated with power while masculinity and power are more congruent with each other? The answer to this question could be found in the management theorist Kanter's work - *Men and Women of the Corporation* (1993) where she argues that female power is manifest in culturally and historically determined archetypes of female power: the 'Mother', the 'Seductress', the 'Pet' and the "Iron Maiden". The latter is



linked with exercising power directly and hereby deemed masculine and appalling.

Baxter (2012) elaborates more on these archetypes and posits that they are not 'fixed roles'; women are able to exploit them in line with varied social contexts to achieve goals. Moreover, Koller (2004 a) explains that the discourse of "Iron Maiden" might be gendered via the use of metaphors which could masculinize female subjects.

The ability of the female politicians to adjust their roles in accordance with social context maximizing their agency is reinforced in Shaw's (2020) "Gender and Political Speech" promoting "performative model of gender" which is influenced immensely by cultural values. Precisely, the ideology of "different voice" lies at the very foundation of conception that women bring about their style of establishing consensus and balance by cooperative style of communication. In reality, women who manifest strong agency and adopt so-called "masculine" ways of communication are faced with negative appraisals, which is discriminatory in itself. The aim of CDA is to look at and scrutinize to what extent the gender of the politician is performative in terms of agency.

### ***Metaphors in Political Discourse***

Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) revolutionizing conceptual metaphor theory highlights that metaphor use is an everyday verbal activity in which an abstract thing is conceptualized by another more concrete one at cognitive level and subsequently transferred into a linguistic expression or any other semiotic mode of communication. Metaphoric transfer posits that the knowledge about a source domain, for example '*Journey*', is cognitively compared to a target domain, for example, LIFE, which yields a conceptual metaphor '*Life is Journey*'. Linguistically, this conceptual metaphor may take the following expression: '*I'm at crossroads.*' Obviously, there is ample amount of cognitive comparisons which suppose the existence of relevant linguistic expressions, for example, conceptual metaphor '*Life is Fight for Survival*' which relates to the following metaphor at the language level: '*We are attacking hardships and challenges on daily basis*'. Therefore, if one person opts for '*Life is Journey*' cognitive model and the other – for '*Life is Fight for Survival*', they conjure up different emotions and send different messages to the people they communicate with; thus, metaphor serves an interpersonal metafunction (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). What's more, via metaphoric expressions the speakers not only posit themselves in relation to the audience, but also create certain viewpoints, represent the world from a particular standpoint realizing an ideational function through creating 'social realities' for us (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980, p.159).

Metaphors don't suffice with only the above-mentioned functions; through the ideological function, metaphor is a way of persuading the audience,

winning the listeners to one's way of thinking, if not manipulating. Thus, metaphor contributes to the formation of ideological meanings in discourse and gender is one of the integral components of social life where ideology is pervasive. The different notions and understandings of masculinity or femininity do ideological work reifying or challenging the identities which might be beneficial for one group, but disadvantageous for the other especially in societies with 'hegemonic masculinity' (Connell, 1995; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). The metaphor-based gender identity construction is set in three dimensions:

- Gendered metaphors reifying power asymmetries in defining reality which solely relies on male experiences (Koller, 2004 b; Velasco Sacristan, 2005; Wilson, 1992);
- Metaphors characterizing men and women (Hegstrom and McCarl-Nielsen, 2002; Hines 1999; Koller, 2004 a, Luchjenbroers , 1998);
- Metaphors that are used by female and male discourse participants.

Our study investigates the third dimension of metaphor use which is based on the premise that due to socialization men and women develop different views of the world, conceptualizing it in different ways (Kovecses, 2005, p.90) and representing relevant linguistic metaphoric expressions in their verbal repertoire. Analyzing men's /women's metaphor use would allow us to make inferences with regard to the speakers' gender identity which is construed in a social context characterized by unequal power relations between genders. As previously mentioned, the research endeavors to relate conceptual metaphor theory with the social constructivist approach. It has to be mentioned that men and women apply unlike metaphors to conceptualize the same event or phenomenon (Fiksdal, 1999) thus developing their gender identities. However, gender identity is not a fixed phenomenon as opposed to an essentialist view, rather it is a linguistic resource actualizing either femininity or masculinity depending on the social context.

### ***Pronouns and Voice***

Pronouns are closely linked with agency social actors are capable of representing in the discourse. Agency, as well as discursive power and authority, could be unraveled by the use of personal pronoun 'I', which "reflects an individualistic representation of politicians as social actors" equipping them with the sense of having "power and ownership" (Ndambuki & Janks, 2010, p.11). The use of 'I' represents a social actor as an individual, whereas 'we' portrays the actor as a part of a collective. The choice of active over passive voice for structuring the statements is hereby connected with agency and authority. Therefore, these linguistic aspects will be investigated along with the cognitive metaphor use.

## Methods

The comparative study of Salome Zurabishvili's and Grigol Vashadze's metaphor use is based on a corpus of a total of 7521 words (see Appendix for details). All the texts under investigation represent the English Language interviews in connection with the 2018 presidential elections and are accessible on the Internet platforms (for details see Appendix). The Software tool for corpus analysis is *Antconc*, which is free, easy to use and convenient for investigating corpora (Anthony, 2020).

The verbal unstructured data as mentioned above come from a variety of sources published on the Internet: Deutsche Welle, Euronews, Reuters, BBC news, Radio Free Europe. The recorded material has been transcribed and analyzed by *Antconc*. This type of data-driven analysis of discourse is referred to as *sentiment analysis* also known as *opinion mining* (Liu, 2015), which focuses on identifying how people use natural language to construct their identities (Holmes, 1998; Holmes & Meyerhoff, 1999) and how they might influence public opinion formation.

The first step is the identification of a keyword list for each politician's mini subcorpus. As for the Metaphor identification procedure, it was carried out by the method of Pragglejaz Group (2007) yielding a number of metaphoric expressions at the text level used by each politician. The procedure was manually conducted and later on processed by *Antconc* tool for identifying the concordances and frequencies for quantitative as well as qualitative text analysis. This step is necessary to identify the recurrent source domains. The MIP procedure yielded a list of 21 metaphorically used lexemes. As a next step, *Antconc* Tool software is applied to run the concordances for 21 metaphoric types in each subcorpus to get a more in-depth analysis of metaphorically used lexemes. Based on the concordance results, the following was calculated (Koller and Semino, 2009, p.17):

- the number and percentage of types realized for each of the source domains ('*Journey*' and '*War*') to see how productively either politician uses the metaphor;
- the number of metaphoric tokens, that is, the individual metaphoric expressions;
- the metaphoric type-token ratio (mTTR; see Koller, 2004b) to ascertain the *variety* with which each metaphorically used lexeme is realised. The metaphoric type-token ratio shows how often different metaphoric expressions occur in a corpus; the lower the mTTR, the less varied is the metaphor usage in the corpus. It follows that the number and percentage of metaphoric types that are realised does not correlate with the mTTR, because the number of tokens may be disproportionately higher;

- the metaphor density per 1000 words to determine the *frequency* with which the metaphoric tokens in question are used by the two politicians.

Semino and Koller (2009, p.17) posit that computer-assisted corpus analysis requires establishing its relation to linguistic features such as intertextuality, negation and certainly, co-construction of the metaphor. Metaphor usage by each politician may be influenced by topic, audience and historical background.

## Results and Discussion

This section below presents the most important aspects of the politicians' discourse highlighting the keywords (Table 1) and metaphor use (Table 2).

**Table 1.** Keywords in Salome Zurabishvili and Grigol Vashadze

	<b>Salome Zurabishvili</b>	<b>Grigol Vashadze</b>
<b>Role</b>	<i>President Partners</i>	
<b>Proper Names: Politicians</b>	<i>Ivanishvili Saakashvili Putin</i>	<i>Saakashvili Misha Salome Zurabishvili Ivanishvili</i>
<b>Self-reference</b>	<i>I, we</i>	<i>I, we , my, our</i>
<b>Other reference</b>	<i>Aggressor Georgians Emigration Opposition Society Parliament apparatchiks</i>	<i>Everybody Nobody Citizen Dictator Idiot</i>
<b>Proper Names: Countries</b>	<i>Russia France Latvia Georgia NATO Ukraine</i>	<i>Georgia Russia</i>
<b>Adjectives of Nationality and other</b>	<i>Georgian Russian European Independent</i>	<i>Georgian Russian Soviet Political</i>
<b>Mental Process</b>	<i>Mean think</i>	
<b>Process</b>	<i>Controlled Supporting/ed Elected Occupying Inscribed abducted</i>	<i>Going Called Know Residing</i>
<b>Abstract Issues and Entities</b>	<i>Candidature Exile Initiatives Provocation stability</i>	<i>Facilitation Union Exile Kremlin Elections Georgian dream citizenship</i>
<b>Concrete Issues and Entities</b>	<i>Constitution Diplomat Line Territory population</i>	<i>TV Chicken Mistake Passport country</i>
<b>Words of Apology</b>		<i>pardon</i>
<b>Other</b>	<i>Very</i>	<i>Absolutely Frankly Very</i>

The research identified the following conceptual metaphor source domains: *War, Sport, Journey, Theatre, Builder* and 21 types of metaphorically used lexemes at the text/discourse level. Table 2. represents frequencies of metaphorically used lemmas in relation to conceptual

metaphors and politicians. The most prominent source domains are *Journey*, *Sport* and *War*. Abbreviations SZ and GV stand for Salome Zurabishvili and Grigol Vashadze respectively.

**Table 2. Frequencies of Metaphorically used lemmas**

	WAR		SPORT		JOURNEY		THEATRE		BUILDER	
	SZ	GV	SZ	GV	SZ	GV	SZ	GV	SZ	GV
<b>Metaphoric Types</b>	6	2	2	4	4	1	2	3	1	1
<b>Metaphoric tokens</b>	18	6	3	15	27	2	4	4	3	1
<b>mTTR – metaphoric Type/Token ratio</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>0.67</b>	<b>0.27</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.75</b>	<b>0.33</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Metaphoric density/1000 words</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>2.37</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>0.79</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>0.39</b>

### The ‘Journey’ source domain

The metaphor ‘*Politics is Journey*’ goes back to Lakoff and Johnson’s (1999) general conceptual metaphor ‘*Purposes are Destinations*’ which functions on the scheme *Source–Path–Goal* (Johnson, 1987). Taking this model into consideration, we can say that if a discourse participant is heading towards a destination, no matter what challenges and obstacles he/she may have – ‘*Purposeful Activity is Moving on a Path towards a Destination*’ (Lakoff, 1993). If we consider the fact that destinations are regarded positive, since a person is striving to reach them, then this journey metaphor positively evaluates certain political aspects /policies (Charteris-Black, 2004, p.93). The journey metaphor embodies the goal-oriented movement which makes it fairly productive in the political discourse (Charteris Black, 2005; Musolff, 2004; Semino, 2002). In the present case study, the journey metaphor used in two Presidential candidates’ interviews is investigated, which is realized at the text level by the following lexemes: *step, towards, way, move*.

The concordance shows that majority of the token types which are used metaphorically in Salome Zurabishvili’s interviews is connected with the metaphoric expression *move* combined with keywords such as *European Union, Nato, Georgia, American Partners, Territory, occupying* and comparative adjectives – *closer, faster* - to intensify the movement towards the destination along with the personal pronouns /keywords ‘I’ and ‘we’ (examples 1-7).

- 1) “... and given my experience and past and contacts, I intend to be a very active one that advocates Georgia *moving closer and into the European Union*.”

- 2) “So, it’s something that is becoming very concrete for the Georgian population, but this election was the declaration by the Georgian population that it *wants to move faster, closer to the European Union* and so, we have the best chance and I intend to deliver.”
- 3) “We need to work a lot, we need a lot of new ideas, to discuss them with *Americans as well as Europeans* and where it is where we can move.”
- 4) “I think that I am very well suited to accompany this last transition of Georgia *towards the European Union and NATO* and its western destiny.”
- 5) “I don’t think that at this time and age Russia is behaving the way it does on our *occupying line* where every day, we have people that are abducted. This line is moving, it’s a constant threat that it is moving inside our territory, very close to Tbilisi or the way Russia is behaving today with Ukraine. I don’t think that we can today *enter* cooperation mode. I don’t think there is any balance. We are Europe and Europeans. If the West and Europe and our American Partners *move to* any form of discussion with Russia, that’s where we need to be *close*, informed in order for our principles, our objectives, our sovereignty and territorial integrity to be respected and supported and supported beyond the table as such. That’s *the way to go*.”
- 6) “We have to try to figure out with our partners what would be the new ways for Georgia to *move* from this rather stagnant situation where we cannot do anything with these occupied territories to a new stage.”
- 7) “If the West and Europe and our American Partners *move to* any form of discussion with Russia, that’s where we need to be close, informed in order for our principles, our objectives, our sovereignty and territorial integrity to be respected and supported and supported beyond the table as such.”

The source domain of ‘Journey’ is certainly mapped on the domain of politics which may be associated either with masculinity or femininity depending on the agency – whether the linguistic metaphor comes across as active or passive, which means that this metaphor is multi-faceted and related to personal experiences and political scenarios. The ‘Journey’ metaphors which were identified in Salome Zurabishvili’s interviews tend to display more active agency (examples 1-7) along with the excessive use of keyword - personal pronoun ‘I’ which make her an active, powerful candidate. The female politician uses sport and war metaphors alongside. It might be connected with the social and political environment which supports identity construal. Therefore, the journey metaphor is not as masculine as sport

metaphor, but the active linguistic structures used alongside is an attempt to promote female agency and power.

### **The ‘*Sport*’ source domain**

The ‘*Sport*’ metaphors are widely used in political discourse (Balbus, 1975, p.26) indicating the existence of opposing sides in the political arena which obey certain rules of conduct (Howe 1988:89) in order to play and win respectively. Therefore, the elements of sport are quite compatible with politics and it is obvious that the source domain of ‘*Sport*’ is easily mapped onto the target domain of ‘*Politics*’. Gibbs (1994, p.140) highlights that “many of the metaphors used in politics draw heavily and systematically on the languages of sport and warfare”. The pervasive use of metaphors in the political discourse is supposed to be conditioned by the most significant function of this linguistic tool – the function of influencing/persuading the audience. Additionally, Kovecses (2010, p.41) posits that “games and sport are characterized by certain properties that are commonly used for metaphorical purposes”. Moreover, “the competitive nature of both elections and professional sport seems a sufficient basis for frequent metaphorization of elections through sport” (Fetzer and Lauerbach, 2007, p.87). There is the aspect that is worth focusing on that “in contrast to ‘*War*’ metaphors, ‘*Sport*’ metaphors suggest *fair play* and the chance for “peaceful resolution” (Howe, 1988, p.95). The pervasiveness of sport metaphor might be explained by the fact that “competitive sports metaphors place positive associations on winning and value the attributes that make winning more likely” (Charteris-black, 2013, p.188).

The evidence for the ‘*Sport*’ source domain was found in both politicians’ discourse. Here is the list of metaphoric expressions/lemmas at the text level which realize the above-mentioned conceptual metaphor ‘*Politics is Sport*’: *play, compete, lose, win/won, round, participate*. These metaphoric expressions are more evident in Grigol Vashadze’s interviews with more emphasis on lexemes *win, round* and *participate* in combination with the keywords examples 8-10).

- 8) “Do you know, this is the official version of the so-called government and the so-called Georgian Dream, in reality, *won* the first *round*.”
- 9) “So, I was a Soviet Diplomat and I can tell you that I am very proud of it because I have *participated*\_in negotiations which made our life safer.”
- 10) “Everybody understands that when we are *winning not if we are winning those elections, we are winning the referendum on our country, and we are bringing closer snap* parliamentary elections”.

The use of sport metaphor makes the male candidate come across as more competitive and reinforces traditional attitudes.

### **The ‘War’ source domain**

The ‘War’ metaphor is the most significant one as it highlights the nature of agency. Moreover, it is equally manifested in the political speeches of the candidates. The use of ‘War’ domain is inherently associated with masculinity and competitiveness. The female representative is as ready to fight as the male one. And the examples given below are supposed to be the proof:

- 11) Russia is projecting power on our territory and *we have to be fighting* and trying to preserve its independence.
- 12) *We need to confront our positions, to confront it with our partners.*
- 13) *I am not interested in the political battle* and I intend to be such a president who will try to bring, to be above the political parties that will not descend into the political battles.

Grigol Vashadze uses war metaphor as well:

- 14) So-called Georgian Dream is very right when *they are fighting the deadly fight for these polls. But they have already lost their fight.*
- 15) I spent five years of my *life fighting with Russia* and I succeeded and left Russia in a shameful company of Venezuela, Syria, Nicaragua...
- 16) Yes. You know, it is a strange question because, quite frankly, I have never been choosing my friends according to their political beliefs; yes, he is my friend and if there *is a confrontation between my beliefs and his beliefs*, I will try my best to retain our friendship.

Nonetheless, Salome Zurabishvili’s War metaphor is associated with fighting against occupant Russia, while Grigol vashadze focuses more on a fight as a presidential candidate.

### **Conclusion**

‘Politics is Sport’, ‘Politics is Journey’ and ‘Politics is War’ define a cognitive aspect of the politicians’ discourses. The ‘War’ metaphor is almost equally evident in both candidates’ discourse, which shows that they are ready to fight and win. But the ‘Sport’ source domain ascribes more competitiveness to the male politician’s speech whereas the ‘Journey’ source domain attributes more tranquil and destination-oriented attitude to a female politician’s agency. Still, Journey metaphor is a different case. As we can see the ideology of “different voice” pales here and women might also adopt the masculine way of discourse making. Nonetheless, the use of journey metaphor makes the female candidate appear less competitive or bound by struggle. Still, a lot has to be done in terms of a cognitive shift to cause equal discursive positions for male and female politicians.



Within the premises of the research far-reaching claims based on the selected mini corpora could not be drawn. However, whatever has been found is significant for the Georgian political discourse in terms of revealing politicians' capability of performing gender, which makes them appear more or less masculine/feminine. And the latter changes in line with the social and political context or expectations imposed by particular societal norms.

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## **Appendix**

### **Salome Zurabishvili corpus – 4988 words**

#### **SZ 1**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3audjCs82M>

DW News. Published on Nov.9, 2018. Zhanna Nemtsova's interview with Salome Zurabishvili.

#### **SZ 2**

[https://video.i24news.tv/details/\\_5973225792001?lang=en&utm\\_medium=n\\_av\\_bar\\_button&utm\\_source=en\\_website](https://video.i24news.tv/details/_5973225792001?lang=en&utm_medium=n_av_bar_button&utm_source=en_website)  
i24news.

**THE RUNDOWN | Salome Zurabishvili discusses historic victory | Thursday, November 29th 2018**

#### **SZ 3**

<https://www.euronews.com/2018/11/29/euronews-speaks-exclusively-to-georgia-s-new-president-elect-salome-zurabishvili>

Euronews speaks to Georgia's new President-elect, Salome Zurabishvili  
By Katy Dartford • last updated: 29/11/2018

#### **SZ 4**

<https://www.businessinsider.com/r-georgian-president-elect-takes-strong-line-towards-moscow-after-contentious-vote-2018-12>

Georgian president-elect takes strong line towards Moscow after contentious vote

Reuters

Dec. 1, 2018,

#### **SZ 5**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jih0BtC6TJQ>

BBC news

Published on Nov. 29, 2018

## **Grigol Vashadze Corpus 2533**

GV 1

<https://www.dw.com/en/georgian-candidate-grigol-vashadze-denies-tight-russia-ties/a-46197576>

<https://www.dw.com/en/georgian-candidate-grigol-vashadze-denies-tight-russia-ties/a-46197576>

Georgia's presidential candidate: I've spent five years fighting with Russia | DW English

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mF8GXDC2M18>

GV2

AP Archive

'Protest against results of presidential election in Georgia'

<http://www.aparchive.com/search?startd=&endd=&allFilters=&query=Protest+against+results+of+presidential+election+in+Georgia&advsearchStartDateFilter=&advsearchEndDateFilter=&searchFilterHdSDFormat=All&searchFilterDigitized=All&searchFiltercolorFormat=All&searchFilteraspectratioFormat=All>

GV 3

RadioFreeEurope RadioLiberty

Georgians Vote in Tight Presidential Election

<https://www.rferl.org/a/georgia-presidential-elections-voting/29626196.html>

GV 4

AP Archive

GEORGIA EXIT POLL

<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/c002365a492c112e780432750b2af46a>

GV 5

AP Archive

Opposition members protest inauguration of president

<http://www.aparchive.com/metadata/youtube/bb549344811df01d19ce717e3bd16a70>



## **Examining the Status of English as a Medium of Instruction in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Comparative Study of Botswana and Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

This paper examines the status of English as a medium of instruction in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) by comparing how it is taught and learned in Botswana and Nigeria. The paper's argument is based on the premise that learners acquire literacy skills in a familiar language (Williams, 2011). The English language is an official language in the two countries and has been linked to their social, economic and political development (Cholakova, 2015). The aim of the study is to compare the status of English as a medium of instruction in Botswana and Nigeria, identify and examine the implications for its use, and recommend best practice for policymakers in the field. Based on a systematic review of research between 2000 and 2021, the paper identifies several key findings affecting both countries: the insufficient acquisition of literacy skills in English, the need for a language policy review in Botswana, and the need for a thorough review of teacher quality by the governments of both countries if United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.c is

to be achieved by the deadline of 2030. The implications of the review for both countries are that pupils drop out of school as a result of their lack of understanding of English; a non-credit pass in English at the secondary level can hinder students' career progression; English remains parents' educationally preferred language; and policy makers need to have a strategic awareness of how English and other languages are used in their communities for educational purposes.

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**Keywords:** Botswana, English language, medium of instruction, Nigeria, Sub-Saharan Africa

## 1. Introduction

English has become a global language, and from its earlier limited use, has gained currency as the most sought-after language in the modern world. Its development has not been without controversy, however, as some scholars have identified several negative aspects of its rise to hegemony, e.g., viewing it as an imperialist language, while others judge it to be a link to positive socio-economic developments in a society (Pandaranga, 2015). As a global language, 'English has become the second language of everybody' (Plonski, Teferra & Brady, 2013, p. 1). It has also become the educationally preferred language in many countries, with an official status that enables its wider use. Indeed, English is currently a medium of instruction in about 54 countries in the world. Some of the benefits of this role include offering speakers enhanced career prospects and educational mobility, while its challenges in the African context relate to non-involvement by parents and the lack of support by government, as well as the potential for mother tongue and cultural loss (Karvonen, 2017). Regardless of the limitations, studies have consistently shown that African parents often prefer their children to use English rather than their mother tongue as the medium of instruction because of its undoubted status (World Bank 2002).

Presently, economic and military hegemony are also associated with linguistic hegemony; most countries in the world use English as a second language and this is a consequence of the former British Empire and the military hegemony of America (Khayali & Akasha, 2018). This is one reason for the existence of anglophone African countries. English is perceived to offer better opportunities and social mobility (Coleman, 2010). The language has traits which make it useful, approachable and adaptable (McGovern, 2019) and consequently, English is the dominant means of communication in economics, politics and education in Africa (Plonski Teferra & Brady, 2013). The role of English is often double-edged, however, as it plays a unifying as well as divisive role and has led to a division in African societies of the

powerful, educated elites from lower socio-economic groups, especially in urban areas (Williams, 2011).

The aim of the systematic review undertaken in this paper is to offer the first comparative study of the status of English as a medium of instruction in Botswana and Nigeria and specifically to identify the implications for its use in both countries. The study is based on the premise that learners acquire literacy skills in a familiar language, and this consequently may contribute to quality education in ways that can help alleviate poverty and aid the wider development of their societies (Williams, 2011). While there have been several studies on the status of English as a medium of instruction, the originality of the research in this paper is that a) it is the first to provide a systematic review of research comparing English language teaching and learning in Botswana and Nigeria, and b) it addresses the importance of English as a medium of instruction with respect to the achievement of UN SDGs, which have tended to marginalise or omit reference to multilingualism and the importance of language learning (Salzburg Report 586, 2017).

## **2. Background**

Over the course of several centuries many African countries were colonised by European colonial powers. As of 2021, Africa has a total population of 1,361,244,376, representing 16.72% of the entire world's population, and is divided into different regions: Eastern Africa, Western Africa, Northern Africa, Middle Africa and Southern Africa- Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) was discovered by explorers towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century (Silue, 2015) and studies show that education in the region is perceived as one of the weakest in the world (Williams, 2011). Most countries in the region are multi-ethnic and multicultural and multilingualism plays a prominent role in the linguistic landscape of the continent. Although research consistently suggests that the continent has the highest number of languages in the world (Guldemann, 2018); this is in fact misleading, as the number of languages in Africa is 2,058 (30% of the world's languages), while Asia has 2,197 or 33% (Silue, 2015) (see Table 1).

As the language of administration, the judiciary, government, diplomacy and a symbol of unity in most African countries, English retains its status as the most prestigious language on the continent. Of the 54 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Zellers, 2018), 26 currently have English as an official language or co-official language and researchers have predicted that second language users of English will increase from 235 million to 462 million by 2050 (Moulin & Campos, 2017). The countries in SSA were primarily colonised by the British, French and Portuguese. Nigeria and Botswana were colonised by the British and as a result both countries share similar contexts in terms of the teaching and learning of English.



**Table 1.** Languages and Ethnic Groups in Nigeria and Botswana

COUNTRY	POPULATION	ETHNIC GROUPS	LANGUAGES
<b>BOTSWANA</b>	2,317,233	Tswana (Sestwana) 79%; Kalanga 15%; Basara 3%; Others including Kaglagadi and people of European ancestry 7%.	Setswana 73%; Shekgalgadi 3.4%; English (official) 2.8%; Zezuru/Shona 2%; Sesarwa 1.7%; Sembukush 1.6%; Ndebele 1%; Others 2.8%.
<b>NIGERIA</b>	214,028, 302	Yoruba 15.5%; Hausa 30%; Igbo (Ibo) 15.2%; Fulani 6%; Tiv 2.4%; Kanuri/Berberi 2.4%; Ibibio 1.8%; Ijaw/Izon 1.8%; Others 24.7%.	English (Official); Hausa, Igbo (Ibo); Fulani, over 500 additional indigenous languages.

Source: World Fact Book 2021

Originating from the context outlined above, the following research questions will be explored in the study:

1. What are the differences in the provision of English in language education policies of Botswana and Nigeria? This question considers the provision of the language education policies of the two countries. Nigeria possesses three national languages, while Botswana has one. The mother tongue/language of environment is taught for three years in Nigeria and for one year in Botswana.
2. What different challenges confront Botswana and Nigeria in terms of English as a medium of instruction? This question focuses on the problems associated with using English as a medium of instruction in the two countries as several different factors play a role in English use.
3. How does teacher quality inhibit the learning of English as a language of instruction in Botswana and Nigeria? The effects of teacher quality on the teaching and learning of the language will be considered, focusing on the decline in education quality in the two countries against the background in which the government of Botswana has invested considerable sums in education. In 2016, the government invested 10.64 BWP or 28.8% of the country's budget (Budget Speech,

2016), while the reverse was the case in Nigeria as funding has decreased. For example, education expenditure dropped from 10.54% to 7.04% in the period 2014-2018 respectively.

4. What are the differences in the prospects of English as a language of instruction in Nigeria and Botswana? This question explores the status of English by examining its perceived status as a gateway to higher education in the two countries.

### 3. Methodology

The methodology is based on a systematic review which considered research conducted between 2000-2021; this period of two decades was necessary as this is the first comparative study between the two countries on the subject. The databases searched included Google Scholar, ResearchGate and Academia.edu. Studies that did not fall within the time span of the research were rejected. In total, 67 empirical and non-empirical publications were chosen, and the themes searched for were shaped by the research questions. Themes such as teacher quality and language education policies, language education policies in Nigeria and Botswana, the challenges of English as a medium of instruction, the prospects of English as a language of instruction and teacher quality in Africa were included. Journal articles, books and monographs, blogs, news media reports, theses and conference papers were reviewed. Table 2 shows that 44 (65.67%) journals, 9 (13.43%) books and monograph, 1 (1.49%) blog, 10 (14.93%), news and reports and 3 (4.48%) theses/conference papers were reviewed.

**Table 2.** Themes of the Study

Themes	Journals	Books and Monographs	Blog	News media Reports	Theses and Conference Papers
<b>English as a global language</b>	Khaiyali & Akasha (2018)	Williams (2011)			Plonski, Taferra & Brady (2013)
<b>Language Education Policies in Nigeria and Botswana</b>	Mokibelo (2015); Mokibelo (2016a); Mokibelo (2018); Makinwija (2015); Gwandu & Ibrahim (2016); Tom-Lawyer & Thomas	Kennedy (2011); NPE (1998); British Council (2017); Capstick, (2018); Tabuluwa & Pansiri, (2013)		UNICEF (2011); ADEA (2015); UNICEF (2016); Salzburg Report 586, (2017), World Bank, (2002); Botswanan	Jubal Education Conference, (2012)

	(2020); Gorter & Cenoz (2017); Ochoma (2015); Tollefson, (2008); Nyati-Ramahobo, (2000); Ogunmodimu (2015)			Guardian (2018)	
<b>Challenges of English as a medium of Instruction</b>	Gokmengolu & Gelmez-Burakgazi, (2013); Cankaya (2017)	Dearden (2015)			
<b>Challenges of English as a medium of Instruction in Nigeria and Botswana</b>	Omowumi (2019); Adebayo & Folorunsho (2017); Ememe (2009); Igboanusi & Peter (2015); Uwanyi & Omeje (2013); Adeyemi & Kalane (2011); Mokibelo (2016b); Namuchwa (2007)				
<b>Implications of English as a medium of Instruction in Nigeria and Botswana</b>	Arua & Magocha (2010)				
<b>Teacher quality in Nigeria and Botswana</b>	Obidike (2016); Moalosi & Matsoga (2016); Iloanya (2014); Omotoyinbo		Ratsatsi (2005)		Adagiri, (2009)

	(2019); Ola-Busari (2014); Kolawole, Olatunji & Akanbi (2015); Maimela (2016); Trudell (2019)				
<b>Teacher Quality</b>	Gemmell (2015); Tellez (2004); Darling-Hammond (2000); Bolitho (2015); Dadvand & Behzadpoor (2020); Blomeke, Olsen & Suhl (2016)	Padwad, (2015)			
<b>Prospects of English in Nigeria and Botswana</b>	Igboanusi (2015); Molosiwa (2020); Magogwe (2007); Kigoto, (2020)			Wittenborg, University of Applied Sciences, (n.d)	
<b>Prospects of English</b>	Cholakoya (2015); Graddol (2000)			Euromonitor (2015)	
<b>Languages in Botswana and Nigeria</b>		World Fact Book (2021)			
<b>Sub-Saharan African and Regions of Africa</b>	Silue (2015)			Zellars (2018); Worldometer (2021)	

#### 4. Findings and Discussion

##### 4.1. What are the differences in the provision of English in the language education policies of Botswana and Nigeria?

Educational language policies are signposts that indicate how the target language is to be used as a medium of instruction (Tollefson, 2008). The

issue of educational language policies is a sensitive and volatile one that needs careful consideration, otherwise sections of society might feel marginalised. Language policy has been viewed as the conscious attempt to alter the use of a community or individual language(s) (Kennedy, 2011). Adapting this definition, educational language policy may be defined as a conscious change in the language(s) used in education

Research demonstrates that an educational system that permits learning in a language that a majority of the learners are unfamiliar with, and a handful of the teachers are proficient in, may lead ‘to failure, alienation and waste’ (Robinson 2005; Quane 2003; cited in Williams 2011, p. 49). For African countries in particular, this is a point of consideration as it characterises the context of several anglophone African countries. In addition, research suggests that students who are not instructed in their mother tongue may become academically deficient (Salzburg Report, 2017).

Language policies have been described as poor when they do not reflect the situation of the communities involved; they are not financed, executed, encouraged and recognised, neither do they capture and embrace the linguistic situations of the people involved (Salzburg Report 586, 2017).

#### **4.1.1. Botswana**

Botswana has no single document that enshrines its language education policy (Nyati-Ramahobo, 2000). English is the official language, while Setswana is the national language. Mokibelo (2015) provides an account of the language education policy noting that at independence, Setswana was the medium of instruction from standard one to three (6-9 years), followed by the English language; this position was slightly changed after a review in 1977 by the National Commission on Education in which the commission extended the use of Setswana to standard four (9-10 years) and thereafter English. A further review in 1993/1994 led to the enactment of the current policy. The country recognises two languages at the expense of 28 others (Batibo, 2005; cited in Mokibelo, 2016) and stipulates that Setswana be used as the medium of instruction in standard one (5-6 years), while English is learnt as a subject in standard two (6-7 years) and becomes the medium of instruction (National Policy on Education, 1994).

Scholars have written extensively about the effect of the policy on the education of the learners from marginalised tribes (Makwinja, 2015; Mokibelo, 2015 & 2018) and the propensity to deny marginalised tribes their ‘linguistic human rights’ (Philippson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2017, p. 24). Tabulawa and Pansiri (2013, p.33) corroborated this view, when they stated that ‘ethnic minorities’ rather than non-Tswana groups, have no linguistic rights. The policy has impeded learning as pupils who do not understand the languages of instruction have had to drop out of school (Mokibelo, 2018)

thereby blighting their future in education. It should be noted that the speakers of the minority languages have a right to education in their own languages (May, 2001; cited in Gorter and Cenoz, 2017). In addition, according to Mokibelo (2018), the policy leads to a divide between minority and majority languages. Nevertheless, it is rather unfortunate that policies that are meant to advance the development of a society are stultifying it; this demonstrates that there is a link between language policy and the problems of development confronting African nations (ADEA, 2015), and this is especially evident in the Botswanan context (Kennedy, 2011). As noted by the Salzburg Report (2017), an interesting question worthy of further research is the extent to which this policy has an overtly political dimension, in that it has been created to suppress minorities.

Africa has been identified as a continent in which pupils commence learning in a foreign language (Kennedy, 2011). Therefore, the language policy of Botswana could be termed 'inappropriate' since some pupils commence learning in an unfamiliar national language. In addition, the period of transition from Setswana to English does not allow for the development of competency in their first language. Indeed, it involves a sudden rather than gradual process (The Jubal Language in Education Conference, 2012). Indeed, as Williams (2011) has noted, as a result, the use of English as a medium of instruction in African countries may not lead to developments in human capital. In order to rectify this, strategies that promote the effective teaching of the language should be uppermost in shaping educational policy.

#### **4.1.2. Nigeria**

Language education policy in Nigeria is a politically sensitive issue considering the diverse population of the country, and as yet, the it has not chronicled its language education policy in a single comprehensive document (Adegbija, 2004). While over 500 languages are currently spoken in Nigeria, the government recognises three national languages – Yoruba, Hausa and Igbo – while English became the official first language and medium of instruction in 1882 (Adetugbo 1979; cited in Ogunmodimu, 2015).

The Educational Language Policy of Nigeria has always revolved around the use of the mother tongue/language of the environment at lower primary school level prior to English becoming more dominant in primary 4 (8-10 years). According to UNICEF (2016), there is a positive link between language education policy and students' schooling, and the benefits of using the mother tongue can be seen in the lower primary in that it promotes participation in classrooms, reduces attrition and ensures involvement in children's education by people and communities.

However, Nigerians pay lip service to this policy in practice, as in urban schools, students mostly commence learning in English due to parental

preference for the language. Consequently, as Ochoma (2015) suggests, there is a gap between the policy and its implementation in classrooms. The education policy, also referred to as the 'early exit transitional' model, is deficient in two ways, however, most notably in terms of its implementation, which is usually inadequate, and because it lacks academic benefits.

Other problems associated with the policy include the dearth of indigenous language teachers, the lack of materials in indigenous languages and the attitude of learners to indigenous languages as mediums of instruction (Gwandu & Ibrahim, 2016). Again, the factors that hinder the implementation of the language education policy include non-awareness, multilingual classrooms, the dearth of qualified teachers, the non-availability of relevant materials, government policies that do not include measures to implement policies effectively, the attitude of parents and pupils, the private institutions and early exit (Ochoma, 2015). However, research by the British Council (2017) shows that one prominent issue supporting the implementation of the policy is the attitude of aspirational parents in that perceive English to be the best medium for educational instruction and thus want their children to start learning the language from kindergarten onwards.

#### **4.1.3. Comparison**

In comparison, Nigeria possesses three national languages, while Botswana possesses one. In Nigeria, the use of mother tongues/languages of environment is usually for three years and thereafter English is used more extensively. In Botswana, the national language is used for one year before English is introduced. Nigeria and Botswana both operate the early exit transition model. The two countries do not have their language education policies catalogued in a single document and thus this is a gap that requires addressing by future research. Finally, the policies are usually not implemented in the urban areas of either country (see Table 3).

#### **4.1.4. Lessons for Good Practice**

In terms of good practice, several lessons can be drawn from the above discussion. The transitional bilingual model is the most effective teaching model available. The late exit model, which is obtainable in Europe, represents best practice according to UNICEF (2016). Moreover, it is important as Mokibelo, (2016, p. 667) suggests that the 'period of transition is pivotal to subsequent levels of achievement'.

**See Table 3. Educational Policies of Botswana and Nigeria**

<b>YEAR</b>	<b>BOTSWANA</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>NIGERIA</b>
<b>PRE- 1966</b>	Indigenous languages used as medium of instruction	1927	In lower primary schools, indigenous languages are the medium of instruction
<b>1966</b>	Setswana to be used as medium of instruction from standard one to three; thereafter, English is used	1977	The mother tongue or language of environment to be the medium of instruction
<b>1977</b>	Setswana to be used as medium of instruction from standard one to four, while English to be used from standard five	1981	The mother tongue or language of environment will initially be the medium of environment, then English
<b>1994</b>	Setswana to be used as medium of instruction in standard one and English from standard two	1998	In the lower primary, the language of environment to be the medium of instruction
		2004	The language of environment to be medium of instruction for the first three years, thereafter English
		2013	Every child shall be taught in the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community for the first four years of basic education' (including pre-primary and Primary 1- Primary 3

Sources: Mokibelo (2018), Tom-Lawyer & Thomas (2020) & British Council (2017).



#### **4.2. What different challenges confront Botswana and Nigeria in terms of English as a medium of instruction?**

Countries that were colonised by the British continue to have English as their official language. The same applies to French and Portuguese. These languages have also become languages of instruction in the various countries. English as a medium of instruction has been noted in the private sector of different countries (Dearden, 2015) though its use as a medium of instruction is fraught with challenges.

The challenges of English Medium Instruction (EMI) and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) have been noted by several scholars (Benson, 2004; Hu & Alsagoff, 2010; Hu, 2007; Deucher, 2006 cited in Mokibelo, 2015 & Dearden, 2015). Some of the challenges as observed in Uganda include non-participation in class by pupils, teacher-centred lessons, code-switching in class and pupils' lack of understanding of the subject matter (Namuchwa, 2007). In addition, Cankaya (2017) enumerated several challenges as observed in Turkey, including the greater amount of time involved in learning (Kirkgoz, 2014), and the potentially negative impact on the motivation of students (Gokmengolu & Gelmez-Burakgazi, 2013). Most students from minority groups do not achieve full educational outcomes in English (Deuchar, 20006; cited in Mokibelo, 2015). Scholars have also noted that knowledge about the implementation of the policy is vague and that educationalists are unaware of the policy in Nigeria (Benson, 2005; cited in Igboanusi & Peter, 2015). On the other hand, MacLeod and Larsson (2011), in a study to determine English influence on Swedish young people among others, noted that:

- Students are familiar with listening to English, and music coupled with television and film are the prime media for learning the language;
- Singing is one informal method of exposure to oral English;
- Students write little English when they are not in the classroom;
- Computers and the Internet are used mostly when English is learnt out of the classroom;
- Students have a feeling that the classroom milieu contributes in a limited way to learning relevant knowledge of English.

The context of their research, which is akin to the situation in most African countries, demonstrates that an effectively implemented approach to EMI can lead to improvements in the English language proficiency of students.

##### **4.2.1. Botswana**

As indicated in the previous section, English is the official language and a medium of instruction from standard 2 (6-7 years) in Botswana. The status accorded English in the country, consequently, demands that citizens

should be proficient in the language. According to Adeyemi and Kalane (2011, p. 1), 'Recommendation 31 of the National Policy on Education (1994) emphasises proficiency in the use of English as a tool for effective communication, study and work'. Therefore, English has an established role in the country that is indisputable.

At the primary level, Mokibelo (2014, 2015, 2016a, 2016b) has written extensively on the challenges confronting English as a medium of instruction in rural public primary schools, while examining the language in education policy of Botswana. These include non-participation in lessons, poor understanding, incorrect use of pedagogy, relatively high school dropout rates, how English can demoralise the learners as they exhibit limited expressions in some basic language skills, learners do not achieve learning outcomes on completion of their studies at this level, and the imposition of English on learners can lead to agitation, perplexity and difficulty in reading.

At the secondary level, some of the challenges as identified by Adeyemi and Kalane (2011) include the poor reading skills of students, parental background, dysfunctional libraries, the non-assessment of speaking skills, large class sizes, the competency of teachers and the use of foreign-author textbooks. As the above challenges indicate, collectively these factors may prevent some learners from acquiring literacy skills in English.

#### **4.2.2. Nigeria**

English enjoys the status of an official language in Nigeria, and it is the language of the press, the judiciary, administration and government. In Nigeria, English charts the course of life of an individual as it is required for further studies, job opportunities and upward mobility. Every country that recognises it as a medium of instruction has challenges confronting it. However, as noted by Ugwanyi and Omeje (2013), to mitigate these challenges in Nigeria, priority should be given to effective teaching and addressing its decreasing proficiency standards.

Some of the challenges of teaching English at the tertiary level in Nigeria include the interference of the mother tongues of tutors as well as students, and the dearth of educational materials and library resources (Omeme, 2009). Others include the grammatical structure of English, which poses a challenge to learners, the dearth of English specialists, crowded classrooms, the non-availability of textbooks (Ugwanyi & Omeje, 2013) and reading/learning deficiencies (Adebayo & Folorunsho, 2017). These challenges are fundamental to the educational system of the country.

In addition, Omowumi (2019) argues that some of the communication problems associated with English as a medium of instruction at the primary level in Nigeria include peer group influence, native language interference and non-standard modelling by teachers. Moreover, the 'educational

infrastructure' needed for the provision of quality learning in English as a medium of instruction is not available and there are no clear regulations on the teaching of the language (Dearden, 2015).

In summary, research has identified several factors that hinder the development of English as a medium of instruction in Botswana and Nigeria, including mother tongue interference, teachers not being effective role models of English language use, dysfunctional libraries and the complexity of the structure of English. English as a medium of instruction enables social mobility and further studies on this subject are required in both countries to bolster the existing knowledge base. Research suggests that learners do not acquire satisfactory literacy skills in English in either country.

#### **4.3. How does teacher quality inhibit the learning of English as a medium of instruction in Botswana and Nigeria?**

Quality education is a right of every child and research consistently underlines the importance of teacher quality if students are to perform effectively in English (Obidike, 2016). Research has shown that improvements in teacher efficiency impacts student outcomes positively (Gemmell, 2015) but it is important to support teachers throughout pre-service, recruitment and selection, as well as in-service and retention stages of their career trajectory (Reinhardt, 2001; cited in Tellez, 2004).

The quality of the teacher significantly impacts student achievement. According to Darling-Hammond, (2000, p.2) 'measures of teacher preparation and certification are by far the strongest correlates of student achievement in reading and Mathematics'. A teacher, who is poorly prepared and certified will impact student achievement negatively. Indeed, if the quality of initial teacher education is poor, the outcomes of students also tend to be low (Bolitho, 2015). In addition, some of the components of initial teacher education quality include the curriculum structure, motivation of entrants into the initial teacher education programmes and practices of such programmes.

In a study to determine the factors that affect teacher quality implementation, Obidike (2016, p.1) noted that some of the most important practices of teacher quality are 'delivering high-quality student-centred instruction, promoting high levels of student engagement, clear assessment strategies for student learning, using positive behaviour management strategies and evidence of student learning'. This suggests that teacher quality encompasses teacher preparation, certification, recruitment, in-service training, and continuing teacher development. Using Pink's model (2009) as a framework, Padwad (2015) viewed dynamism in teacher motivation and proposed examining teacher motivation from three perspectives: motivation to join the profession, motivation to stay and motivation to grow in the profession.

In this context, Deci and Ryan's (1985) theory of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are still valuable. Motivation to join the teaching profession may be extrinsic or intrinsic, which means that the reasons why an individual joins the profession determines whether it was an inner drive or not; intrinsic reasons relate to the love for the profession, while extrinsic relates to joining the profession as a last resort in order to survive. The reasons to stay in the profession are usually extrinsic as there is always the need for survival. If survival is not achieved, teachers are bound to look elsewhere. The need to stay in the profession is typically intrinsic as this is usually a stage of self-actualisation. Therefore, all these factors must be taken into consideration if teacher quality is to be improved

#### **4.3.1. Botswana**

According to Ratsatsi (2005, p. 1), the impediments to quality education and universal primary education in Botswana are 'teacher attrition mainly due to HIV/AIDS, pre-primary education, in-service training ... and salaries'. Iloanya (2014) asserts that Botswana is in need of well-prepared teachers that are committed to the teaching profession and are capable of delivering quality education to learners as quality in the country's teacher education is a pre-requisite for an efficient schooling process.

The government of Botswana has stated in various policy documents that it is important that quality education is provided (National Policy on Education 1994; Vision 2020; cited in Moalosi & Matsoga, 2016). This is an important policy consideration for the government as research further reveals that they have allocated significant funds for the development of teachers. However, while this is a priority, a change is recommended in the training of teachers as a decline in students' achievement has been recorded in primary and secondary schools. Moreover, research has shown the link between English language teacher quality and student performance. Indeed, Blömeke, Olsen and Suhl (2016) assert that teacher quality is connected with the quality of instruction, and the quality of instruction is in turn strongly correlated with student outcomes. Similarly, in the Botswanan context, Iloanya (2014) argues that one of the most important ways of improving students' learning outcomes is through improving the quality of teaching.

The quality of entrants entering teacher training colleges is to a large extent a key factor in determining the quality of their graduates. The recognition of teacher quality by the government has enabled it to devise several measures to ensure quality education. One of these is the Textbook Evaluation Committee (TEC) which was established to ensure quality inputs at the elementary level (Maimela, 2016) and to review and approve textbooks in the country (Monyaku & Mmereki, 2012; cited in Maimela, 2016).

In addition, to further improve quality, the government has raised the qualification of primary school teachers to the minimum of a diploma/B.Ed. as well as provided incentives to aid teacher recruitment and retention (Maimela, 2016). Further efforts have aimed to reduce large class sizes (Republic of Botswana 1994; cited in Maimela, 2016).

Despite these efforts by the government, Botswanan schools continue to face many challenges. Mokibelo (2015), for example, observed a situation in which teachers who had specialised in two subjects at teacher training for primary level were made to teach all of the subjects in their schools. This predicament certainly affects the teaching of English as the teachers are deficient in the language skills required for effective teaching. In addition, teachers are denied in-service training, and suggestions made by Revised National Policy on Education (1994) with regard to in-service training, have not been implemented (Ratsatsi, 2005) Therefore, to improve the quality of English language performance in students in Botswana, research findings relating to teacher quality will need to be addressed first and foremost.

#### **4.3.2. Nigeria**

Research also shows that there is a positive link between the quality of teachers and the academic performance of students in Nigeria (Omotoyinbo & Olaniyi, 2019; Ola-Busari, 2014) and that quality is a prime factor in Nigeria's educational system (Ozuruoke 2006; Omoreghe 2003, Iji 2006; cited in Adagiri, 2009). Scholars have shown that there has been a downturn in education quality over the last three decades (Obidike, 2016) and specifically in the quality of English language teaching and learning in the country (Ola-Busari, 2014).

Many factors have been identified to account for this situation; however, the teacher factor has always been indicated as the primary cause. The source of incompetent English language teachers has been attributed to the poor funding of education dating from the latter part of 1980s, which has resulted in a brain drain (Ola-Busari, 2014) as teachers have moved to Britain, America and other European countries in search of greater opportunities for career development and more stability.

Teacher quality encapsulates teacher preparation, certification, recruitment, in-service training, and continuing teacher development; scholars have noted that teachers in Nigeria are poorly trained, and that teachers lack the license to teach the subject. Teachers from different disciplines have been allowed to teach English, and as a result, the recruitment of incompetent teachers has become the norm (Obidike, 2016; Kolawole, Olatunji & Akanbi, 2015; & Ola-Busari, 2014). Furthermore, the dearth of language experts (Gwarjiko, 2015) and low achieving entrants into teacher colleges (Amadi, 2013) are also issues that need further consideration. Importantly, teachers are

denied the opportunity of in-service training (Akinsolu, 2010 cited in Obidike, 2016), and where available, if at all, it is typically inadequate (Trudell, 2019). English language quality in Nigeria has been linked to the competence of the English language teachers, with teachers lacking the proficiency for quality teaching in the language (Ola-Busari, 2014). The inadequacy of teachers is reflected in their inability to use English effectively. This is manifested in their classroom practice of code-switching (Nta et al, 2012, Ezema, 2004; cited in Trudell, 2019). Moreover, the Chief Examiner of the West African Examination Council (WAEC) report (2003, 2004) corroborates the fact that the quality of English language teaching in the country is poor, with students not being able to construct basic sentences, with some students lacking the ability to answer comprehension passages.

The continuing professional development of English language teachers is usually a rewarding experience as it leads to an update of pedagogical content knowledge and this may also impact positively on the students as they are taught by competent teachers. However, research shows that most teachers in the country lack opportunities for structured CPD activities, thereby hampering their professional development (Adagiri, 2009).

### **4.3.3. Comparison**

In comparison, several key points emerge from our analysis of teacher quality in Botswana and Nigeria. A positive link between teacher quality and student performance has been identified (Omotoyinbo & Olaniyi, 2019; Ola-Busari, 2014; Blömeke, Olsen & Suhl, 2016), as well as a decline in education quality (Obidike, 2016 & Moalosi & Matsoga, 2016). Poor funding of education is an important factor in Nigeria, while the Botswanan government has committed P. 12,8 billion to the development of teachers. Indeed, in the fiscal year 2015/16 to 2017/18 the government of Botswana increased allocations to the education sector from P. 11.8 billion to P. 12. 8 billion, while in Nigeria the education expenditure dropped from 10.54% to 7.04% in the fiscal years 2014-2018 respectively (Ola-Busari, 2014; Moalosi & Matsoga, 2016, Statista, 2020 & UNICEF Botswana, 2017). Teachers without the certification to teach English language are allowed to teach. In Botswana research shows that in a rural area of Kweng West, 50% teachers in Kaudwane, 37.5% in Tshwaane, 28.6% in Khekenye and 23.5% in Mantshwabisi were untrained (Ola-Busari, 2014; Mokibelo, 2015), while in Nigeria, most schools advise teachers without a teaching qualification to acquire them.

### **4.4. What are the differences in the prospects of English as a medium of instruction in Nigeria and Botswana?**

The future of English is complicated and rarely predictable (Graddol, 2000). English has a positive link with political, social and economic

development (Cholakova, 2015) and studies have been conducted to demonstrate a significant boost to a nation's economy as a result of an improved status for English (Euromonitor, 2015). Some factors that further consolidate the position of English in the world including the demand for employees who are proficient in the language, the global status of the language, benefits derived from speaking the language, the migration of international students to Europe and the unifying role of English in the world (Cholakova, 2015).

#### **4.4.1. Botswana**

According to Graddol (2014, p.10) English is now identified as a 'new basic skill that all children need to acquire if they want to participate fully in a 21st-century civil society'. Botswana has not been left behind in this respect as English is the second language in the country.

One prospect of English as a medium of instruction is that it benefits learners to enter local institutions of learning. For example, in Botswana students are expected to pass English to gain admission to secondary and tertiary institutions. Similarly, in the era of globalisation, Botswana sends thousands of students to study for undergraduate degrees up to PhD in various universities around the world, mainly in the UK, Canada, the USA and Australia under the top achievers' programme. The Botswana Top Achievers' Programme was started in 2010 by Botswana's Ministry of Education and Skills Development in order to help students pursue careers that are of strategic importance in driving economic diversification in the country. When students from the programme apply to universities abroad, since English is not their first language, they are required to provide evidence that they have adequate proficiency in English to successfully undertake their programmes of study through the medium of English. They therefore have to take international tests, such as TOEFL and IELTS to demonstrate their level of proficiency (Molosiwa, 2020). These students generally do well because of their experience of learning English, judging from the top achievers' statistics published by the Ministry of Education annually (BGCSE,2010-2020). Currently these students are also gaining access to universities in other parts of the world such as Asia and Europe, as using English as a medium of instruction to learners whose first language is not English is now a global trend.

Another prospect of English as a medium of instruction is that the language skills acquired extends to international diplomacy. It is evident that once learners finish high school or university and join the labour force, their background in English benefits them in the workplace as English is an official language in Botswana and the language of the government, media, judiciary and commerce.

Furthermore, official oral engagements such as meetings and workshops are conducted in English, notwithstanding that Botswanans typically speak to each other in Setswana or their other local languages. In addition, in some professions such as the media, public relations, marketing, teaching and career diplomacy, English is recognised as a basic skill required for career progression. There is also prestige attached to proficiency in English and this provides advantages in terms of accessing better employment opportunities. In the areas of global communication, political communication and diplomacy, English proficiency is widely recognised as the passport to effective communication in all fora where ideas are exchanged. This is because English as an international language is used by both government and the civil society to establish and maintain relations between countries globally. Finally, the current trend in Botswana is that families in cities have been more exposed to English due to better economic conditions that characterise urban environments. Due to the development and enhancement of ICT by the government, there is generally access to Internet, smart phones, TV and computers (Isaacs, 2007). In many families, both in urban and rural settings, children are first introduced to English before they are introduced to their parents' mother tongue(s). Parents regard the introduction to English at an early stage as an advantage to their children because there are academic benefits attached to using the language, especially at an early age (Molosiwa 2020). That is why there has been a growth of the private education sector in Botswana as schools introduce English as a medium of instruction immediately on school entry.

#### **4.4.2. Nigeria**

Several studies have shown the prospects of English as a medium of instruction in Nigeria (Dearden, 2015 & Euromonitor, 2015). A credit pass in English is a passport for entry into tertiary institutions in the country. It is the language of young people, which further consolidates its position and the future economic development of individuals in Nigeria is strongly related to their proficiency in the language. English speakers typically command higher salaries, and this is reflected in the position of Nigerian graduates with the strongest English language skills, who attain the most senior positions in the country. Nigeria receives 35% of Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) due to the status of English as a lingua franca and English speakers are in high demand as it aids business growth. The proficiency of Nigerians in English is a boost to the economy and the percentage of English speakers in the country is on the rise. Typically, Nigerian parents have a positive attitude towards English (Dearden, 2015) and degrees from English speaking countries are held in high regard (Euromonitor, 2015). Consequently, most Nigerians migrate to English speaking countries for post-graduate and undergraduate degrees. English is the



language of the Internet, which makes it a global language and hence the Internet is the basic information medium through which information is accessed and disseminated.

### **4.3. Comparison**

A comparison of the prospects has shown that English is a passport to attaining higher education in both countries and fluency is a badge of prestige and status. Graduates from the two countries migrate to English speaking countries for further studies. Indeed, UNESCO asserts that approximately, 900,000 Nigerians are being schooled abroad (ICEF Monitor, 2021). In addition, Nigerian students rank first in terms of the number of Sub-Saharan students studying abroad (Kigoto, 2020) with Nigeria on 10.25%, while Botswanan students account for 2.3% of the total (Wittenborg, University of Applied Sciences, n.d).

### **Conclusion**

This paper has made an original contribution to the knowledge base of existing research by providing the first systematic review of the challenges and prospects of English as a medium of instruction in Nigeria and Botswana. It found that there are challenges with the Education Language Policy of Botswana as it causes pupils from marginalised tribes (according to Mokibelo, 2018; Mokibelo & Moumakwa, 2006; cited in Mokibelo, 2014, in Remote Area Dweller Settlements (RADS), (17-25 students yearly) to drop out of school; specifically, in Standards 1-7 (6-13 years), 85% of pupils and 15% of Forms 1-3 (12-15 years) students also dropped out of school. It also noted that the two countries operate the early exit transition model, which does not aid pupils in the acquisition of literacy skills in English. Indeed, as a result of the early transition to a second language, pupils do not gain competence in their mother tongue before transitioning to a second language.

In addition, the language education policies of the two countries are not implemented in urban areas. A fundamental challenge confronting English as a medium of instruction in the two countries is that students do not acquire adequate literacy skills as they are taught in an unfamiliar language. Moreover, teacher quality is an issue that needs to be addressed as without teacher quality English cannot be effectively taught and learnt. However, regardless of these challenges, English has prospects in both countries due to its hegemony in areas of business, education, law and administration.

### **5.1. Implications for the use of English as a Medium of Instruction in Nigeria and Botswana**

The use of English as a language of instruction has caused pupils to drop out of school because they do not understand the language. For example,

research shows that 2,253 students discontinued their education in 2001 (Polelo, 2004; cited in Mokibelo, 2014). Again, the dropout rate in Botswana were 0.6%, 0.7% and 0.8% in 2013, 2014 and 2015 respectively (Botswana Guardian, 2018). The education language policies in the two countries are not implemented in the urban areas as parents in those regions often prefer to have their children taught in English. Students hardly acquire literacy skills in the language; the case of children in Remote Area Dweller Settlements (RADS) such as Bazezuru, Barsawa and San in Botswana shows that approximately 17-25% students dropout each year; specifically, in Standards 1-7, 85% of pupils and 15% of Forms 1-3 students dropped out of school (Mokibelo, 2016 & Makwinja, 2015). English is the educationally preferred language by parents in the two countries (Arua & Magocha, 2010). In Botswana 80% of parents prefer English in schools to other languages (Arua & Magocha, 2010), while in Nigeria, 70% of the parents prefer English as medium of instruction (Amadi, 2012). Overall, teacher quality impacts effective teaching and learning of the language in both countries and is a major factor requiring further policy level changes (Ola-Busari, 2014; Blömeke, Olsen and Suhl, 2016).

## **5.2. Recommendations**

### **Botswana**

Arising from the findings of this paper, several main recommendations have been identified. For Botswana, the government is recommended to adopt the late exit bilingual model to allow for the transfer of skills from the mother tongue; to facilitate this, 5 years of transition should be allowed. The government needs to review its language education policy in order to address the problems of minority groups. Pupils should be encouraged to learn Sestwana and to develop proficiency in it.

### **Nigeria**

The government is recommended to shown greater commitment to the effective teaching of the language. Due to the importance of English in Nigeria, teachers require access to effective and lifelong in-service training; this is also an area requiring future longitudinal research. Pupils should have enough time (approximately 6 to 7 years) to develop proficiency in their mother tongues before the transition to international languages. The governments should ensure that pupils are encouraged to learn in their mother tongue in order to ensure an effective transfer of skills.

For both countries, educational policies that lead to effective language curriculum reform are required. English will continue to play a prominent role in Nigeria and Botswana; hence the governments of both countries need to protect and sustain its legitimacy.

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## “Yo Fui Negro Una Vez...Cuando Era Pobre”. Racismo Filosófico, Racionalidad Supremacista e Injusticia Epistémica

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### Resumen

Este artículo propone una reflexión crítica acerca de los procesos de formación monocultural bajo el influjo actual de nuevas formas de racismo. Suscribiendo a varios de los planteamientos de Judith Butler sobre la performatividad del lenguaje injurioso (antesala de los denominados discursos de odio), se traza un recorrido por diferentes aspectos filosóficos a considerar en torno al problema del racismo. En primer lugar, se vindica la necesidad de prestar atención a las relecturas que los teóricos críticos de la raza han realizado en las últimas décadas sobre la historia de la filosofía moderna occidental. En segundo lugar, se aborda la cuestión de la desaparición de saberes (“epistemicidios”) como condición de una racionalidad supremacista, así como los diversos efectos de prácticas sociales que Miranda Fricker ha caracterizado como “injusticia epistémica”. El artículo tiene como eje tres casos ilustrativos de la lógica del desprecio que subyace a las actitudes de odio: “ser negro”, “ser migrante”, “ser pobre”.

**Palabras Claves:** Butler; Racismo; Kant; Epistemicidio; Negrofobia; Injusticia Epistémica

## **“I Was Black Once ... When i Was Poor” Philosophical Racism, Supremacist Rationality and Epistemic Injustice**

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### **Abstract**

This article proposes a critical reflection on monocultural formation processes under the current influence of new forms of racism. By subscribing to several of Judith Butler’s approaches to the performativity of insulting language (a prelude to so-called hate speech), a journey through different philosophical aspects to consider around the problem of racism is traced. First, it vindicates the need to pay attention to the re-readings that critical theorists of race have made in recent decades on the history of modern Western philosophy. Second, the question of the disappearance of knowledge (“epistemicides”) as a condition of a supremacist rationality is addressed, as well as the various effects of social practices that Miranda Fricker has characterized as “epistemic injustice”. The article focuses on three illustrative cases of the logic of contempt that underlies hateful attitudes: “being black”, “being a migrant”, “being poor”.

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**Keywords:** Butler; Racism; Kant; Epistemicide; Negrophobia; Epistemic Injustice

### **Introduction**

*No hay epistemologías neutrales,  
y las que se pretenden neutrales son las menos neutrales de todas.*  
Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Conferencia del 7 de mayo de 2012

Vivir “en el lenguaje” es condición de posibilidad de nombrar y ser nombrado. Como sujetos participantes en comunidades lingüísticas, somos blanco de descripciones posibles y disponibles en un contexto sociohistórico determinado acerca de las “clases de personas” que existen. En otras palabras, la existencia social supone cargar con múltiples “identificadores” que serán asignados con independencia de la voluntad del portador. Por ejemplo, si el color de piel es una característica considerada relevante para agrupar a las personas dentro de un determinado conjunto (y fuera de otros), el sujeto quedará subsumido en algunas categorías reconocibles por quienes comparten creencias, valores y prácticas organizadas bajo dicho criterio. Por lo tanto,



incluso desde antes de nacer, existe una diversidad de potencialidades identitarias dentro de las cuales un individuo será colocado por su grupo.

En la obra *Lenguaje, poder e identidad*, Judith Butler aborda perspicazmente la cuestión de la capacidad performativa del lenguaje para promover modos de subjetivación. Butler discurre particularmente sobre el insulto como acto de habla acontecido en una existencia marcada por la vulnerabilidad lingüística (2004). Que el insulto y el lenguaje ofensivo tengan el potencial de “lastimar” revela lo sensibles y dependientes que los seres humanos podemos ser respecto a la realidad simbólica del lenguaje. Butler se pregunta: “¿Podría acaso el lenguaje herirnos si no fuéramos, en algún sentido, seres lingüísticos, seres que necesitan del lenguaje para existir?” (2004, 16). Asimismo, Butler planteará que, aunque el insulto es una de las primeras formas de agravio lingüístico que se aprende, el lenguaje de la injuria no sólo remite a insidiosas palabras y representaciones pronunciadas y pronunciables (explícitas), sino también a un daño lingüístico tácito, asociado al tipo de elocución: “un estilo -una disposición o un comportamiento convencional- que interpela y constituye a un sujeto” (17). El insulto conlleva una degradación no sólo moral, sino también, y, ante todo, epistémica. De este punto tratará específicamente el presente artículo. Se argumentará que, en la base constitutiva del denominado lenguaje de odio, subyace un desprecio activo por una Otredad no reconocida en su dimensión moral ni epistémica. Lo “diferente” es traducido al lenguaje de una recursividad inferiorizante: el Otro es menos porque sabe menos, y sabe menos porque es menos (Santos 2014, Pereda, 1999).

Tal devaluación impulsa (y refleja) experiencias de silenciamiento, anulación y aniquilación de la competencia argumental del sujeto inferiorizado, junto con su desvalorización social. Ocurre una suerte de “desontologización epistémica”, en el sentido de que el Otro no es percibido como “existente” en tanto miembro de la comunidad productora de conocimiento valioso. La devaluación puede incluso deberse a la vigencia de estereotipos identitarios que colocan en posición de desventaja a un sujeto por el sólo hecho de cargar con algún rasgo que el grupo de “sujetos epistémicos” considera degradante, y, por lo tanto, excluyente. Dicha degradación tiene como consecuencia que el sujeto estigmatizado no sea percibido como plenamente racional, dado que está disminuido.

El caso del racismo es paradigmático de este complejísimo entramado de devaluaciones. La condición de “Ser negro” ilustra de manera ejemplar las formas diversas de agravio que los individuos y los grupos pueden sufrir a raíz de ser observados por medio de sesgos que atentan contra su credibilidad, su capacidad argumentativa y su capital epistémico. Si bien las luchas en contra de prejuicios raciales y prácticas racistas son muchas e importantes, persiste todavía un amplio repertorio de “injusticias epistémicas” que derivan de un

racismo sutilmente conservado (el cual, aunque no llegue a plasmarse en una deliberada agenda de dominación, sirve a las funciones de justificar actitudes racistas). Sobre este aspecto se aludirá aquí, recurriendo a los planteamientos de la filósofa inglesa Miranda Fricker sobre el tema de la injusticia epistémica.

Cabe mencionar que muchas de las consideraciones que residen en el background de este artículo han sido inspiradas por investigaciones realizadas en el horizonte de la teoría crítica de la raza, el Análisis Crítico del Discurso Racial y los estudios decoloniales . En particular serán de interés aquellos señalamientos en torno al rol que la historia occidentalista de la filosofía ha tenido en la invisibilización racista de saberes y formas de pensamiento no europeas. Se hará una sucinta exposición de algunas de las líneas de trabajo por las que se ha ido evidenciando que la filosofía no ha sido, en el espectro del racismo, un “convidado de piedra”. El objetivo principal de este ensayo es esbozar algunos argumentos sobre los procesos de destrucción de saberes (“epistemicidios”) que desembocan en insidiosas formas de injusticia racial.

### **Filosofía y Racismo Epistémico**

Las reflexiones críticas de Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze, Henry Paget y Santiago Castro-Gómez en su obra de 2014, *El color de la razón: racismo epistemológico y razón imperial*, sirven de observatorio para problematizar el rol de los filósofos modernos en la perpetuación del racismo biológico, social, moral y epistémico. En la obra mencionada, el capítulo de Chukwudi Eze (filósofo nigeriano fallecido en 2007) pone de relieve la importante presencia del pensamiento racial en los cursos de Antropología y Geografía Física impartidos por Kant. Tal planteamiento no es del todo novedoso ya que, anteriormente, autores como Thomas Hill y Bernard Boxill habían objetado que los estudios sobre Kant se enfocaran exclusivamente en la *Crítica de la Razón Pura* (1781) y la *Fundamentación de la Metafísica de las Costumbres* (1785), omitiendo tanto los textos anteriores como posteriores (Hill y Boxill 2001). Chukwudi Eze explica tal desinterés u “olvido” en términos del “irresistible deseo de ver a Kant solo como un filósofo puro, preocupado únicamente por los temas filosóficos de la cultura “pura” y ciego al color de los temas filosóficos en el *sancta sanctorum* de las tradiciones de la filosofía occidental” (2001, 210). Arguye enfáticamente que, en su análisis acerca de los estudios antropológicos, Kant no concebía que la emancipación del género humano a través de la razón pudiera ocurrir sin tener en cuenta la superioridad de la raza blanca europea respecto a las consideradas “razas de color” ubicadas fuera de Europa. De acuerdo con las investigaciones de Santos Herceg (2010) , Kant abordó el tópico de las diferencias entre razas de manera directa al menos en dos escritos breves: “Acerca de las distintas razas de los hombres” (en 1775) y “Determinación del concepto de una raza humana” (en 1785). En ellos, Kant asumía que existen cuatro razas que se pueden reconocer a la

primera mirada: 1) la raza de los Blancos, 2) la raza Negra, 3) la raza de los Hunos (mongoles) y 4) la raza Hindú o Hinduista. Luego agregaba que, a partir de esas cuatro razas, se pueden deducir todas las otras características heredables de los pueblos. Es decir, para Kant, todas las razas se habían desarrollado secuencialmente a partir de una raza originaria (un tronco común). Kant lo esquematizaba de esta manera:

Tronco originario: Blanco de color castaño.

Primera raza, altamente rubio (Nórdico, Europeo) de [clima] frío húmedo.

Segunda raza, rojo cobre (Americano) de [clima] frío seco.

Tercera raza, negro (Senegalés) de [clima] cálido húmedo.

Cuarta raza, amarillo aceituno (indio) de [clima] cálido caluroso  
(Kant KGS II: 441 y KGS.VIII.98-99)

Son numerosos los pasajes que estos críticos encuentran en la obra kantiana relacionados con sus creencias racialistas, que Kant trata como “hechos”. Por ejemplo, en 1802, insistiendo en la “superioridad” originaria de los blancos, Kant argüía que “Los negros nacen blancos, excepto por sus genitales y una argolla alrededor del ombligo, que son negros. A partir de estas partes se expande lo negro en los primeros meses de vida al resto del cuerpo” (Kant, KGS.IX, 312). Esto implica que los negros se van alejando (desviando) del tronco originario, que es blanco.

En esta relectura racialista de Kant se resalta la estratificación racial que involucra esencialmente una jerarquización cognitiva y moral. Kant afirma: “La humanidad encuentra su mayor perfección en la raza de los blancos. Los indios amarillos tienen un talento menor. Los negros están muy por debajo, y en el lugar inferior está una parte de los pueblos americanos” (Kant, KGS.IX, 316). Vuelve a este punto reiteradamente: “los americanos y los negros son razas que, en lo referente a sus condiciones espirituales, se han hundido muy por debajo del resto de los miembros de la especie humana” (Kant, KGS XII, 801). Al parecer, Kant había esgrimido desde temprano una continuidad racialista entre el color de piel y la capacidad epistémica, basándose incluso en una conocida nota que David Hume escribió en su ensayo “On National Character” (donde pone en duda la humanidad del negro). Hume argumentaba: “Tiendo a sospechar que los negros y en general todas las otras especies de hombres (de las cuales hay cuatro tipos diferentes) son naturalmente inferiores a los blancos” (Hume, 1982: 252. Cit. por Díaz, 2017, 9). Y algo similar escribía Kant en Observaciones acerca del sentimiento de lo bello y lo sublime (1764) para afirmar la frivolidad de los negros africanos:

El señor Hume desafiaba a que se le presente un ejemplo de que un negro haya mostrado talento, y afirma que entre cientos de millares de negros transportados a tierras extrañas, y aunque muchos de ellos hayan obtenido libertad, no se ha encontrado uno solo que haya imaginado algo grandioso en el arte o ciencia o en cualquiera otra cualidad honorable, mientras entre los blancos se presenta frecuentemente el caso de los que, por sus condiciones superiores, se levantan de un estado humilde y conquistan una reputación ventajosa. Tan esencial es la diferencia entre estas dos razas humanas; parece tan grande en las facultades mentales como en el color. (KGS II, 253).

Se ha subrayado también que, en la cosmovisión kantiana, el color de piel no sólo va ligado a la capacidad intelectual y moral, sino también a atributos estéticos asociados a la “fealdad”. Por ejemplo, se menciona que en esos escritos Kant se refería a los habitantes de Abisinia (África) como siendo “tan deformes y malvados como el resto de los negros” (Kant, KGS.IX, 419), y que se quejaba de “el fuerte hedor del negro que no es posible de evitar mediante purificación alguna” (Kant, KGS.XI, 79). Destacando que ningún otro pueblo viajaba como los europeos, Kant afirmaba que estos, por habitar zonas de clima moderado, eran “más hermosos en su cuerpo, más trabajadores, más bromistas, más moderados en sus pasiones, más comprensivos que ninguna otra especie de hombres en el mundo” (KGS.IX, 317). En su Geografía Física, Kant confirmaba que estas diferencias físicas, intelectuales y espirituales (dictadas por la naturaleza) es lo que explicaba que estos pueblos hayan instruido y dominado por las armas a los otros por todos los tiempos (Kant, KGS. IX, 317).

Ahora bien, como afirma Santos Herceg (2010), Kant no extrajo de su racismo un ideal o programa político (lo cual debe ser tenido en cuenta al etiquetarlo, sin más, de “racista”). Autores como Michel Wieviorka (2009) han dejado bien establecido que las doctrinas e ideologías racistas fueron evolucionando, y que, en ese sentido, las ideas de los siglos XVII y XVIII no podrían encasillarse en un racismo elaboradamente científico como el del siglo XX. No obstante, como el mismo Wieviorka reconoce, esas representaciones inferiorizantes del Otro bien podían definirse como *protorracistas* y legitimadoras de diferentes formas de sometimiento (por ejemplo, el negro africano podía ser visto como *salvaje* pero también como susceptible de ser *mejorado* mediante los beneficios de la colonización).

El ejercicio suspicaz y crítico de obras filosóficas señeras, como la de Kant, en tanto reflejo de los compromisos de la filosofía con el racismo de la época, alienta a un cambio de mirada no sólo respecto de la obra kantiana, sino de la modernidad en general. En respuesta a este interés, las investigaciones que revisitan el pasado de la filosofía canónica a partir de nuevas categorías de análisis historiográfico han ido de menos a más. La discusión sobre el racismo y el racismo en la filosofía ya se empezó a

destapar en 1990, cuando el filósofo alemán Christian Neugebauer (estudioso de la filosofía africana) publicó un texto llamado “El racismo de Kant y Hegel”, dando apertura a una seguidilla de trabajos de similar tenor, como el de Ronald Judy en su escrito “Kant y el Negro”, y el de Andrea Figl, que relacionó el “racismo” kantiano con su filosofía moral (Santos Herceg, 2010). A la publicación que Chukwudi Eze realizó sobre la idea de raza en la antropología kantiana (en 1997) le siguieron otras en la misma dirección. Entre esos autores se puede mencionar a Charles Mills con su “Dark Ontologies” (1998), Tsenay Serequeberhan con “La crítica al eurocentrismo y la práctica de la filosofía africana” (2001), Robert Bernasconi con “Will the real Kant please stand up. The challenge of Enlightenment racism to the study of the history of philosophy” (2003) y Spivak Gayatri Chakravorty, académica y activista feminista hindú que, en su artículo “¿Puede hablar el subalterno?” (2003), denunciaba la violencia epistémica con la cual Occidente se representa al “sujeto de tercer mundo”.

En tal marco de pensamiento pueden también situarse las duras críticas del filósofo e historiador camerunés Achile Mbembe a la construcción occidental de “el negro”, así como también los punzantes señalamientos del sociólogo portugués Boaventura de Sousa Santos al occidentalismo monocultural que ha privilegiado un modelo único de racionalidad hegemónica. Se examinarán sus ideas en los siguientes apartados.

### **Crítica de la Razón Negra: la “humanidad” en suspenso**

En su Crítica de la Razón Negra, Achile Mbembe plantea que ser “un negro” es un devenir, una invención que reduce el cuerpo y el ser vivo a una cuestión de apariencia, de piel y de color (una ficción de raíz biológica que connota “lo que nadie desea ser”). Mbembe considera que los mundos euroamericanos han hecho de “el negro” y de “la raza” dos vertientes de una misma figura: la locura codificada. Cita a Gilles Deleuze cuando este afirma que “siempre hay un negro, un judío, un chino, un gran mongol, un ario en el delirio”, puesto que aquello que excita al delirio, entre otras cosas, son las razas (Deleuze, 1995, cit. Mbembe, 2016, 23). El negro es lo que se ve cuando no se ve nada, cuando no se comprende nada e incluso cuando no se busca comprender nada: “Dondequiera que esté, el negro libera dinámicas pasionales y provoca una exuberancia irracional que desafía constantemente al sistema mismo de la razón” (Mbembe, 2016, 23).

Mbembe advierte que, históricamente, “el pensamiento europeo ha sido proclive a entender la identidad menos en términos de pertenencia mutua a un mismo mundo —co-pertenencia— que como una relación entre elementos idénticos” (Mbembe, 2016, 22, énfasis añadido). Desde tal perspectiva, la identidad está inscrita en el ser mismo (y también la diferencia), siendo algunos rasgos -como el color de piel- una propiedad o marcador

identitario fijo. La controversia en torno a esta esencialización de la identidad es cuestión de larga data. Por ejemplo, las campañas de los abolicionistas en las postrimerías del siglo XVIII se focalizaban fuertemente en des-naturalizar la creencia de que la piel negra era una “indeleble” marca de inferioridad. Argumentos detractores de tal ideología se hallan en escritos como el de Thomas Clarkson, *Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (1786), o en el ensayo que el médico y naturalista John Mitchell leyó -fallidamente- ante la Royal Society de Londres en 1744: *An Essay upon the Causes of the Different Colours of People in Different Climates*.

El filósofo y escritor francés-caribeño (de origen martiniqués) Frantz Omar Fanon sostiene, en su libro *Piel negra, máscaras blancas*, que “el negro” no existe, al menos no más que “el blanco”. Fácticamente, no hay nadie cuyo color de piel sea blanco en el mismo sentido en que es blanca una tiza, una hoja de papel, la cal o una mortaja. Así como “el sujeto Negro” es una figura imaginaria construida por el “blanco”, a su vez “el hombre blanco” es también una fantasía de la imaginación europea que Occidente ha naturalizado y universalizado (Fanon, 2009).

Las razas, el racialismo y el racismo constituyen, ante todo, una gran urdimbre narrativo-epistemológica sobre el ser, la identidad, el saber y el poder. Por lo que se sabe hasta ahora, la primera clasificación racial la realizó François Bernier a finales del siglo XVII. En el siglo XVIII hubo una acalorada polémica entre defensores y detractores de la monogénesis y la poligénesis, y en el siglo XIX, con la expansión colonial, el concepto de raza se volvió medular para discurrir acerca de “lo no europeo” (Sánchez-Mejía, 2016).

En cuanto al concepto de “negro” como construcción cultural y lingüística, Mbembe señala que dicho concepto ya circulaba en los textos franceses a comienzos del siglo XVI, pero adquirió protagonismo en el siglo XVIII, precisamente en el cenit de la trata de esclavos (Mbembe, 2016, 88). Cuando el francés Georges Louis Leclerc, conde de Buffon, presentó la primera gran clasificación racial (en su “*Variétés dans l’espèce humaine*”, de 1749) las narrativas sobre los mundos lejanos -como África- y las razas, estaban teñidas de representaciones sobre el negro como “prototipo de una figura prehumana incapaz de liberarse de su animalidad, de autoproducirse y de sublevarse a la altura de su propio dios” (Mbembe, 2016, 48. Énfasis añadido). Era moneda corriente concebir al negro como estando atrapado en la sensualidad y alejado de la normalidad de la especie. La premisa de que “el negro tiene dificultades para romper las cadenas de la necesidad biológica” fungía como explicación de por qué no era capaz de “darse una forma verdaderamente humana ni modelar su propio mundo” (Mbembe, 2016, 48).

Esta bestialización colonial de los grupos considerados inferiores hizo de “el Negro” un símbolo de la alteridad negativa, la ausencia de la mismidad,

el reflejo empobrecido del hombre ideal (del cual se separa por una distancia temporal insalvable). El Negro, según Mbembe, es representado como estandarte de una vida limitada a la sumisión, la extracción y la depredación de un amo que constantemente lo produce como tal. Fuera del espectro servil, el negro es una alteridad imposible (Mbembe, 2016, 88). Admitir la posibilidad de racionalidad en los negros (una “razón negra”) vuelve ambigua y tensa la distinción entre la razón y los instintos, entre la ratio humana y el impulso animal que habita al negro. Así, su humanidad quedará en un largo y pesado suspenso. La retórica de Alexis de Tocqueville es ilustrativa de las explicaciones racializadas que permeaban incluso el discurso liberal. Cuando escribió *De la démocratie en Amérique* (1835-1840) alegaba que, en gran medida, las fuerzas que amenazaban a Estados Unidos tenían que ver con la presencia de “razas desafortunadas” (negros e indios) en el mundo de los blancos. Desde su experiencia política, parecía indudable que las razas se distinguían no sólo en su apariencia exterior sino también en la educación, la ley y los orígenes. El esclavo negro concentraba, para Tocqueville, todas las características del envilecimiento y la abyección: siendo de la propiedad de otro, un esclavo era inútil para sí mismo, gozaba innatamente de la sumisión y admiraba a sus tiranos. Afirmaba que al esclavo “no le ha sido atribuido el control de su propio destino; el uso del pensamiento mismo le parece un don inútil de la Providencia” (cit. en Mbembe, 2016, 159). Tocqueville deploraba que el negro no luchara para demostrar soberanía alguna, convirtiéndose prácticamente en una bestia de ganado y despertando aversión, repulsión y asco: la servidumbre lo embrutecía y la libertad lo hacía perecer. A esa criatura nacida “en la bajeza”, apenas le concedía los rasgos generales de la humanidad. Con furioso lenguaje racista, Tocqueville aseveraba: “Su rostro nos parece repugnante, su inteligencia nos parece limitada, sus gustos son bajos: poco falta para que lo tomemos por un ser a medio camino entre el animal y el hombre” (cit. en Mbembe, 2016, 160). Incluso llegó a sostener que, aunque uno le concediera la libertad al esclavo negro, “jamás podrá hacer que, frente al europeo, [ese negro] deje de estar en la posición de un extranjero” (cit. en Mbembe, 2016, 160).

Esta diferenciación/división esbozada por Tocqueville puede entenderse en el marco de lo que Mbembe concibe como típica distribución jerárquica dominada por una lógica del cercado, concomitante a los regímenes de segregación. La categoría “raza” habilita a identificar y definir grupos poblacionales “de riesgo”, particularmente cuando la seguridad se considera indispensable. Mbembe lo explica en los siguientes términos:

Los procesos de racialización tienen el propósito de identificar estos grupos poblacionales y de fijar, con la mayor precisión posible, los límites dentro de los cuales pueden circular. Tienen, a su vez, el objetivo de determinar, lo más exactamente posible, los emplazamientos que pueden

ocupar estas poblaciones. En definitiva: apuntan a garantizar la seguridad general. Se trata de clasificar a estos grupos poblacionales e identificarlos al mismo tiempo como “especies”, como “series” y como “casos” en el seno de un cálculo general sobre el riesgo, el azar y las probabilidades. El objetivo es poder prevenir los peligros inherentes a su circulación y, si fuera posible, neutralizarlos por anticipado, con frecuencia mediante la inmovilización, la encarcelación o la deportación. (Mbembe, 2016, 75).

Ciertamente, como se adujo previamente respecto a Kant, la clasificación racial (o racialismo) no necesariamente debe implicar sesgos racistas en el sentido actual. Sin embargo, debe advertirse que el racialismo es terreno más que fértil para el racismo en general, y para el desarrollo de políticas negrófobas en particular. Recuérdese que la decimonónica concepción de “peligrosidad” asociada al pensamiento racialista justificaba, por ejemplo, las políticas eugenésicas de fines del siglo XIX bajo el manto de la profilaxis social. Dado que el binomio razón/pasión siempre estuvo en el corazón de la diferenciación racial (Sánchez Mejía, 2016), y que la raza negra era visualizada como mucho más cercana a la instintividad animal, concebirla como peligrosa era una deducción obligada. Como afirma Mbembe, desde la mirada racista, “dar o recibir la muerte no significaba violencia alguna a los ojos del negro. Un animal siempre podía comer a otro” (Mbembe, 2016, 163). En la imaginación interpersonal de la cultura euroamericana del siglo XIX, la presencia misma de los negros -supuestamente carentes de consciencia racional- era (y sigue siendo) denotada en una jerga de extrañeza y pánico: “¡Mira, un negro! [...] ‘Mamá, mira ese negro, ¡tengo miedo!’” (Fanon, 2009, cit. en Mbembe, 2016, 204).

### **Paternalismo Epistémico y Construcción de ignorancias**

En su clásico libro *Internados*, el sociólogo Erving Goffman afirma: “Cualquier grupo de personas – prisioneros, primitivos, pilotos o pacientes- forma una vida propia que se convierte en significativa, razonable y normal una vez que te acercas a ella” (1972, 9).

Sin embargo, no siempre ese acercamiento desemboca en un “encuentro” que diversifique y complejice horizontalmente los saberes y las formas de existencia. En el marco de comprensión desde el cual se avizoraba la experiencia del encuentro cultural entre lo europeo y lo no-europeo, destacaba una polaridad semántica que recorrió transversalmente las décadas de la expansión colonial, a saber: la distinción entre civilización/barbarie (Sánchez-Mejía, 2016). No sólo el color de piel, sino muchas otras divergencias (como la religión, los hábitos de vida, las costumbres, los rituales) eran marcadas desde tal polaridad para trazar una taxativa diferenciación identitaria. El título de la obra de Niall Ferguson, *Civilization: The West and the Rest* (2011) es elocuente respecto de las caegóricas formas



de reafirmar la diferencia entre “Ellos” y “Nosotros”. El caso de Tocqueville sirve nuevamente como muestra de la percepción deflacionaria que se transluce en un discurso legitimante de la superioridad de unos sobre otros. Esto queda develado en la forma en que este autor escribió sobre la etapa de expansión (y violenta conquista militar) de Francia sobre África, entre 1830 y 1847. En esa época, filósofos, políticos y científicos sociales pretendieron analizar las costumbres y la cultura de las personas con las cuales los franceses se encontrarían en la Argelia francesa: árabes y bereberes (Sánchez-Mejía, 2016). Habiendo sido comisionado por la Asamblea Francesa como defensor del proyecto colonizador, Tocqueville se expresaba de los argelinos subrayando no sólo la diferencia sino la jerarquización. Decía: “Por el solo hecho de la superioridad de sus luces, un pueblo poderoso y civilizado como el nuestro [Francia] ejerce una influencia casi invencible sobre las pequeñas tribus poco menos que salvajes y, para obligarlas a incorporarse a él, basta que se pueda entablar con ellas relaciones durables” (Sánchez-Mejía, 201, 27). En Cartas sobre Argelia -donde dejaba inferir su postura pro-colonialista tratándose de África- Tocqueville aludía a un deliberado proceso de destrucción de conocimientos locales que bien podrían ejemplificar lo que Santos ha denominado “epistemicidio”. Afirmaba Tocqueville: “Para hacer desaparecer mejor los vestigios de la dominación enemiga, previamente habíamos tenido la precaución de lacerar o de quemar todos los documentos escritos, registros administrativos, piezas auténticas u otras, que habrían podido perpetuar las huellas de aquello que se había hecho antes de nosotros” (cit. en Mbembe, 2016, 202). Tocqueville visitó Argelia entre 1841 y 1846; al compartir su impresión de la ciudad de Argel, escribía: “Primer aspecto de la ciudad: Nunca he visto nada parecido. Una prodigiosa mezcla de razas y vestimentas, árabes, cabileños, moros, negros, mahoneses, franceses. (...) Todas estas gentes se agitan con una actividad que parece febril. Toda la ciudad baja parece en estado de destrucción y de reconstrucción. Solo se ve por todas partes ruinas recientes, edificios que se levantan; solo se oye el ruido del martillo. Es Cincinnati transportado a suelo africano” (Tocqueville, 1841, 41. Cit. en Sánchez Mejía, 2016, 30. Énfasis añadido).

La formación de un nuevo “sujeto epistémico” implicaba acciones de reeducación y sustitución de los conocimientos vigentes. Con aire de “paternalismo epistémico”, Tocqueville daba sobradas muestras de ansiedad epistemicida: “La conquista constituyó una nueva era. Por temor a mezclar de una manera irracional el pasado con el presente, destruimos inclusive una gran cantidad de calles de Argel con el objetivo de reconstruirlas siguiendo nuestro propio método. Además, a las que dejamos subsistir las rebautizamos con nombres franceses”. (Tocqueville, 1841, 39. Cit. en Mbembe, 2016, 202).

Estas narrativas triunfalistas nutren cierta interpretación de la gesta colonizadora en términos de una gran efusión narcisista o incluso dionisíaca. Dice Mbembe, aventurándose a una lectura nietzscheana:

La mezcla de voluptuosidad, frenesí y crueldad, de ebriedad y ensueño, es una de las dimensiones estructurales de la empresa colonial. Sólo puede entenderse a partir de esta forma de encantamiento que es, al mismo tiempo, agitación y tumulto. ¿O acaso el mundo colonial no posee la mayoría de las características que Nietzsche le atribuye a la tragedia griega?: “Aquel fenómeno de que los dolores susciten placer, de que la alegría arranque al pecho sonidos atormentados”, mientras que “en la alegría más alta resuenan el grito de espanto o el lamento nostálgico por una pérdida insustituible” (Mbembe, 2016, 202-203).

La colonia, afirma Mbembe, es un lugar donde no se le permite al colonizado hablar por sí mismo y ni para sí mismo: “Esta negación de la palabra tiene relación con el confinamiento del colonizado a la esfera de la aparición desnuda: sea como desecho o residuo, (..) es aquél cuya vida, desprovista de toda significación que no sea aquélla que le otorga el amo, sólo tiene valor, estrictamente hablando, por su aptitud para generar beneficio” (Mbembe, 2016, 201).

Ahora bien, la devaluación, la humillación, la ofensa, la injuria, la denostación, se inscriben dentro de una dinámica de depredación epistémica que no siempre es abiertamente exterminadora. Puede y suele manifestarse también a través de una activa y profunda indiferencia, desinterés e indolencia sobre lo devaluado. Aludiendo a cómo los franceses ignoraban las lenguas, costumbres y geografía de las “diferentes razas” que habitaban la colonia en Argelia, Tocqueville narraba en 1837: “Los franceses ignoraban lo que era la aristocracia militar de los spahis y, en cuanto a los morabitos, tardaron mucho tiempo en saber si cuando se hablaba de ellos se hacía referencia a una tumba o a un hombre. (..) Los franceses no tenían conocimiento de todo esto y, a decir verdad, ni siquiera les interesaba aprender” (cit. en Mbembe, 2016, 208. Énfasis añadido).

Como afirma Santos, el poder no sólo se ejerce al usufructuar del derecho a ver, sino también del derecho a “no ver”. El poder se materializa como la capacidad de crear inexistencias. En la colonia, dice Mbembe, la soberanía se ejerce a través de esta distribución de la “visibilidad”: “El poder racial —el poder-ver-racial— se expresa en primer lugar en que aquél al que se decide no ver o escuchar, jamás podría existir o hablar por sí mismo. En última instancia, hay que hacerlo callar. Sea como sea, su palabra es indescifrable o, por lo menos, inarticulada. Es necesario que otro hable en su nombre y que tome su lugar para que aquello que él pretende decir tenga sentido pleno en la lengua” (Mbembe, 2016, 205).

Ser despojado de la facultad de hablar por sí mismo carcome el sentido de agenciación y obstruye las condiciones de paridad epistémica (indispensables para la mutua atribución de credibilidad). Dirá Mbembe que, al carecer de voz propia, el sujeto queda “obligado a pensarse constantemente, si no como un “intruso”, al menos como alguien condenado a aparecer en el campo social como un “problema” (Mbembe, 2016, 205).

### **Racionalidad Supremacista e Injusticia Epistémica**

Los epistemicidios calcan e incentivan procesos de formación monocultural a través de los cuales diversos saberes quedan subalternizados, desaparecidos, olvidados o simplemente ignorados. Los productores y usuarios de esos saberes quedan excluidos dado que no son visibilizados como miembros de la comunidad generadora de conocimiento valioso. Tal destrucción no es sólo de conocimientos sino de epistemologías, es decir, de procesos de validación que engloban reglas específicas de demarcación y fundamentación.

Entre los efectos más palpables de las dinámicas epistemicidas los más comunes son el (auto)silenciamiento y el embotamiento epistémico. En ambos casos, el sujeto de conocimiento resulta disminuido en su credibilidad. Esto significa que las razones que pueda alegar respecto a sus creencias tienden a ser pre-desechadas por motivos externos a la argumentación misma (ligados a algún atributo identitario desfavorable para la economía de la credibilidad). La filósofa inglesa Miranda Fricker ha denominado “injusticia epistémica” al tipo de agravio que alguien puede sufrir cuando no es tomado en serio en virtud de algún sesgo personal y/o grupal. Fricker, que llama “injusticia testimonial” a la que es perpetrada contra un hablante estigmatizado en tanto argumentador, recurre a un ejemplo de injusticia epistémica racista tomado de la novela de Harper Lee, *Matar a un ruiseñor*: Allí, el novelista narra un caso donde se acusa chuscamente a un hombre negro, Tom Robinson, de haber cometido un abuso contra una joven blanca en el pequeño y prejuicioso condado de Maycomb, en Estados Unidos. A pesar de que la evidencia apoya íntegramente la inocencia de Tom, los miembros del jurado, conformado completamente por blancos, están sesgados por el estereotipo racial prejuicioso en contra de la credibilidad de los negros. En el contexto de la sala de sesiones donde se procesa al acusado, el jurado no puede percibir a Tom Robinson de una forma que no sea como un negro deshonesto, inconsciente, mentiroso y depravado (Fricker, 2017, 69).

Un importantísimo aspecto resaltado por Fricker versa sobre el carácter no necesariamente consciente de las creencias racialistas y las actitudes racistas de los blancos de Maycomb contra los negros en general (y contra el acusado en particular). Los estereotipos que modelan las percepciones no siempre están mediados por creencias que puedan detectarse.

La mayoría de los casos de injusticia testimonial suceden sin que sus perpetradores elijan o deseen no creerle al testimoniante. Pueden estar actuando de “buena fe” y con la “certeza” de estar defendiendo una verdad apegada a los hechos. Tales prejuicios pueden deberse a la acción de “sigilosos prejuicios residuales cuyo contenido puede incluso ser rotundamente incongruente con las creencias [antirracistas] que en realidad suscribe el sujeto” (Fricker, 2017, 70. Énfasis añadido). Fricker concibe los estereotipos sociales como imágenes que son capaces de causar un impacto visceral sobre el juicio, lo que les permite condicionar nuestros juicios prescindiendo de nuestra conciencia.

Que una atmósfera social esté impregnada de imaginarios culturales prejuiciosos contribuye a que el juicio de credibilidad sobre alguien tienda a contaminarse sin siquiera percibirlo. Afirma Fricker: “Si los estereotipos son asociaciones ampliamente aceptadas de un grupo y un atributo, estereotipar supone entonces un compromiso cognitivo con alguna clase de generalización empírica acerca de un grupo social determinado” (Fricker, 2017, 62). Podría no ser el color de piel lo que disminuye la credibilidad en un hablante, sino su acento, su lugar de procedencia, el barrio en el que vive, su condición itinerante, el tipo de trabajo que hace, o cualquier otro rasgo de clase o forma de vida al que se le asocian determinadas expectativas epistémicas desdeñosas. En otras palabras, ser negro, ser migrante, ser transexual, ser pobre, ser desescolarizado, o ser de cualquier condición históricamente desventajosa puede colocar a dicho individuo en una posición en la cual se lo asocia con algún atributo inversamente relacionado con la credibilidad. El prejuicio opera como una suerte de “información retinal” que induce a ver al Otro-diferente como un Otro-inferior.

Por supuesto que Fricker no está pensando en que todo déficit de credibilidad desemboque en un caso de injusticia testimonial. Se pueden tener fundadas razones en no creer (o creer poco) en los argumentos que alguien está proponiendo. Pero esa reducción de la credibilidad no se debe a la clase de persona que el argumentador es, sino a la falta de fuerza evidencial en su razonamiento (o a creer que no es sincero). Es decir, la credibilidad podría menguar porque el testimoniante comete errores inocentes ligados a la falibilidad del conocimiento; ello es muy diferente a que la falta de credibilidad se sustente en un odio inhumano y a priori (tal como ocurre en el caso del juicio a Tom Robinson, donde el desprecio es por la carga estereotípica de “ser negro”, diga lo que diga, y argumente como argumente). Es preciso remarcar que los juicios de credibilidad están impactados no sólo por la identidad social conferida por el oyente al hablante, sino también por la propia identidad social del oyente. Fricker hace hincapié en este punto: los miembros del jurado no captan la diferencia que imprime en su percepción de

Tom Robinson como hablante no solo el hecho de que él sea negro, sino, en igual medida, el hecho de que ellos sean blancos.

Los prejuicios aceitados por estereotipos racistas funcionan como “lemas”, es decir, como declaraciones sobre verdades pronunciadas cientos de millones de veces en las conversaciones más habituales. Aunque el mapa creencial de una persona con actitudes racistas no esté plenamente elaborado según criterios evidentes, puede igualmente actuar como si fuese innegable que “los negros son peligrosos”, “son impulsivos”, “son vengativos” o “son agresivos” (por ejemplo, cuando la alta presencia de personas negras en un lugar le despierta al blanco, involuntariamente, cierta tensión o incomodidad).

Como se verá a continuación, a medida que se va entramando un consenso sobre estas cuestiones, la consciencia racista se va fortaleciendo y la disposición a adoptar irreflexivamente los lemas racistas se va volviendo “sentido común”. La producción social y situada de tales estereotipos se desdibuja hasta ser olvidada y normalizada. A partir de allí, una cierta mirada prejuiciosa sobre el Otro-diferente se vuelve familiar y se siente “natural”. El prejuicio circula y se potencia colectivamente, eximiendo de responsabilidad personal a quienes lo repiten por simple imitación, internalización, ingenuidad o pereza crítica. Un estilo de pensamiento basado en el desprecio y la anulación del Otro-Devaluado puede incluso cristalizarse en un “discurso de odio” que la mayoría comparte y del cual nadie, individualmente, asume responsabilidad moral alguna. En la siguiente y última sección, se ejemplificará esta forma de racismo tomando como eje a uno de los actores sociales más vilipendiados en los tiempos actuales: el migrante.

### **La colonización racial de las conversaciones cotidianas**

Las ideologías racistas han ido cambiando a lo largo del tiempo, legitimándose no sólo en diferencias biológicas sino también en “diferencias culturales” interpretadas como innatas e inmodificables. Un caso emblemático de la revitalización de “nuevos racismos” se puede rastrear en los discursos anti-inmigrantes. Hace unos veinticinco años la antropóloga social Verena Stolcke, por ejemplo, se refería a este tema de los “nuevos racismos” en Europa señalando lo siguiente:

La derecha francesa comenzó a orquestar su ofensiva antiinmigrante al abrazar lo que Taguieff ha denominado un “racismo diferencial”, una doctrina que exalta la esencial e irreductible diferencia cultural de las comunidades de inmigrantes no europeos, cuya presencia es condenada por amenazar la identidad nacional original del país “anfitrión”. Un elemento central de esta doctrina de exclusión es el repudio del “mestizaje cultural” en favor de la preservación incondicional de la propia identidad biocultural supuestamente original (Stolcke 1995: 4; Traducción propia. Énfasis añadido).

Similarmente, algunos politólogos derechistas abogaban por un “racismo defensivo” que impidiera en Italia el ingreso de árabes y musulmanes (Pagliai, 2009). Tras los atentados a las Torres Gemelas de New York el 11 de septiembre de 2001, los prejuicios respecto a los árabes han rebasado claramente el ámbito de las diferencias religiosas y el estereotipo del “musulmán terrorista” ha impregnado de miedo e inseguridad los espacios donde estas personas transitan (sobre “islamofobia”, cfr. Grosfoguel, 2011).

Estos nuevos rebrotes de segregación de los grupos humanos exigen repensar el racismo más allá de la encorsetada dicotomía “Blanco/Negro”. Tal reduccionismo hace pasar desapercibidas muchas formas de discriminación relacionadas con conductas, lenguajes, tradiciones, rituales, formas de vida y epistemologías que no necesariamente van acompañadas de diferencias significativas en aspectos biológicos, como el color de piel (Pagliai 2009, Lentini 2004, Allievi 2002).

En su estudio sobre el odio racial en el norte de Italia contra los migrantes polacos, los albanos y los mismos italianos del sur, Valentina Pagliai plantea un aspecto del tema que no es en absoluto menor. Pagliai señala que el racismo no se reproduce ni se mantiene si no es por lo que las personas individuales hacen al interactuar (usando mapas descriptivos sesgados por lemas racistas). Abordar el problema sólo en su costado estructural (el racismo enquistado en instituciones escolares, policiales o sanitarias) desvía la atención respecto a la participación de los individuos en actos de discriminación. En ese tenor, lo adecuado sería dejar de decir que las personas son racistas, y plantear más bien que devienen racistas toda vez que, dentro de ecologías sociales estructuralmente perjudicadas, abonan individualmente a conversaciones que hacen circular y consolidar tales sesgos. En el estudio de caso que Pagliai realizó en Toscana (norte de Italia) se señala, por ejemplo, el masivo e incuestionado apego de los ciudadanos a la idea de que habían sido “invadidos” por los migrantes albanos y chinos. Si bien dichos ciudadanos no habían inventado, de manera personal, los rótulos despectivos contra esos migrantes, los usaban y amplificaban una y otra vez en sus pláticas diarias.

Esto lleva a reflexionar sobre la facilidad con la cual se van construyendo, microsocionalmente, “esquemas de observación” que velozmente se extienden sin mayor contrariedad. Tanto en las conversaciones cara a cara como en las narrativas más presentes en los medios de comunicación masiva, se replican metáforas atrincheradas en el fondo de prejuicios compartidos. Asumir, por ejemplo, que las personas pertenecen al “nosotros” si y sólo si tienen “raíces” dentro de ese grupo, implica una forma de representación que despoja a los itinerantes o migrantes de la experiencia de una co-pertenencia no basada en dichas “raíces”.

En la medida en que estas violentas metáforas no son cuestionadas, el estereotipo inferiorizante va ganando, en la opinión pública, un incalculable

grado de adhesión. Por ejemplo, en Estados Unidos, la idea de que “los migrantes mexicanos, salvadoreños y hondureños son propensos a delinquir” está tan generalizada como la creencia de que “llegan a quitarle el trabajo a los americanos y a exprimir su sistema de salud y educación”. El “acuerdo no-argumentado” sobre estas supuestas certezas promueve una coincidencia intersubjetiva que incrementa la sensación de que esos juicios racistas no son más que descripciones fieles a la realidad objetiva. Representarse al migrante como Otro (y no cualquier Otro, sino un Otro temible) es una de las hélices de los discursos injuriantes más potentes hoy día en la sociedad euroamericana.

Entonces, a modo de recapitulación, la identidad social racializada preexiste en los discursos vigentes, pero, al mismo tiempo, se potencia en y por dichos hilos conversacionales en los que no solo se hace una evaluación del Otro-Devaluado sino también del Sí-Mismo-Hipervaluado. El filtro racista por el que pasan esos “extraños” los subsume en un gran “Otro indiferenciado”. En México, por ejemplo, el tren en el que se mueven los migrantes centroamericanos que intentan llegar a la frontera norte sin documentos es coloquialmente apodado “la bestia”, y aunque en él viajen salvadoreños, nicaragüenses, guatemaltecos, hondureños, costarricenses y mexicanos del sur (trepados en el techo o entre los vagones), todos quedan englobados en el discurso de “los ilegales” (supuestos portadores de enfermedades, suciedad, promiscuidad, delincuencia, indigencia, abuso, violencia, y carne de cañón para los cárteles de narcotráfico que gobiernan los estados centro y norte de México). A lo largo de las performances que se van entretejiendo con estas imágenes, se va construyendo lo que Butler denomina una “realidad fantasmática” (1997), que resulta por demás conveniente para que el racismo se maquille con un discurso autoprotector. Cualquier tipo de ayuda humanitaria o gubernamental hacia estos grupos puede quedar rápidamente neutralizada bajo el peso de los argumentos sobre la peligrosidad del migrante.

## **Conclusión**

El nombre no es lo nombrado (Nietzsche, 1981, 67). Fanon lo expone con una prosa estremecedora:

No soy negro, así como tampoco soy un negro. Negro no es ni mi apellido ni mi nombre, mucho menos mi esencia o mi identidad. Soy una persona humana y con eso basta. El otro puede discutirme esa cualidad, pero nunca conseguirá quitármela ontológicamente. Y esto no cambia por el hecho de que sea esclavo, colonizado, objeto de discriminaciones o de cualquier forma de vejaciones, privaciones o humillaciones a causa del color de piel. Sigo siendo una persona humana innata más allá de las violentas tentativas por hacerme creer

que no lo soy. Este excedente no eliminable escapa a cualquier tipo de captura o fijación dentro de un estatus social y jurídico determinados. Y ni siquiera la muerte puede interrumpirlo, así como tampoco pueden borrarlo ningún sustantivo, medida administrativa, ley, asignación, doctrina o dogma. “Negro” es, entonces, un apodo, la túnica con que otro me ha arropado y bajo la cual ha pretendido encerrarme para siempre (Fanon, cit. en Mbembe, 2016, 100).

No obstante, aunque el nombre no sea lo nombrado, el lenguaje crea, como se dijo al principio, experiencias y modos de subjetivación. Su performatividad, como dice Butler, nos aleja del ideal de “un sujeto soberano, plenamente consciente y dueño de la significación y de los efectos de sus actos”. En otras palabras, el lenguaje “nos toca”, la significación engendra sentires, afecciones inaprehensibles desde los límites de lo decible. Los estereotipos que gozan de inmunidad crítica en una época albergan la potencialidad de infligir heridas epistémicas y experiencias vitales ignominiosas.

Empero, estos estereotipos no tienen un peso absoluto; por el contrario, su valor es cambiante y relativo. El color de piel es un ejemplo fructífero para analizar cómo el “ser negro” puede ser altamente estigmatizado en un contexto y perder relevancia en otro. Cuando le preguntaron al ex campeón mundial de boxeo Larry Holmes qué tan difícil era “ser negro”, Holmes contestó: “Es duro ser negro. Yo fui negro una vez... cuando era pobre” (Holmes, cit. en González de la Fuente, 2016, 197). Tal respuesta abre la oportunidad de repensar si se deviene “menos negro” cuando se ha logrado revertir otros estereotipos inferiorizantes (como el de ser pobre, no escolarizado y residente de un gueto negro). Está claro que Holmes -que dejó la escuela en séptimo grado y lavaba autos por un dólar- logró “el sueño” de la movilidad social al convertirse en un ídolo internacional y ganar fama, dinero, éxito y reconocimiento. Al haber escalado “del gueto a la gloria” pudo acceder a múltiples privilegios negados al común de los negros pobres. En ese sentido, Holmes dejó de ser “un negro”. Sin embargo, vuelve a ser “un negro” cuando se recuerda que su estrellato se debió nada más y nada menos que al boxeo: “un derroche salvaje de brutalidad gratuita y desenfrenada”, “una de las últimas barbaridades consentidas” en la evolución, un arcaísmo reservado a la escala más baja de las clases sociales, un “cuerpo primitivo” vacío de conocimiento (“puro instinto”, un “agresivo nato”), fácilmente confundible con “el matón callejero” que habita el barrio negro y pobre del cual el boxeador generalmente proviene (Wacquant, 2006, 56-73). En su fascinante etnografía inmersiva en los gimnasios del Chicago negro, Louis Wacquant (siguiendo a su mentor, Pierre Bordieu) expone el flagrante epistemicidio a través del cual la racionalidad pugilística (la del “cuerpo vivido”) ha sido



denigrada bajo el estereotipo cultural del boxeador como una criatura animalesca, in-civilizada, hambrienta, resentida, sadomasoquista, con poco sentido moral y baja agudeza intelectual (Wacquant, 2006; 2007).

Los estereotipos identitarios atraviesan el microcosmos social alborotando creencias contrapuestas. Cuando Holmes se reafirma epistémicamente en su superioridad pugilística sobre el rival, derriba el mito de la inferioridad congénita de los negros, pero al mismo tiempo también realza el mito de su propia bestialidad. En esa compleja red de lemas y estereotipos vigentes, las descripciones se vuelven difusas y negociables. Holmes “es negro y no es negro”, o “es un negro pero millonario”, o “es un millonario pero negro”, y así ad infinitum. No hay estrategias concluyentes ni neutrales para cartografiar “lo real”; por el contrario, al describir el mundo también se lo inventa. Como sostiene Gibson-Graham, “nuestros actos de representación son ejercicios de libertad (...) que traen responsabilidades y consecuencias” (citado en Pratt, 2007, 26).

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## Le chaos borgésien entre réel et virtuel

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### Résumé

Le corpus de cette étude est composé de trois nouvelles de Jorge Luis Borges : *Le jardin aux sentiers qui bifurquent*, *Funes ou la mémoire* et *Le livre de sable*. L'auteur a semé des indications chaotiques à travers ces textes, une sorte de ramifications infinies dans le temps en prouvant que les événements ne sont que des points de départ pour des trajectoires bifurquées. Pour Borges, les choix humains sont des actions qui peuvent se produire selon des possibilités infinies dans un immense univers labyrinthique. Chaque décision mènerait à des parcours qui diffèrent dans le temps et qui peuvent converger, se croiser ou diverger avec d'autres qui ont débuté dans un passé ou auront lieu dans un futur lointain. A travers les mondes imaginaires de ces trois nouvelles, l'auteur veut prouver que tout n'est pas dû au hasard et nous invite à considérer la réalité comme une issue d'un labyrinthe géant sans pour autant nier la virtualité. Selon une méthode synthétique, on a pu déceler l'affinité entre le texte littéraire de Borges et la théorie du chaos.

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**Mots-clés :** Chaos, réalité, labyrinthe, infini, bifurcation, mémoire, livre

## Borgesian Chaos Between Reality and the Virtual

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### Abstract

The essence of this study consists of three short stories by Jorge Luis Borges: *The Garden of Forking Paths*, *Funes the Memorious*, and *The Book of Sand*. The author has shown chaotic indications throughout these texts. A kind of infinite ramifications in time by proving that events are only starting points for branching trajectories. For Borges, human choices are actions occurring in infinite possibilities within an immense labyrinthine universe. Each decision would lead to paths that differ in time and that may converge, intersect or diverge with others that began in the distant past or will take place in the future. Through the imaginary worlds of these three short stories, the author wants to prove that not everything is due to chance, and invites us to consider reality as a way out of a giant labyrinth without denying the virtual. Using a synthetic method, the similarity between Borges' literary text and chaos theory was detected.

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**Keywords:** Chaos, reality, labyrinth, infinite, forking, memory, book

### Introduction

Selon Albert Einstein, la faculté d'imaginer est « plus importante que le savoir »<sup>1</sup>. A travers les trois nouvelles, objet de cet article, Borges réussit à mêler imaginaire et savoir. En se servant indirectement d'une notion complexe telle que la théorie du chaos, il démontre encore une fois que même les idées scientifiques les plus complexes peuvent être abordées d'une manière littéraire et même avec le fantastique, spécialité qui lui est chère.

Il semble a priori que le but de Borges n'est pas de faire plonger le lecteur gratuitement dans un monde irréel, désordonné et sans horizon, mais au contraire de lui faire ressentir la différence avec une réalité réductrice pour découvrir les lois qui gèrent le monde et qui peuvent apparaître comme chaotiques. Dans le domaine scientifique, la théorie du chaos est devenue aujourd'hui une méthode d'analyse pour comprendre les dimensions fractales, les dépendances des systèmes dynamiques aux conditions initiales. Comment Borges en tant qu'écrivain perçoit-il cette théorie difficile à assimiler pour les non spécialistes ? Pourtant, il est certain que ce grand auteur adorait la

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<sup>1</sup> <https://citations.ouest-france.fr/citations-albert-einstein-288.html>

mathématique et la philosophie et il « connaissait quelques paradoxes de la philosophie et de la mathématique » (Fux, 2010). Lors de son entretien avec Georges Charbonnier (1967, p. 255-345), Borges explique « Je ne crois pas être un bon mathématicien, mais j'ai lu-j'ai relu, c'était plus important-Poincaré, Russel et quelques autres mathématiciens [...] Je ne dirai pas que je suis un mathématicien ou un philosophe, mais je crois avoir trouvé dans les mathématiques et dans la philosophie des possibilités littéraires, et surtout des possibilités pour la littérature qui me passionne le plus : la littérature fantastique ». En effet, la plupart de ses nouvelles regorgent d'allusions explicites ou implicites à des concepts tels le hasard, la probabilité, le cheminement chaotique spatio-temporel, et surtout celui de l'infini mis profondément en œuvre dans la nouvelle *L'Aleph*. Depuis 1960, une connexion est faite entre mathématique et littérature inventive et innovante, et la création de L'Oulipo, « Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle<sup>2</sup> », un groupe composé d'écrivains et de mathématiciens, témoigne de cette interaction entre ces deux disciplines. A cet égard Perec (1969), un écrivain et verbicruciste français et membre de l'Oulipo, a écrit un roman intitulé "La Disparition" qui ne comporte aucun « e ».

Avant d'aborder la notion du chaos chez Borges, il est nécessaire de souligner que l'objectif de cette recherche n'est pas d'analyser la complexité mathématique de la théorie du chaos, car tout simplement ce n'est pas notre domaine. Nos efforts seront déployés pour cerner l'intérêt borgésien au phénomène du chaos. En effet, le monde fictionnel de Borges est rempli d'espaces chaotiques qui visent à mettre en communication deux mondes distincts : la réalité et la virtualité.

Le concept du chaos qui est apparu au début du vingtième siècle préparait à une sorte de révolution scientifique comme celle de la théorie de la relativité générale d'Einstein. Les efforts des scientifiques visaient la définition du chaos et la vérité du désordre apparent des phénomènes. La recherche de cette vérité a débuté avec l'homme lui-même et elle sera recherchée tant qu'il y aura de la vie sur terre, mais « la vérité, vous le savez, c'est ce qui simplifie le monde et non ce qui crée le chaos (172)<sup>3</sup>. Dans ce sens, le chaos désigne une absence ou une ignorance des règles qui gouvernent un phénomène et par conséquent cette absence masque sa vérité. Principalement, le chaos s'oppose à l'ordre, il n'est pas assimilé au hasard et il diverge de la philosophie par la consistance comme préconise Deleuze et Guattari (1991, p.45): « Le chaos n'est pas un état inerte ou stationnaire, ce n'est pas un mélange au hasard. Le chaos chaotise, et défait dans l'infini toute consistance. Le problème de la philosophie est d'acquérir une consistance, sans perdre

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<sup>2</sup> L'Oulipo est une association fondée en 1960 par le mathématicien François Le Lionnais et l'écrivain et poète Raymond Queneau.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

l'infini dans lequel la pensée plonge [...] Donner consistance sans rien perdre de l'infini...».

Y-a-t-il un lien entre le chaos et le désordre ? Autrement dit, le chaos est-il une antithèse de l'ordre ? Mais le désordre observé n'est-il pas une image trompeuse qui cache un ordre parfait ? Si oui, le chaos n'est-il pas un ordre parfait géré par un attracteur ? Et les manifestations désordonnées ne donnent-elles pas qu'une image embrouillée du phénomène qui est en train de se constituer ? Pourtant, le grand mathématicien Mandelbrot mentionne deux types de chaos « ordonné et désordonné » selon Peitgen et Richter (1986, p.157).

Quand on parle du chaos, il faut absolument parler du météorologue Edward Lorenz et son magique attracteur, un oscillateur de dimension fractale entre 2 et 3 selon Grassberger et Procaccia (1983). Dans son modèle dynamique sur la météo, Lorenz découvre que l'évolution à long terme de son système est fortement corrélée aux conditions initiales, c'est-à-dire, même une donnée infime peut bouleverser la prédiction due à un système dynamique, d'où la naissance de " l'effet papillon " selon lequel « le battement d'une aile de papillon à Pékin peut engendrer des remous dans l'atmosphère de New York »<sup>4</sup>. En effet, personne n'a vu une tornade provoquée par le battement des ailes d'un papillon mais des variables liées à la météorologie terrestre la produisent si les conditions de leurs effets joints se produisent. Cette évolution chaotique découverte par Lorenz n'est jamais identique à elle-même et non périodique, mais « elle s'enroule en fait éternellement sur elle-même »<sup>5</sup> en sautant d'une aile à l'autre d'une manière erratique. En effet, des variations minimales dans ces conditions rendent la prédiction impossible à long terme, même pour le système purement déterministe car il est impossible de connaître parfaitement les conditions initiales.

Pourtant, l'effet de papillon, comme les autres phénomènes chaotiques, écrit Gleick (1987, p. 41), « existait déjà dans le folklore :

*Faute de clou, on perdit le fer ;  
Faute de fer, on perdit le cheval ;  
Faute de cheval, on perdit le cavalier ;  
Faute de cavalier, on perdit la bataille ;  
Faute de bataille, on perdit le royaume ! »*

Après cette illustration préliminaire du chaos, revenons maintenant à Borges. Une question ordinaire s'impose : est-il possible de décrire la vérité de l'univers à l'aide d'un modèle unique en tenant compte des différentes

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. p.49



variations dans le cosmos ? Pour Borges, la réponse est certainement non car l'univers est un labyrinthe lié à l'infini et les connaissances humaines sont impuissantes à y trouver une issue valable. Dans la première phrase de *La Bibliothèque de Babel*, Borges (1944, p. 79) débute la nouvelle par : « L'univers (que d'autres appellent la Bibliothèque) se compose d'un nombre indéfini, et peut-être infini, de galeries hexagonales ». Effectivement, il accorde toute la symbolique de l'infini à cet édifice en la décrivant comme « une sphère dont le centre véritable est un hexagone quelconque, et dont la circonférence est inaccessible ». Puisque la bibliothèque désigne l'univers qui est un labyrinthe selon Borges, donc cette bibliothèque est un labyrinthe. L'univers cache une infinité de savoirs et le fait d'y penser provoque un malaise comme le dit Petroff (1999) : « Dans la mesure où les livres racontent l'univers et se confondent avec lui, la bibliothèque est, elle-même, l'univers des livres, c'est-à-dire, en cédant au vertige de la mise en abyme, l'univers de l'Univers ».

Cette dimension infinie n'est qu'un signe que l'homme est en face d'un savoir infini, et il est condamné à utiliser toutes ses forces rationnelles et imaginaires pour acquérir ce qui est possible de se savoir. Dans ce contexte va la pensée de Pascal (1957, p.84) qui se demande « qu'est-ce que l'homme dans la nature ? A cette question, il répond que c'est « un néant à l'égard de l'infini, un tout à l'égard du néant, un milieu entre rien et tout, infiniment éloigné de comprendre les extrêmes ». L'expression "un milieu entre rien et tout" désigne le centre d'un cercle, source de l'égalité entre les hommes dans leurs actions permanentes jusqu'à l'infini.

Borges insiste profondément sur l'exploitation intellectuelle de l'homme en conduisant son lecteur dans un monde labyrinthique, afin de l'égarer et aviver son désir de comprendre sa nouvelle et ses énigmes. Le lecteur vit ainsi un mélange de réalité et de fiction pour se terminer dans la réalité qui représente l'issue du labyrinthe, et ceci est confirmé par Nicolas (1999) qui estime que « Borges place ses nouvelles dans le domaine de la spéculation intellectuelle, et ne se rapproche de la réalité pratique que lors du bouclage final ». Ainsi, la dernière phrase de *La Bibliothèque de Babel* le prouve : « Ma solitude se console à cet élégant espoir (91) ». Avec cette fin, Borges revient au point de départ en accordant à la bibliothèque une dimension réaliste en descendant du monde fantastique au monde rationnel. La même fin est constatée dans *L'Immortel* où un retour à la réalité donne vie au temps qui meurt dans l'état d'immortalité comme l'écrit Sayegh (2021) : « Borges distingue deux notions qui s'opposent : immortalité basée sur la certitude et la prévisibilité et mortalité fondée sur l'incertitude et l'imprévisibilité. La première génère une vie statique et l'autre une vie dynamique ». Ceci explique les cris de joie du Troglodyte retrouvant le contact avec le temps réel car « il

recupère son humanité perdue dans les méandres de l'uniformité de l'éternité »

Mais où est-il le chaos chez Borges ? A cet égard, Weissert (1991) affirme que Borges aurait devancé la science d'une trentaine d'années dans la formulation de la théorie du chaos, et ceci va avec le témoignage de Fux (2010) qui écrit «Borges a énoncé lui aussi qu'il y a des choses qu'on peut concevoir sans pouvoir les résoudre».

Cet article se propose d'examiner les textes de Borges suivant une méthode synthétique qui vise à saisir l'arrière-pensée mathématique et philosophique de l'auteur en rapport avec la théorie du chaos. Les nouvelles sur lesquelles sont basées les analyses sont : *Le jardin aux sentiers qui bifurquent*, *Funes ou la mémoire* et *Le livre de sable*. Les deux premières se trouvent dans *Fictions* (Borges, 1944) tandis que la troisième fait partie de son recueil intitulé *Le livre de sable* (Borges, 1975). Une grande attention sera accordée aux traces du chaos à travers l'univers borgésien afin d'explorer l'implicite de ces nouvelles : Est-ce la joie de voyager dans un monde fictionnel, imaginaire et virtuel ? Ou, derrière ce monde, existe-t-il un lien particulier entre le réel et le monde chaotique?

### **Le jardin aux sentiers qui bifurquent**

Cette nouvelle<sup>6</sup> de 16 pages est un livre de labyrinthe : *Le jardin aux sentiers qui bifurquent* raconte l'histoire d'un professeur chinois, Yu Tsun qui enseignait l'anglais en Angleterre et qui était en même temps un agent de l'Empire allemand pendant la Première Guerre mondiale. Sa tâche était d'enquêter puis de signaler l'endroit où se trouvent les artilleries du parc britannique. Son souci principal était de retrouver le sinologue, Stephen Albert, mais il a été découvert par le capitaine Richard Madden. Forcé à s'enfuir et à se cacher, Tsun s'est consacré à faire le point sur son passé en Chine, notamment sur son prédécesseur Ts'ui Pen, auteur d'un roman très particulier qui parle de construire un labyrinthe dans lequel tous les hommes se perdaient. Lorsque Tsun atteint Stephen Albert, il fut grandement émerveillé par lui, en découvrant qu'il a soigneusement étudié l'œuvre de Ts'ui Pen, et il a réussi à déchiffrer l'énigme selon lequel le livre et le labyrinthe représentent le même ouvrage. C'était « *Le jardin aux sentiers qui bifurquent* » dont le thème est le temps. Il s'agissait d'une œuvre littéraire qui cherche à décrire tous les résultats possibles d'un événement dont chacun d'eux conduit à des dénouements spécifiques et ceci se fait d'une manière continue et il nous rappelle des univers multiples selon l'interprétation de la mécanique quantique. La mission de l'espion est réussie mais les liens avec

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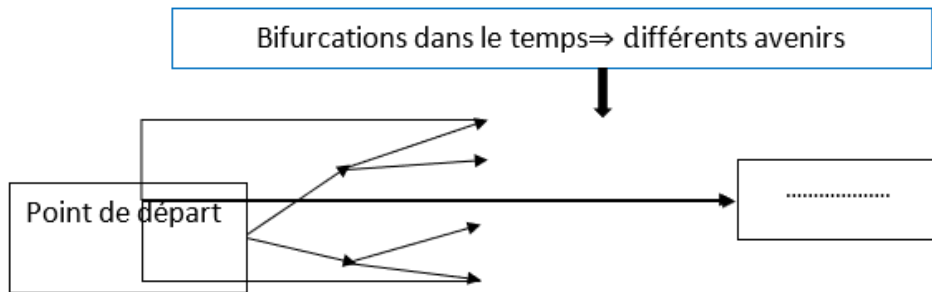
<sup>6</sup> En 2010 avait lieu la vente aux enchères du manuscrit de la nouvelle « le jardin aux sentiers qui bifurquent».

Albert se révèlent désastreux : Tsun élimine ce dernier mais fut arrêté et condamné à mort.

Après cette brève présentation de la nouvelle, il serait bénéfique de signaler l'opinion de Carolina Ferrer (2014) qui s'appuie sur le livre de Frank et Vosburg (1977) : « L'œuvre possède une structure de boîtes chinoises, composée de quatre boîtes. De l'extérieur vers l'intérieur, la première correspond à la nouvelle *Le jardin aux sentiers qui bifurquent* que nous lisons. La deuxième boîte est le livre d'histoire où le narrateur a trouvé la déclaration signée par Yu Tsun, un espion chinois qui travailla pour les Allemands pendant la Première Guerre mondiale. Dans sa lettre, troisième boîte, Tsun explique qu'il a assassiné Stephen Albert, un sinologue britannique, afin de communiquer à son supérieur qu'ils doivent attaquer la ville nommée Albert. La quatrième et dernière boîte correspond au roman *Le jardin aux sentiers qui bifurquent* écrit par Ts'ui Pên, l'ancêtre de Yu Tsun ».

Cette nouvelle ouvre la porte à des bifurcations temporelles, offre une nouvelle vision du monde et de l'action humaine. En quelque sorte, le lendemain n'est jamais déterministe et au même temps personne ne peut le prédire avec exactitude parce que d'une part il est lié à une décision prise à l'avance, et d'autre part, l'homme est incapable de le concevoir à cause des interventions de nombreux phénomènes erratiques provoquant des perturbations sur ses réalisations possibles. C'est l'empreinte du chaos lui-même. Dans ce sens va Borges lorsqu'il écrit : « *Le Jardin aux sentiers qui bifurquent* était le roman chaotique ; la phrase 'nombreux avenir (non tous) ' me suggéra l'image de la bifurcation dans le temps, non dans l'espace [...] Dans toutes les fictions, chaque fois que diverses possibilités se présentent, l'homme en adopte une et élimine les autres ; dans la fiction du presque inextricable Ts'ui Pên, il les adopte toutes simultanément. Il crée ainsi divers avenir, divers temps qui prolifèrent aussi et bifurquent (104) ». Donc chaque décision prise à un moment donné constitue une sorte de "conditions initiales" selon la théorie du chaos, par conséquent il en résulte des avenir différents. En suivant ce raisonnement, le présent n'est qu'un produit d'une décision prise à un particulier point de départ. En ce sens, chaque individu a des futurs multiples qui sont des bifurcations variées, de sorte que chacune d'elles est un point de départ pour d'autres bifurcations et les dénouements n'en sont qu'un reflet. Borges l'explique en écrivant : « ... tous les dénouements se produisent : chacun est le point de départ d'autres bifurcations. Parfois, les sentiers de ce labyrinthe convergent : par exemple, vous arrivez chez moi, mais, dans l'un des passés possibles, vous êtes mon ennemi ; dans un autre, mon ami (104) ». C'est pourquoi les deux présences d'Albert et de Tsun se rejoignent, se confondent et se séparent au gré de bifurcations temporelles fantastiques. La figure suivante illustre cette situation :

### Schéma illustratif des bifurcations possibles



Cette analyse rejoint ce que l'écrivain Isabelle Stengers (1987)) a préconisé sur l'existence d'une multitude d'avenirs en écrivant dans l'introduction de son livre intitulé " D'une science à l'autre. Des concepts nomades " : « Le lecteur français de Borges découvre, dans *Le jardin aux sentiers qui bifurquent*, une parabole de la coexistence proliférante des futurs possibles, et de l'insignifiance de ce que nous croyons être et vouloir dans l'un d'entre eux [...] et il apprend la valeur métaphorique de ce mot, 'bifurcation', désignant originellement la division en deux branches d'une route ».

Le narrateur a utilisé le récit de la trahison comme un prétexte pour nous conduire vers un étrange monde fictionnel. En effet l'espionnage de Tsun, personnage principal de cette nouvelle, l'a amené à examiner de multiples choix au présent pour arriver à son but qui consiste à communiquer aux allemands la bonne information concernant la base d'artillerie anglaise située en France pendant la Première Guerre mondiale. Borges nous invite à renoncer au déterminisme au profit d'une vision probabiliste selon laquelle chaque événement dans l'univers des possibilités implique la réalisation d'un avenir différent. Cette idée est née avec la mécanique quantique découverte depuis plus d'un siècle<sup>7</sup>.

Cette multitude de choix dans le présent aboutit à une infinité de possibilités dans l'avenir : « Je pensai à un labyrinthe de labyrinthes, à un sinueux labyrinthe croissant qui embrasserait le passé et l'avenir et qui impliquerait les astres en quelque sorte (99) ». En effet, dans ce récit, la bifurcation du jardin s'ouvre à la temporalité, et conduit à une pluralité de futurs. Cette conception est confirmée par Borges quand il écrit : « Personne ne pensa que le livre et le labyrinthe étaient un seul objet (102) [...] Je m'étais demandé comment un livre pouvait être infini. Je n'avais pas conjecturé d'autre procédé que celui d'un volume cyclique, circulaire. Un volume dont la dernière page fût identique à la première, avec la possibilité de continuer indéfiniment. Je me rappelai aussi cette nuit qui se trouve au milieu des 1001 Nuits, quand la reine Schéhérazade (par une distraction magique du copiste)

<sup>7</sup> <https://lejournal.cnrs.fr/billets/peut-tester-les-univers-paralleles>).

se met à raconter textuellement l'histoire des Mille et Une Nuits, au risque d'arriver de nouveau à la nuit pendant laquelle elle la raconte, et ainsi l'infini (103) ».

Autrement dit, les réalisations futures possibles ne sont pas certaines et chacune représente une bifurcation propre qui fait errer le lecteur dans un labyrinthe, par conséquent un réseau de labyrinthes parallèles se forme et l'ensemble devient un labyrinthe de labyrinthes, et pourquoi pas un ordre parce que le désordre du désordre ne signifie-t-il pas un ordre parfait ? Hugh Everett, un physicien et mathématicien américain estime que « tout ce qui aurait pu avoir lieu dans le passé a bien eu lieu dans un autre univers. Et tout ce qui peut avoir lieu dans le futur aura bien lieu dans des univers parallèles »<sup>8</sup>, par conséquent des mondes multiples se créent et les prédictions changent avec chaque bifurcation. L'investigation profonde de cette nouvelle révèle que Borges avait une profonde réflexion sur les temps multiples, la multitude des avenir possibles, des univers parallèles et des uchronies<sup>9</sup>. Borges ajoute : « Un labyrinthe minuscule... Un labyrinthe de symboles, corrigea-t-il. Un invisible labyrinthe de temps (102) ». Il ne s'agit pas d'un labyrinthe matérialisé construit par des architectes d'une grande performance dans la maximisation de l'errance, mais un labyrinthe invisible construit mentalement et son théâtre c'est le temps et non l'espace, une sorte de bifurcation des temps multiples, et l'évocation de l'œuvre orientale *Les Mille et Une Nuits* avait pour but de fixer cette notion dans l'esprit du lecteur. Dans chacune des nuits, Schéhérazade a mené une bataille atroce qui a duré mille et une nuits consécutives, et chaque nuit était en face de deux éventualités : la survie par une action judicieuse ou la fatalité de la mort promise par le sultan. A cet effet s'émerge implicitement des univers temporels parallèles indépendants qui forment une sorte de labyrinthe temporel, où les temps multiples s'émergent au sein de son aspect linéaire et cyclique. Pour Borges, le présent englobe tous les événements du passé et du futur, donc la notion du temps continu a été brisée. Avec ce sens, le temps n'est plus un index des phénomènes temporels car il a l'éternité comme étendue et ses différentes formes bifurquent sans cesse.

Pour bien comprendre les sentiers mouvants de ce jardin mystérieux, il serait utile de mentionner une constellation Temps<sup>10</sup> qui unit un grand groupe d'écrivains, de scientifiques et d'artistes dont chacun perçoit le sens du temps à sa manière. En effet, une investigation de cette constellation avec des itinéraires différents montre à quel degré la perception du temps peut dépendre

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> En effet selon le principe de l'uchronie, s'il n'y avait pas la Première Guerre mondiale, l'histoire de l'humanité aurait une autre trajectoire.

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.surgissantes.com/link?id=923&constellation\\_id=144](http://www.surgissantes.com/link?id=923&constellation_id=144)

de facteurs variables pour aboutir à des notions très dissemblables. Ce passage en revue offre au lecteur la possibilité de comparer plusieurs concepts du temps qui sont parfois complexes, convergents ou divergents. Ils fonctionnent de manière très variée : parallèle, linéaire, cyclique, périodique, spirale ou de diverses formes qui s'émergeront avec la progression de la pensée humaine en fournissant plus de significations pour l'existence humaine et son rôle dans cet univers. On retrouve quatre concepts dans la constellation Temps :

Pour certains le temps s'écoule et il est irrécupérable et tout ce qui se passe s'en va et ne se répète pas, telle la vision d'Apollinaire dans son poème « Le Pont Mirabeau » ou la fameuse formule d'Héraclite « On ne se baigne deux fois dans le même fleuve ».

D'autres perçoivent le temps en couleurs, baigné dans la lumière ou l'obscurité en ressentant même sa température ; il devient presque une sorte de sensation physique ou un état d'âme, mais surtout pas quelque chose de révolu et de mort. Il devient renouvelable et ressenti comme vivant<sup>11</sup>. C'est le cas du peintre impressionniste Claude Monet qui souligne le passage du temps et le changement du climat à travers ses nuances. La répétition des saisons et des couleurs sont les signes d'une renaissance toujours nouvelle malgré la ressemblance. En effet, la saisonnalité est perçue comme preuve du temps palpable qui est toujours nouveau au contraire du temps qui se répète à l'identique. Ainsi, le temps redonne vie aux choses et aux êtres au lieu d'en détruire.

Cette complicité entre le temps et la vie prend fin avec la troisième vision qui insiste sur le temps dévorant symbolisé par Cronos. Baudelaire, dans ses luttes et ses défaites continues contre le temps illustre l'exemple parfait de ce combat inégal contre un prédateur démesuré : pour lui, il est tout simplement l'Ennemi et résume le décalage incommensurable entre la finitude de l'homme et l'éternité du temps.

Quant aux scientifiques, leur vision du temps essaie de le priver de toute aura imaginaire ou esthétique et le perçoivent exclusivement selon leurs postulats rationnels. Il devient pour eux une entité évolutive et mouvante en interdépendance avec la notion de l'espace. Un point commun avec Borges qui a su formuler cette interférence dans ses nouvelles en faisant de l'espace la matière qui modèle l'idée abstraite du temps. Pour Albert Einstein, le temps ne s'écoule pas, il est gelé, et ce n'est que la quatrième dimension de l'espace-temps. Donc dire que le temps s'écoule c'est exhorter l'illusion : « Pour nous, physiciens dans l'âme, la distinction entre passé, présent et futur ne garde que la valeur d'une illusion, si tenace soit-elle » écrit Bouton (2018). Pour le physicien, Hawking (1989) « il fallut abandonner l'idée d'un temps unique et absolu, (180) ». Pour lui, « le désordre ou l'entropie croît toujours avec le

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

temps, (182) ». Ceci l'a poussé à parler de « la flèche du temps ». Pour Hegel et selon Bouton (2015, 125-141.) le penseur de la téléologie d'une « Histoire universelle », le temps a un caractère dialectique. Pour lui, le présent appelé aussi maintenant « se nie dans l'avenir, qui se nie à son tour dans le passé, pour laisser la place à un nouveau maintenant [...] Le temps est caractérisé par deux concepts, "l'infini" et "le négatif". Le négatif désigne l'aspect destructeur du temps, sa négativité ».

Enfin, pour l'écrivain et philosophe Mikhaïl Naïmy (1973, p.206), le temps ressemble au cours d'un grand fleuve et il arrive à une conclusion de nature philosophique selon laquelle la conquête du temps ne sera achevée que si l'homme est capable de ramer à contre-courant afin non seulement d'atteindre ses sources mais aussi de les dépasser pour arriver là où il n'y a ni temps ni espace.

Comme constaté dans l'étude de cette nouvelle, le temps qui règne n'est pas une ligne uniforme ou linéaire tel qu'on considère dans les études chronologiques. En effet Borges nous dit : « Cette trame de temps qui s'approchent, bifurquent, se coupent ou s'ignorent pendant des siècles, embrasse toutes les possibilités. Nous n'existons pas dans la majorité de ces temps ; dans quelques-uns vous existez et moi pas ; dans d'autres, moi et pas vous ; dans 'd'autres, tous les deux (107) ».

Donc le temps borgésien qui est « un invisible labyrinthe de temps » coupe toutes les autres lignes de la constellation Temps, c'est une coordonnée de l'espace. En résumé, l'attitude de Borges par rapport au temps apparaît comme l'indique Loichot (1996) : « Labyrinthe clos par sa circonférence mais infini en son sein, où se manifeste le mouvement incontrôlable du temps ... ». Et il continue que Borges « préfère la brièveté et la complétude de la nouvelle pour l'y enserrer comme dans un labyrinthe ».

### **Funes ou la mémoire**

Dans cette nouvelle, Borges commence son récit par l'histoire d'un homme, « un précurseur des surhommes (114) » qui symbolise une capacité étrange dans le monde humain. Qu'est-ce qui distingue cet homme ? Et qu'est-ce qui a poussé Borges à le prendre comme modèle afin de prouver une idée du monde fantastique ? En effet, l'écrivain le présente comme unique : « ...un seul homme au monde eut ce droit (et cet homme est mort) un passionnaire sombre à la main, voyant cette fleur comme aucun être ne l'a vue, même s'il l'a regardée du crépuscule de l'aube au crépuscule du soir, toute une vie entière (113) ». C'est Ireneo Funes, un jeune indien, taciturne, mais qui possède énormément de savoirs. Il est aussi mystérieux comme le « vague paysage lacustre (113) ». Le narrateur ne l'a pas vu plus de trois jours, et il trouve son bonheur à parler de lui dans quelques pages qui seront peut-être les plus courtes, mais jamais neutres. A la question « Quelle heure est-il Ireneo

? » Il répond directement : « Dans quatre minutes, il sera huit heures [...] Ainsi, il ne fréquentait personne et il savait toujours l'heure, comme une montre [...] Un chronométrique Funes (115) ».

L'une des caractéristiques de Funes est que son écriture révèle une certaine ambiguïté, à première vue. On dirait qu'il ne sait pas écrire et même qu'il mélange les lettres « i pour y, j pour g. [...] que cela faisait partie des bizarreries d'Ireneo (117) ». Aussi dans sa chambre obscure, « Ireneo passait habituellement les heures mortes sans allumer la bougie (118) ». Funes « fut renversé par un cheval pie, [...] Pendant dix-neuf ans, il avait vécu comme dans un rêve [...] Dans sa chute il avait perdu connaissance ; quand il était revenu à lui, le présent ainsi que les souvenirs les plus anciens et les plus banals étaient devenus intolérables à force de richesse et de netteté (119) ». Sa mémoire devenue prodigieuse rappelle Cyrus, un roi perse dans l'antiquité, qui était capable d'appeler par leur nom tous les soldats de son armée et Mithridate, un roi romain de vingt-deux peuples, était capable d'haranguer chacun d'eux dans sa langue, sans interprète comme indique Borges :

*« D'un coup d'œil, nous percevons trois verres sur une table ; Funes, lui, percevait tous les rejets, les grappes et les fruits qui composent une treille. Il connaissait les formes des nuages austraux de l'aube du trente avril mil huit cent quatre-vingt-deux et pouvait les comparer au souvenir des marbrures d'un livre en papier espagnol qu'il n'avait regardé qu'une fois et aux lignes de l'écume soulevée par une rame sur le Rio Negro la veille du combat du Quebracho. [...]. Il pouvait reconstituer tous les rêves, tous les demi-rêves. Deux ou trois fois il avait reconstitué un jour entier ; il n'avait jamais hésité, mais chaque reconstitution avait demandé un jour entier. Il me dit : J'ai à moi seul plus de souvenirs que n'en peuvent avoir eu tous les hommes depuis que le monde est monde et aussi : Mes rêves sont comme votre veille. Et aussi vers l'aube : Ma mémoire, monsieur, est comme un tas d'ordures. Une circonférence sur un tableau, un triangle rectangle, un losange, sont des formes que nous pouvons percevoir pleinement (119-120) ».*

Avec les formes géométriques classiques, Funes cite aussi qu'il « avait imaginé un système original de numération et qu'en très peu de jours il avait dépassé le nombre vingt-quatre mille. Il ne l'avait pas écrit, car ce qu'il avait pensé une seule fois ne pouvait plus s'effacer de sa mémoire (121) ».

Il est clair que Borges raconte un récit qualifié de « doublement chimérique » car c'est une fiction et un personnage de fiction comme souligne Otero (2006). Il s'agit d'un jeune indien possédant une mémoire d'une capacité inimaginable qui dépasse les mémoires de tous les hommes réunis. Dans son œuvre *Fictions*, Borges le décrit comme suivant : « En effet, non



seulement Funes se rappelait chaque feuille de chaque arbre de chaque bois, mais chacune des fois qu'il l'avait vue ou imaginée (122) ». Funes invente son propre système de numération, une liste apparemment chaotique et non arbitraire, par exemple (121) :

7013  $\Leftrightarrow$  *Maxime Pérez*  
7014  $\Leftrightarrow$  *Le chemin de fer*  
500  $\Leftrightarrow$  9

« Ireneo avait dix-neuf ans ; il était né en 1868 [...] mourut en 1889 (124) » : un simple calcul informe qu'il avait vingt-et-un ans. S'agit-t-il d'une erreur arithmétique ? Nous ne le croyons pas. La seule interprétation possible est que le nombre dix-neuf chez Funes correspond à son propre système de numération qui n'est pas le même chez le narrateur.

Cet indien possède une mémoire exhaustive privée de toute perturbation possible ce qui lui permet de citer son vécu d'hier sans erreur avec les détails les plus minimes, seconde par seconde. Cette étrange révélation par Borges indique que Funes détient une mémoire infailible avec une vision complète et précise des événements qui surgissent avec un ordre parfait. En effet, les humains sont tous condamnés à l'oubli à cause des divers facteurs inter-corrélés qui réduisent la capacité de leur mémoire. Puisqu'on est exposé à une sorte de déviation de la concentration, par conséquent il est impossible d'accueillir des informations parfaites qui sont soumises à un « masque restrictif » figurant d'une manière permanente dans l'environnement intellectuel et matériel de l'homme. Ce masque est dû aux aléas des interactions humaines et des phénomènes cosmiques illimités qui influent sur notre planète, ce qui fournit aux hommes des informations confuses qui nécessitent un éclaircissement rapide sinon leur usage systématique les conduira ailleurs. Le système de numération inventé par Funes a-t-il un ordre ? Apparemment non, mais Borges n'a pas choisi ses équivalences au hasard. En effet, la capacité mémorielle illimitée de ce personnage nous laisse penser au contraire. Pour lui, il existe un ordre parfait dans ces nombres choisis et seule sa mémoire est capable de le déchiffrer.

Une question fondamentale se pose : où est le chaos dans le système de numération de Funes ? Est-ce dans sa mémoire ou dans sa vision explicite du monde ? Comme mentionné ci-dessus, Funes a une mémoire égale ou supérieure à celle de tous les hommes réunis depuis l'existence du monde humain. Tout simplement, cela ne s'explique que du point de vue de la théorie du chaos elle-même : nous ne pouvons pas diagnostiquer l'attracteur chaotique dont dispose Funes car il voit exactement ce qu'il a du « chaos ordonné » comme l'appelle le mathématicien Mandelbrot. Cela est clairement démontré dans sa personnalité et son potentiel mental qui ont été décrits dans cette nouvelle. Cela signifie que Funes dispose d'un attracteur spécifique à lui, qui

le rend capable d'amener des désordres apparents à un ordre parfait. C'est l'ordre dans le désordre, et dans un langage scientifique moderne inspiré de la théorie du chaos, sa mémoire voit l'attracteur caché derrière ces nombres.

### **Le livre de sable**

Le titre est souvent évocateur chez Borges. *Le livre de sable* raconte l'histoire d'un « livre infini (131) » : le narrateur achète d'un vendeur de Bibles un livre fabuleux contenant tous les livres. A l'instar de la bibliothèque de Babel<sup>12</sup>, ce « Livre des livres (129) » est incapable de fournir une quelconque information cohérente car « le nombre de pages de ce livre est exactement infini. Aucune n'est la première, aucune n'est la dernière ». Terrorisé par le pouvoir chaotique de ce livre, le narrateur décide de s'en débarrasser.

Le cadre de la nouvelle semble réel. Tout a commencé avec l'arrivée de ce vendeur étranger originaire des Orcades chez le narrateur habitant au quatrième étage d'un immeuble de la rue Belgrano. Au premier abord, le colporteur avec son profil et sa valise grise semble surgir de nulle part tout comme le livre sacré qu'il essaie de vendre et qui s'appelait « le livre de sable parce que ni ce livre ni le sable n'ont de commencement ni de fin (130) ». Comment comprendre cette déclaration ? En effet, entrer dans ce livre, c'est comme entrer dans un labyrinthe de sable dans « une déambulation labyrinthe, sans véritable début ni fin. Le sable, balayé par les pas des visiteurs, dessine et redessine indéfiniment le paysage proposé<sup>13</sup> ». L'analogie entre le livre et le sable incarne l'infini et donc un labyrinthe. En effet, le contenu du *Livre de sable* est indéfini et insaisissable par l'esprit humain. Les informations engendrent d'autres et avec une ramification illimitée causant ainsi le vertige.

Dans cette nouvelle, Borges entre dans l'espace géométrique en citant des objets dont chacun contient une infinité d'autres objets. Ceci crée une profonde angoisse chez le lecteur en le plaçant devant la porte de l'infini, en commençant par la droite ayant une seule dimension et en terminant par l'hyper volume de dimension supérieure à trois : « La ligne est composée d'un nombre infini de points, le plan, d'un nombre infini de lignes, le volume, d'un nombre infini de plans, l'hyper-volume, d'un nombre infini de volumes (127) ». C'est un début étonnant qui évoque le thème de l'infini cher à Borges qui tient le livre non seulement entre ses mains, mais par son esprit assoiffé de mystères. Par ces indications, il a l'intention de nous informer sur cette nouvelle labyrinthe avant d'y entrer. En investiguant les connotations de ces éléments géométriques et l'ordre de leur évocation, il est constaté que

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<sup>12</sup> La Bibliothèque de Babel p.79 (*Fictions*)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.moonwalklocal.fr/project/le-livre-de-sable/>

Borges exploite le passage entre ces objets géométriques du fait que le passage de la ligne au plan fait augmenter la dimension d'une unité, de même le passage du plan au volume et du volume à l'hyper-volume. L'univers plan contient l'univers d'une droite, et l'univers volume contient l'univers des plans, et enfin l'univers de l'hyper volume contient des volumes. En effet, le passage d'un objet géométrique à l'hyper-volume,<sup>14</sup> qui est un objet supérieur, fait accroître la complexité et la possibilité de mouvement. En feuilletant ce livre infini, la seule information donnée par Borges est que « sur l'une des pages, [il vit] le dessin d'un masque. Le haut du feuillet portait un chiffre, qu'[il a oublié], élevé à la puissance 9 (132) ».

Dans l'épilogue du *Livre de sable*, Borges nous informe qu'il s'agit d'un « volume au nombre incalculable de pages (137) ». Autrement dit, il contient une infinité de pages et non une quantité physique de pages imprimées avec des caractères à l'encre. Ceci prouve le raisonnement selon lequel la quantité d'informations surgie de ce livre se ramifie indéfiniment pour remplir un champ infini du savoir. Puis Borges révèle une étrange description de son livre : « À l'angle supérieur des pages figuraient des chiffres arabes. Mon attention fut attirée sur le fait qu'une page paire portait, disons, le numéro 40514 et la page impaire qui suivait, le numéro 999. Je tournai cette page; au verso la pagination comportait huit chiffres (129) ». Puisque les numéros de pages se partagent entre les paires et les impaires, les numéros 40514 et 999 ont chacune une chance de 50 % d'être choisi au hasard, une distribution uniforme de probabilité et par suite l'incertitude est maximale d'après la théorie de l'information de Shannon (1948). Cette pagination mystérieuse semble due au hasard, et la lecture d'une page accable complètement le lecteur en réduisant au strict minimum sa capacité de comprendre car cette page est certainement liée aux informations écrites dans d'autres pages qui la précèdent véritablement et non selon cette numération arbitraire choisie pour ce livre. Cela signifie que les pages sont indifféremment interchangeables dans ce volume chaotique où le début et la fin n'existent pas : « Le nombre de pages de ce livre est exactement infini. Aucune n'est la première, aucune n'est la dernière (130) ». Cela implique que la chance d'une page d'être la première ou la dernière, est nulle, de plus, la chance de trouver une page à sa vraie place est aussi nulle. De là, rechercher une page spécifique de ce livre serait comme chercher un grain de sable dans un monde qui contient un nombre infini de grains de sable. Nous sommes dans deux labyrinthes parallèles : le premier résulte des pages paires qui sont représentées par le numéro 40514 et le second est dû aux pages impaires portant le numéro 999. En effet, même si quelqu'un dispose d'une information parfaite selon laquelle un thème particulier est écrit sur une page paire par exemple, chercher dans cette catégorie de pages, c'est

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<sup>14</sup> Toute existence supérieure à la troisième dimension

comme chercher une issue dans un labyrinthe infini. Cette situation accroît la confusion du lecteur et génère en lui le plus haut degré de dégoût. Cela signifie que chaque page peut être dans n'importe quelle place, comme le confirme Borges en disant : « Les composants d'une série infinie peuvent être numérotés dans n'importe quel ordre [...] Si l'espace est infini, nous sommes dans n'importe quel point de l'espace. Si le temps est infini, nous sommes dans n'importe quel point du temps (130) ». C'est un livre monstrueux et absurde car le narrateur constate que « les petites illustrations se trouvaient à deux mille pages les unes des autres (132-133) ». C'est une déclaration nette d'une répétition illustrative de période de 2000 pages. Cet ordre n'a qu'une seule interprétation selon laquelle un point de départ se crée chaque 2000 page où une bifurcation surgit et par conséquent l'univers de ce livre est chaotique, or la force intellectuelle de l'homme est incapable de saisir l'attracteur de ce livre chaotique. Après l'avoir examiné en profondeur, le narrateur le qualifie d'un « objet de cauchemar, une chose obscène qui diffamait et corrompait la réalité (133) » et décide de le brûler mais il craignait que « la combustion d'un livre infini ne soit pareillement infinie et n'asphyxie la planète par sa fumée (133) », c'est pourquoi il s'en débarrasse en le classant « sur l'un des rayons humides (133) » de la Bibliothèque nationale.

## Conclusion

A travers ses voyages dans les mondes imaginaires représentés par les chemins fourchus de son jardin virtuel, l'immense capacité de la mémoire du jeune indien Funes et dans sa vision cauchemardesque et labyrinthique du *Livre de sable*, Borges a pu concevoir l'existence du chaos avant que les spécialistes le découvrent et le formulent à l'aide de leurs sciences théoriques et expérimentales. Il veut prouver que les choix initiaux des humains aboutiront inévitablement à des chemins infiniment bifurqués de sorte que l'imagination et le réel se confondent, par conséquent la réalité et la virtualité deviennent une seule pièce à double face. Il va de soi que Borges est entré dans le domaine de la fiction non pas pour faire perdre le lecteur dans son monde infini, mais pour annoncer la présence d'une issue de sauvetage à travers la réalité elle-même. En effet, à la fin de chacune de ses nouvelles, Borges intervient directement pour sauver le réel des griffes du virtuel et nous faire revenir dans le monde humain limité par toutes les finitudes malgré le désir suprême de déceler les secrets de l'existence labyrinthique.

L'imagination de Borges ne se limite pas à l'espace et au temps, et sa culture littéraire ouverte aux mathématiques, à la philosophie et à l'histoire humaine en tout temps et en tout lieu, lui a permis de ressentir la présence de ces différents univers auxquels les spécialistes des sciences du hasard, de la probabilité et du chaos accordent une importance capitale. Borges a abordé ces univers en utilisant une forme littéraire basée sur la fiction et les symboles

et dépourvue de toute véracité scientifique ce qui fait de lui un précurseur dans son domaine : il a innové et enrichi la littérature en l'ouvrant profondément aux théories scientifiques fondamentales touchant la vision humaine de l'existence.

Tous les points de vue rapportés, dès le scientifique Albert Einstein sur l'imagination qui dépasse le savoir dans son importance, au Stephen Hawking et son concept de la flèche du temps, au Hegel et sa vision dialectique du temps, aux constellations d'écrivains et de peintres qui ont exprimé leurs visions du temps, mettent l'accent sur les ramifications et la diversité des concepts du temps. Tous ces fondements intellectuels sont, d'une manière ou d'une autre, des témoignages sur les bifurcations annoncées par la pluralité borgésienne du temps.

Enfin, le recours à la théorie du chaos, dans ses grandes lignes, dont la compréhension constitue une grande difficulté pour un non spécialiste n'était qu'un adjuvant pour essayer de saisir la pensée borgésienne dans ce domaine. Indirectement, Borges ouvre grande la porte de la littérature à la virtualité et aux théories scientifiques afin d'aider l'homme à sortir des sentiers battus qui limitent les visions humaines. Ainsi le recours au virtuel semble un moyen d'enrichir le réel au lieu de le remplacer.

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## **Politics and Mass Communication: Rethinking the Interplay of Global Media and Democracy in Post Arab-Spring Morocco**

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### **Abstract**

Global media have usually been regarded as a fundamental guarantee of democracy. They are not mere superficial communication outlets; they are rather crucial agents of change on which the progress, prosperity, and stability of societies depend. This article addresses this relationship and analyzes the impacts of the rapid and unruly digitized invasion on participatory citizenship in Morocco. It explores why democracy, freedom, and change have become inescapable consequences of the proliferation of digitized communication tools and the uncensored access to modern media technologies, auspicing the demise of the nation-state in favor of direct democracy (Katz, 2009; Potter, 2021; Turner, 2016). The conservation of cultural pluralism and the boosting of cultural awareness ultimately depend on how we handle media outlets and how we adapt international information and the massive dissemination of digital products. This research argues that the profuseness of new media technologies permits new digital coalitions and solidarities across spatial, racial, and cultural boundaries and resources for producing new meanings and new identities in Morocco. Furthermore, this study sought to answer among other issues the extent to which local cultural processes are intemperately threatened, shaped, and amplified by globalizing influences and a massive flow of contentious and bigotry-instigating ideas.

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**Keywords:** cultural pluralism, participatory citizenship, the electronic revolution, public sphere, democracy

### **Introduction: Cyberians in the hyperspace**

For years, cyberspace, which lacks a standard and universally accepted definition, has been transforming the world into a global village and turning attention to external events at the expense of local realities. Some Arab thinkers (Abdelhalim, 1998) believe that these technologies shape individuals and strengthen public awareness through a strong mediated engagement, and hence are expected to pave the way for a broad range of globalized values, qualities, and ideas that seek to extend their hegemony and influence beyond their immediate spheres. This attitude has not gone uncontested: Sabina Mihelj, for instance, asserts that the idea that cyberspace has become “a threat to nation-states and national culture is far too simplistic to account for the nature of the interaction between the global and the national in the contemporary world” (Mihelj, 2011, p. 1), Nevertheless, the premise of the increasing impotence of countries within the New Media and Communication Order “has been one of the orthodoxies underpinning several influential narratives of media development, over the last decade or so” (Turner, 2016). These are just two of the plethora of arguments one might advance about this situation, however.

The general belief that the State can control digital spheres by manipulating the media “is one of the myths surrounding the media” (Graber, 2003). Today, the field is “not simply subject to unmitigated state control [;] the picture is more complicated” (Campaola, 2014). We are witnessing the gradual emergence of a collective culture where local governments have almost no authority over online communities as cyberspace does not lie immediately inside its perceptible boundaries.

## **1. New media and new patterns for democracy**

### *1.1. Political dynamics and the politics of online communities*

In an age of mass production and mass communication technologies, the electronic revolution has liberated people from the guiding principles of the established cultural and political structures of nation-states. So, they live within conspicuously and grossly unconventional digitized culture forms that exist aboard locally established standards. This is not to assert that the quality of cultural, political, and spiritual events are indications of worrisome modern times; it is to stress that they are also an important opportunity for policymakers to understand future challenges for which they need to design a collective efficient response and also to assert that such chaotic flow of controversial ideas, zealous discourse, xenophobia, racism, and intolerance had better be controlled or circumscribed by transnational media. What is



happening as we speak is unfortunately not very intelligible - it is a type of rapid and unruly digitized invasion.

Therefore, when citing the benefits of the digital revolution, it is important to consider the influence cyberspheres have exerted on cultures as a whole and reconsider the impact of the rapidly changing contemporary media environment witnessing a powerful growth in cyberbullying, intolerance, and stereotyping among many other issues. In this regard, digitized intercultural encounters involve a lot of cultural hostility and conflictual affirmations of foreign identities as a means of delimitating one group, inherently swanning its superiority over an alien, and often vilified, 'other.' Along with traditional media outlets, modern digital media institutions have a collective dimension involving claimed cultural authorities. They sometimes embody cybercultural dogma that is non-negotiable. In other words, they carry with them the danger that intercultural dialogue may stop short at difference and consequently engender intolerance. At the same time, they can provide a voice for cultural and political dissent, and act as vehicles for the promotion of uncongenial ideological, political, and/or economic agendas:

[They are] a powerful marker of identity and a potential source of conflict. While in democratic societies religious views can play an active role in shaping public policy on health, education, and social services, religions run the risk of being instrumentalized for other purposes." (Dallmayr, 2007)

To curtail this, media laws and norms need to be developed to secure the present and future of cyberspace. This necessitates an ethical stance on the part of all actors and stakeholders to consolidate democracy and generate a national strategy for intolerance reduction among Moroccan citizens, especially that this virtual space enables users to remain anonymous: "The majority of one's correspondents in cyberspace, after all, have no bodies, no faces, no histories beyond what they choose to reveal" (Slevin 2000: 55). Consequently, not needing to be greatly afraid of political persecution like the offline context, the user is more likely to overcome his inhibitions to advance his unorthodox, unconventional, and even condemnable views online.

My knowledge of cyberspace is based on my practice as an EFL Teacher. I have both observed and participated in surveys about the proliferation of digital cultures in Morocco. This experience, along with other nebulous principles of conduct (Newcomb, 2006), has convinced me that media laws and policies need to be developed to secure the present and future of Moroccan cyber spheres. This necessitates an ethical stance on the part of all actors and stakeholders to consolidate, inter alia, democracy and generate a national strategy for intolerance reduction among Moroccan citizens (Ferrati, 2021).

The Internet adds new dimensions, “which offer adolescents countless opportunities and experiences beyond national and cultural boundaries. It is here they acquire material to define their identities and attitudes” (Baune, 2005: 28). For many scholars, it is a positive agent of change that can also serve as a means of intercultural dialogue by identifying emerging issues, raising awareness, and downsizing xenophobia, intolerance, and racism (Cesari 2004; Eickelman and Anderson 2003b; Mandaville 2001b, 2007; Roy 2004 ). This cannot be—nor should one strive to make it— an isolated, “professionalized” objective. Rather, our veneration of difference has to entail the fact that the best way to eliminate the Us-versus-the Rest dichotomy is by promoting a ‘third option’ (Bhabha,1990), a hybrid space where media outlets can be a powerful partner in the construction of a culture of peace, tolerance and intercultural dialogue. This space can constitute a unique and important environment and a place of enunciation, where new identities can be forged and unorthodox voices can speak. (Aaen & Dalsgaard, 2016; Moles, 2008; Xiaowei Zhou & Pilcher, 2019).

### 1.2. *The Arab Spring, political dynamics, and the politics of online communities*

Contemporary assessments of the impact of the proliferation of digitized media products have made it easy for researchers and stakeholders to construct and highlight the most important issues in the young generation’s collective memory. However, along with the uncertainty of the cyber era, the political dynamics that followed the Arab Spring made the identification and understanding of the future changes unpredictable and as yet uncertain. While youth are expected to be more optimistic about the democratic future of the country, the “cultural embeddedness” of modern media technology means that it will not have predictable local impacts, especially in the arena of civil society-based movements (Leon et al.: 2001). The actual state of the art indicates that the dynamics that the MENA region is witnessing should be taken into consideration “when it comes to determining whether democratic rights stated in local constitutions and human rights charters changed their essence and now encompass, thanks to the electronic revolution, new dimensions.” (Katz: 2000)

In his book *Geeks: How Two Lost Boys Rode the Internet out of Idaho*, Katz (2000), suggests that there are no limits to the Geek Ascension, this emerging “freest and most inventive” new way of life that we call the “cyberspace” is unrelentingly eclipsing everything. He presumes that digitized culture and mediated experiences will transform all kinds of social life:

Computers and the Net would transform everything; nobody and no institution would remain untouched—not scientists, academics, artists, politicians, journalists, homemakers, doctors, lawyers, or schoolkids.

Computing was no longer the sole province of nerds and engineers but also the new locus of creative people—poets, painters, novelists, critics. These, he said, were the geeks. (2000, p. xxxiv)

Kat's reflections on this rampant digital disorder and the decline of its aura may help us to understand the cultural significance and the "residual tinctures of the Geek Ascension" in contemporary mass culture. The central concern of media studies, then, has to be with the roles which people "who constitute the 'high priesthood' of the 'Knowledge Society' play in making different types of public knowledge available and a global digitized culture accessible (Katz, 2000, p. xxxiv).

### 1.3. *The democratic potential of new communication technologies*

As with most controversial issues, the problems that Morocco is facing today are too complex to be addressed by a single academic inquiry or brand of policy analysis. The cost of having access to information is decreasing. We are staggeringly witnessing unappeasable cultural assaults wherein cyber spheres play a constant role in organizing our social and cultural fields, which, in the present context, are themselves some of the trademarks of globalization. Despite the socio-political challenges that the country has faced (Fakoussa & Kabis-Kechrid, 2020; Iddins, 2020) and the phenomena of increasingly global Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube entertainment programs (e.g., *Rotiny Al Yawmy*), people remain very strongly oriented towards local values based on respect for oneself and others as well as tolerance being one of their most characteristic traits. The cornerstone of Moroccan society is still the family and the community on which social life is based. Yet, traditional values and beliefs are faltering under the onslaught of western influence and technology (Bowen et al., 2008), as well as the relentless diffusion of mediocrity which confronts young people with choppy, enmity-instigating messages. Political issues have become the focus for UseNet groups where people from all walks of life engage in often feisty discussions with others who care about the same issues (Hill & Hughes 1998, Bucy & Gregson 2001). Angela McRobbie argues that the febrile profuseness of new media permits new coalitions and solidarities across spatial, racial, and cultural boundaries and resources for producing new meanings and new identities:

Sontag's linking [of camp] with. . . gay men is instructive because she shows how a relationship evolved around a social minority making a bid for a cultural form in which they felt they could stake some of their fragmented and sexually deviant identity. The insistence, on the way, on both style and pleasure made the product attractive to those outside as well as inside. He is describing how forms can be taken over, and re-assembled.... [it]often means outstripping their ostensible meaning.

... And if media forms are so inescapable ... then there is no reason to assume that consumption of pastiche, parody, or high camp is, by definition, without subversive or critical potential. Glamour, glitter, and gloss should not so easily be relegated to the sphere of the insistently apolitical. (174-75)

Bucy & Gregson (2001, 369) make the strong point that “quite possibly, the internet/worldwide web presents more political information and opportunities for civic engagement than has [sic] ever existed.” The average Moroccan is expected to have sufficient political knowledge to cope with their duties as active, rights-bearing or “monitorial” participatory citizens who, according to Schudson (n.d., 23) are:

informed enough and alert enough to identify danger to their personal good and danger to the public good. When such danger appears on the horizon, they should have the resources—in trusted relationships, in political parties and elected officials, in relationships to interest groups and other trustees of their concerns, in knowledge of and access to the courts as well as the electoral system, and in relevant information sources to jump into the fray and make a lot of noise.

In recent years, politicians and pundits have increased their efforts to target young audiences, creating “dangerous desires” that should not be fulfilled and prompting youngsters to question their most distinctive cultural values, beliefs, and attitudes (Mankekar, 2004). The role of cyber spheres is important as well. Therefore, as a broad generalization, I believe that most of today’s trending social media posts “may generate tension and conflict members of the same culture and teach many lessons that are simply wrong because [teenagers] mistake [ them] for realistic portrayals of the world.” (DeFleur and Dennis, 2002: 316-317). Hence, while it is impossible to protect this age group from media exposure, it is ineluctably essential for us to restrict efforts by media mongers when they center chiefly, if not exclusively, on this penetrable constituent of the nation.

#### *1.4. Democracy dosages in Moroccan digital spheres*

Of all the narratives that perfuse the space of public and private life in contemporary Morocco, none is as manifest as the discourse on tolerance and democracy. In fact, during the last decade, “democracy,” while a term comfortably familiar to Moroccans, increasingly became part of the government’s political lexicon. The mediatization of the word “democracy,” like the words “freedom,” “tolerance,” and “pluralism,” became modish political terms used and exemplified in local and global deployments of cyberspace. Digital media technology has institutionally been cast as an

instrument of Moroccan governments in the pursuit of growth, prosperity, and public benefit. However, as we started to go global, issues like participatory democracy, human rights, and terrorism increasingly started to demand massive national political engagement, especially after the Arab spring and due to the institutional failures, that have branded the MENA region in recent years. Besides, the allegations that the existing media spheres are inadequate for the needs of participatory citizens raises the problematic issue of what people from all walks of life need to know to be effective citizens (Popkin 1994, Rahn et al. 1994, Delli Carpini & Keeter 1996, 2000a, b, Graber 2001). The development of media technologies in Morocco gained real momentum after 1997 when the Post Office and Telecommunication Act (Law 24-96) was passed and consequently initiated the liberalization of the telecommunication industry and established the Moroccan telecoms regulator the National Agency of Telecommunications Regulation (Agence Nationale de Reglementation de Telecom, ANRT) the independent regulatory agency. Besides, in 2016, through the “Maroc Digital 2020” initiative, Morocco launched its vision of digital government, a new digital strategy that aimed at establishing an agency that will be responsible for digital services, and for optimizing and modernizing digital platforms.

However, it seems that the government’s position towards the way cyberspace is being instrumentalized seems to undermine its task of empowering youths. In addition to the inertia and rigidity characterizing Moroccan digital spheres, local institutions praise the irrepressible and relentless digital mediocrity and the social media platforms that are used entirely to promote hate, xenophobia, and intolerance (Mijs & Paulle, 2016), a situation that must be seen as the foreground, easily observable, manifestations of something absolutely important: it was reasoned that being mediocre would bring you popularity.

Therefore, and to monitor this inadvertent exposure to hostility-infused digital material, media pundits should make responsible digital choices through the promotion of quality, intellect, and the instauration of a democracy-oriented culture in the real and virtual spheres by supporting the development of informed and effective cyber policies while creating a wide range of media choices reflecting the national culture predominating all over Morocco and setting the standards for a society that believes in tolerance, intercultural dialogue, acceptance of difference and pluralism.

#### *1.5. TV Habits and the role of the family in the globalization Era*

We live in an era where the “interaction between Western values and Islamic values is often seen [...] as potentially disruptive and as something which requires constant vigilance by the parents to keep their children in control” (Zokaei & Phillips, 2000, p. 51). Of course, these digital challenges

obviate a parental role or even the role of academic institutions in providing help, guidance, a task which is not likely to be achieved by many families. In other words, it is important to recognize that families vary in the range of media they allow their children to consume. Within this broad media-infused atmosphere, there are messages in transnational channels and in cyberspace that explicitly promote conformity with a set of weird standards that instigate hostility towards difference and tolerance.

In this scenario, young people may choose from among the smorgasbord of alternatives the ones that most appeal to them and those that are most consistent with their desires and inclinations. In other words, despite the restraints that parents might impose on their children's digital habits, the globalization of digitized products through the Internet (for example, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok...) and miniaturized digital devices like smartphones, has certainly demonstrated that parents can no longer interfere with their children's media preferences. Consequently, the establishment of rules related to TV viewing, (when, with whom, where, and how much) and restricting certain programs or stipulating conditions for mobile phone use (e.g. after homework) is merely impossible (Ferrati, 2021). In today's milieu, co-viewing is regressing, and youth can have access to all kinds of programs that parents may object to but are unable to control absolutely. In this context, instructive mediation (the use of TV and the Internet to reinforce values and critical thinking) is the solution. Active mediation can be very fruitful if it elicits discussion because as long as parents are involved in discussions with their children while co-viewing, they are actively protecting their children from cyberbullying, online predators, and other countless potentially dangerous situations (Mankekar, 2004).

## **2. Conclusion and Future**

While this was not initially my objective, the research I conducted led to conclusions that reconfirmed the continuing importance of media and information literacy and reasserted the idea that globalization, unregulated media, and the nearly instantaneous culture they engender should be held accountable for the gradual emergence of a virtual sphere where local governments have almost no authority over communities. Today, the upward expansion of technology is unlimited and only a few youngsters have an inordinate chance of escaping the propagation of technologically induced communication. It is thus ironic that in Morocco, digital spheres have become the catalyst for another form of intercultural communication in society.

Morocco's experience with this new digital situation has been heavily marked by two of the most transformative events of the third millennium: the emergence of the information society and a digitally mediated political life. However, and despite the fluctuating state of its cultural base that sometimes

inhibits flexibility, the emergence of the information society along with other social and political markers indicates an institutional willingness to restructure and positively reshape local reality according to the dynamics of global democracy, the edifice of which lies on the shoulder of creditworthy media.

Politically, Morocco was able to raise its international profile by showing increased tolerance and openness towards other cultures. Nonetheless, I think that democracy requires the media to report the news, uncover hideous realities, and have an undeniable right to report stories freely. Over the last decade-plus, there has been some progress in terms of political and media reforms in Morocco. This cyber-revolution has become in full force, enabling people from all walks of life to digitize every aspect of their lives and to inform themselves about complex issues, and organize themselves in such a way as to make their voices heard and to induce public officials to respond to urgent social, cultural and political matters.

In a world where media concentration has so drastically limited the range of what is acceptable and what is not, it has become extremely important for Moroccan policymakers and local media mongers to carefully cultivate democracy by encouraging self-education processes, media literacy. Today, mediated interactions need to grow into global electronic meeting grounds and agents in advancing democracy, equality, and justice, with more focus on the continuous respect for the divergence of opinions.

The most basic need in the next decade is a shift from the liberalization of media environments to a phase where all the stakeholders collaborate to make the role of cyberspace in the promotion of democracy a national cause and seek to promote the democratic potential of emerging information and communications technologies. Scholars, pundits, and average Moroccans need to agree on what issues people need to be informed about to perform citizenship tasks adequately. If decision-makers and intellectuals are to serve a useful purpose in present-day Morocco, they first need to enrich the dialogue around cyberculture and empower young people to contribute in the most productive ways to generating a local digital culture that is human rights-based, and which promotes respect for the other and the acceptance of transnational, religious, ethnic, linguistic, social, cultural, and political differences.

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## La Résilience chez des Adolescentes Victimes d'agressions Sexuelles Commises par des Femmes en Côte d'Ivoire

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### Résumé

L'objectif de cette étude menée sur trois adolescentes en foyer d'accueil, est de comprendre le processus de résilience à travers des facteurs individuels, chez des victimes d'agressions sexuelles commises par des femmes, à Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). L'Hypothèse postule que ces facteurs sont déterminants dans la reconstruction résiliente. La méthode clinique et l'étude de cas ont guidé le choix des instruments de collecte des données, à savoir : le CD-RISC de Connor et Davidson (2003) et l'Exercice de résilience de Strümpfer (2001). La théorie des facteurs de protection de Garmezy (1990) a permis d'interpréter les résultats par le biais de l'analyse qualitative du contenu des réponses. Ces résultats montrent que les facteurs individuels interviennent dans la construction résiliente. Ceux-ci identifient la compétence cognitive, la spiritualité et la confiance en soi comme facteurs de protection de la résilience chez les participantes à l'étude.

**Mots-clés :** Résilience-Agression sexuelle-Femmes-Adolescentes

## **Resilience in Adolescent Girls Victims of Sexual Assault by Women In Ivory Coast**

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### **Abstract**

The objective of the study on three adolescent girls in foster home, is to understand the process of resilience through individual factors, in victims of sexual assault committed by women, in Abidjan (Ivory Coast). The hypothesis postulates that these are determinants in resilient reconstruction. The clinical method and the case study guided the choice of data collection instruments, namely: the CD-RISC of Connor and Davidson (2003) and the Résilience Exercise of Strümpfer (2001). Garmezy's protective factor theory allowed us to interpret the results through qualitative analysis of the content of responses. These results show that individual factors are involved in resilient construction. They identify cognitive competences, spirituality and self-confidence as protective factors for resilience in the study participants.

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**Keywords:** Resilience-Sexual assault-Woman-Adolescent girl

### **Introduction**

Depuis les deux dernières décennies, les connaissances dans le domaine de l'agression sexuelle n'ont cessé de s'accroître, d'évoluer et de s'étendre à plusieurs disciplines. Les courants d'influence sont multiples et les retombées s'observent tant par les réformes de certaines législations et procédures judiciaires, que par des théorisations, des projets de recherche, ainsi que des pratiques cliniques adaptées et standardisées. Il en résulte qu'il y a une difficulté certaine à conceptualiser, expliquer voire décrire une agression sexuelle. En effet, ce thème alimente de nombreux débats et controverses au sein de la communauté scientifique (Bryden & Grier, 2011). Ceux-ci concernent notamment les différents termes et définitions proposés qui varient considérablement, incluant violence sexuelle, viol, et coercition sexuelle.

Généralement, l'agression sexuelle fait référence aux contacts sexuels sans le consentement de la victime (Luissier, 2017). Ainsi, contrairement au

viol, elle n'est pas limitée aux situations où l'agresseur pénètre ou tente de pénétrer sa victime. Elle n'est pas non plus limitée aux situations où l'agresseur utilise la violence physique afin de contraindre la victime. Toutefois, elle ne devrait pas être réduite à un contact physique transgressant le respect de l'intimité corporelle du sujet, qu'il y ait ou non relation sexuelle (Manciaux, 2005). Il pourrait donc en exister des formes sans autres contacts, telles que : l'exhibitionnisme, l'utilisation perverse du regard, l'exposition des enfants aux ébats sexuels d'adultes par média interposé ou non. Cette auteure affirme également qu'il y a agression psychologique sexualisée lorsqu'un enfant est manipulé par un adulte pour alléguer des agressions sexuelles qui n'existent pas.

Certaines définitions de l'agression sexuelle peuvent sembler restreintes, d'autres (très contestées) paraissent larges et englobent toutes situations. Aussi, pouvons-nous retenir que l'agression sexuelle est un acte à caractère sexuel, avec ou sans contact physique, commis par un individu sans le consentement de la personne visée, ou dans certains cas, notamment celui des enfants et des adolescents, par une manipulation affective ou par du chantage. Elle peut ainsi se manifester sous différentes formes : attouchements, viol ou harcèlement sexuel et a des conséquences sur la santé physique et mentale des victimes, particulièrement chez les mineures dont la trajectoire développementale semble affectée. Sur le plan psychologique, elle est un traumatisme qui entraîne la confusion, la perte de repère, le sentiment d'impuissance, le choc ou chaos émotionnel. En effet, comme tout traumatisme, elle peut avoir pour conséquences un trouble (chronique) de stress post-traumatique. D'une façon générale, elle peut « propulser » l'individu dans toute une symptomatologie signant les traces du trauma. Mais, singulièrement, chez les victimes mineures, les conséquences convergent vers la mise en évidence d'une vulnérabilité psychologique définitive (Pascal & Hie, 2004). L'effet traumatique de l'agression sexuelle est potentiellement déstructurant et souvent, sur mineur, elle s'accompagne du secret et du refoulement psychique. Ainsi, le sentiment de culpabilité peut être amplifié par l'injonction du secret imposé.

Pendant l'adolescence, la dépression et le risque de suicide sont parfois inhérents aux blessures traumatiques causées par l'agression sexuelle (Heim et al, 2000). En tenant compte du fait que cette période spécifique est faite de bouleversements hormonaux, de questionnement sur l'identité et sur la sexualité, où les changements physiques entraînent des bouleversements psychologiques, notamment au niveau de l'estime de soi et du rapport à l'autre, la survenue d'une agression sexuelle vient potentialiser les problématiques. De ce fait, le concept d'agression sexuelle à l'adolescence revêt une forme particulière. Soutoul (1994) révèle que les victimes sont majoritairement des filles. Lagrange (1995) quant à lui affirme qu'un tiers des

victimes affirme avoir subi des violences de manière répétée, principalement dans un contexte extrafamilial, de la part d'un homme connu de la même tranche d'âge. Par contre, 9% des agressions sexuelles surviennent dans un contexte intrafamilial (Gabel, 2002).

Si les hommes sont le plus souvent en cause, les agressions sexuelles sont aussi le fait de femmes. Le phénomène des agressions sexuelles commises par les femmes est connu comme étant plutôt rare (Saradjan, 2010). Peu d'études ont été faites sur le sujet et ne concernent généralement que des agressions sexuelles commises par des femmes sur des individus de sexe masculin. En effet, l'étude de Freeman et Sandler (2008) a davantage les similitudes que les différences entre les agresseurs des sexes féminin et masculin. La principale différence concerne une probabilité plus élevée d'agresser sexuellement des garçons. Selon les auteurs, les délits perpétrés par les femmes consistent en attouchements sexuels, masturbations, contacts bucco-génitaux, pénétrations digitales et rapports sexuels avec pénétration. Il importe de retenir que dans cette étude, 50% des femmes ont commis leur délit avec un co-accusé (souvent un partenaire sexuel de sexe masculin).

De façon générale, la banalisation ou la sous-estimation des agressions sexuelles perpétrées par les femmes continue de soulever la question de la fiabilité des résultats en comparaison avec un tableau réel. Les représentations du rôle de la femme, reliées aux constructions sociales et culturelles, maintiennent son rôle nourricier, protecteur et non-agresseur en lien avec la sexualité ; ce qui influencerait négativement la détection et le dévoilement des agressions sexuelles commises par les femmes (Freeman & Sandler, 2008 ; Saradjan, 2010). Les femmes qui ont agressé sexuellement de jeunes enfants sont souvent non judiciairisées. Au Canada par exemple, elles sont dirigées vers des services d'aide ou de traitement (Cortoni et al., 2009).

En Afrique, la recherche sur les abus sexuels est peu documentée (Mbassa, 2009) dans un contexte culturel où, d'une part la sexualité est taboue et d'autre part le recours à des punitions corporelles jointes à des insultes fait partie de l'éducation des enfants dont la voix n'est pas entendue et la parole niée ; d'où le fait que la dénonciation demeure difficile. En Côte d'Ivoire, les questions relatives à la sexualité constituent également et toujours un tabou. Le rapport VACS sur les violences faites aux enfants et aux jeunes, publié en mars 2020, montre que trois filles sur cinq (58,0%) et deux garçons sur trois (66,5%) ont été victimes de tout type de violence, pendant leur enfance. De plus une fille sur cinq (19,2%) et un garçon sur dix (11,4%) ont été victimes de violence sexuelle avant l'âge de 18 ans. Environ la moitié des filles (46,3%) et des garçons (45,7%) victimes de violences sexuelles durant l'enfance n'en n'ont jamais parlé à qui que ce soit. Parmi les victimes, rares sont celles qui ont fait appel à des services de prise en charge. Les filles /femmes qui ont subi des violences sexuelles ou émotionnelles pendant leur enfance sont plus

susceptibles de souffrir de détresse mentale (76,4% et 56,3%, respectivement) que celles qui n'en n'ont jamais subi (Rapport VACS-CI, 2020). La typologie professionnelle des agresseurs est rapportée mais le sexe n'est pas pris en compte. Cela laisse sous-entendre que les agresseurs sexuels sont du sexe opposé à celui de la victime. Le rapport relève par ailleurs l'insuffisance de dénonciation des violences sexuelles et de prise en charge.

Ainsi, dans la société ivoirienne, « à cheval » entre tradition et modernisme, où la culture garde l'empreinte de valeurs et d'ordonnances mystico-religieuses, la problématique de l'agression sexuelle demeure équivoque (Dagou & Goin Bi, 2015). La pratique des mutilations génitales en est un exemple. Elle est reconnue par la législation ivoirienne comme une violence envers les femmes, depuis 1998. De ce fait, c'est une pratique punie par la loi. Bien que de moins en moins répandue, elle demeure pourtant, sacrée et valorisante en termes d'initiation, dans certaines villes du centre ouest (Koudou et al., 2015). C'est une ambiguïté à laquelle les études sur les agressions sexuelles de femmes commises par des femmes doivent faire face en Côte d'Ivoire. Certaines agressions peuvent passer pour des pratiques religieuses, d'autres par contre, relèvent de relations homosexuelles, qui sont encore taboues. Or, ces dernières représentent environ 5% des délits commis à travers le monde (Tardif et al., 2005).

Les agressions sexuelles d'adolescentes commises par des femmes ont des conséquences analogues pour la victime, à celles consécutives aux agressions commises par les hommes (Manciaux, 2005). Toutefois, d'un point de vue culturel, on pourrait s'attendre à ce que dans une société traditionaliste comme celle de la Côte d'Ivoire où les relations sexuelles entre personnes du même sexe sont interdites, voire punies par la loi, le trouble de stress post-traumatique (TSPT) revête une forme différente. Les risques de rejet par le milieu familial, d'être « traité » d'homosexuel, ou l'éventualité d'être poursuivi en justice, sont des facteurs spécifiques qui donneraient une nuance particulière au TSPT. En l'occurrence, des symptômes comme les troubles émotionnels, la confusion et le désarroi chez l'adolescente s'intensifient. À cela s'ajoute un flou entre norme sexuelle et identité sexuelle, comme le décrit l'étude de Le Pape (2013) sur les viols d'hommes commis par des hommes. En effet, cette étude a montré qu'en plus des symptômes liés aux troubles post-traumatiques, la question de la « masculinité » se pose. En d'autres termes, les victimes ont le sentiment individuel de perte du statut masculin. S'il est indéniable que cette étude concerne uniquement les viols d'hommes commis par des hommes, elle a la particularité de donner des indications sur l'état de santé mentale des victimes d'agression homosexuelle.

C'est fort de cela que nous imaginions faire la rencontre avec le trauma, pendant l'étude : un événement dramatique, avec des circonstances « aggravantes », corrélé à une symptomatologie atypique. La réalité clinique



fût toute autre, notamment lors de la rencontre avec les adolescentes victimes d'agressions sexuelles commises par des femmes à Abidjan. En dépit des risques de désorganisation psychique qui surviennent après un évènement traumatique aussi atypique, nous avons constaté, chez certaines victimes, un développement normal, sans symptômes, ni problème d'adaptation et/ou de santé mentale. Dans la littérature scientifique, un tel tableau clinique fait référence à la résilience. C'est un construit décrit par Cyrlnick (1999), qui consiste pour un individu affecté par un traumatisme, à se reconstruire d'une façon socialement acceptable. L'approche de la résilience considère l'individu à partir des potentiels de résistance et de rétablissement, en tant que sujet capable de trouver face à l'adversité des réponses adaptatives variées qui lui permettent de se construire malgré, ou à partir des situations délétères ou traumatogènes. Dans cette perspective, du fait des différences individuelles, face à des facteurs de risque identiques, certains individus sont moins susceptibles que d'autres de développer des troubles psychopathologiques.

La résilience chez les victimes d'agression sexuelle est un sujet déjà abordé dans la littérature scientifique. Dans une étude de Bénoudji et al. (2017) réalisée au Tchad, les auteurs affirment que la résilience après des violences sexuelles liées aux conflits armés dépend de la capacité à s'adapter, se transformer, ou développer des actions protectrices. Sadia et Kouakou (2019), quant à eux, attestent que les déterminants personnels et sociaux de résilience favorisent la reconstruction identitaire et la participation sociale des enfants victimes d'abus sexuels. Ouatara et al. (2014), ainsi que Kouakou-Mlan (2019), avancent la thèse des différences individuelles, selon laquelle, malgré des circonstances difficiles, certaines personnes arrivent à se protéger et à construire une vie positive. La présente étude tente d'élucider la question de la généralisation des travaux de ces chercheurs. Plus précisément, il est question de savoir s'il est possible de faire les mêmes observations sur des adolescentes relativement à d'autres formes de traumatisme atypique tel que les agressions sexuelles commises par des femmes. Au demeurant, nous privilégions les facteurs intra-individuels.

Des auteurs comme Anthony (1982), Garmezy (1985) et Ruter (1990) ont initié des recherches sur les enfants à risque, révélant que ceux-ci sont inégaux devant le risque et présentent un état de vulnérabilité variable. Ces différences interindividuelles s'expliqueraient par la faculté à mettre « en jeu » des capacités de résistance et de protection : le tempérament, les aptitudes cognitives, l'estime de soi, l'humour, l'empathie. Dans ce contexte, la résilience suppose la mobilisation de compétences, malgré une exposition à un stress sévère.

Au-delà de la recherche des facteurs individuels susceptibles d'être des facteurs de résilience, cette étude tente d'établir un lien entre ceux-ci et la résilience chez trois adolescentes victimes d'agressions sexuelles, commises

par des femmes. Dans la mesure où l'impact traumatique semble différent chez chaque individu, il paraît opportun d'étudier les mécanismes impliqués dans la reconstruction du sujet. De manière spécifique, l'objectif de cette étude est d'analyser les déterminants intra-individuels favorisant la résilience chez des adolescentes victimes d'agressions sexuelles. L'hypothèse générale postule que les facteurs de protection intra-individuels permettent une reconstruction résiliente de l'individu. L'étude s'appuie sur la théorie de Garmezy (1990) qui stipule que les facteurs personnels favoriseraient la résilience. En effet, elle a identifié la réussite scolaire, un comportement adapté en classe, des aptitudes interpersonnelles (sociabilité, empathie, attractivité, humour, confiance en soi, contrôle), comme des indicateurs de résilience. Ces facteurs révèlent des modes d'adaptation et de résistance, en particulier chez l'enfant marqué par des conditions de vie délétères et une adversité importante. Les instruments de mesure utilisés sont le Connor et Davidson Resilience Scale ou CD-RISC (2003) qui permet d'évaluer les facteurs de protection concourant à la résilience. Cette échelle a été conçue pour répondre uniquement à l'évaluation des variables individuelles. À cela s'ajoute, le test de l'Exercice de résilience (Strümpfer, 2001), qui est un test projectif créé pour évaluer spécifiquement la résilience.

## **1. Méthodologie**

### **1.1. Site et participantes à l'enquête**

L'étude s'est déroulée auprès de six adolescentes. Cependant, seulement trois ont été sélectionnées en fonction des scores et réponses obtenus aux différents tests. Elles sont âgées respectivement de 13, 15 et 17 ans. Elles sont, par ailleurs, prises en charge dans un foyer tenu par une congrégation religieuse à Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). Ce lieu de vie accueille des jeunes filles itinérantes, sans logis. Compte tenu des poursuites judiciaires (les relations homosexuelles sont illégales en Côte d'Ivoire), auxquelles elles pourraient s'exposer, le site exact de l'enquête demeure anonyme. Entièrement prises en charge par les religieuses, ces trois jeunes filles ont en commun d'avoir subi des agressions sexuelles commises par des femmes.

### **1.2. Méthode et instruments de collecte des informations**

Deux méthodes ont été convoquées : l'étude de cas et la méthode clinique. Les techniques de recueil de données sont l'entretien clinique, le test du CD-RISC et l'Exercice de résilience (Strümpfer, 2001). Ajouter un test projectif comme l'Exercice de résilience au CD-RISC permet d'évaluer la résilience en explorant comment sont exprimés les facteurs de protection ; cela permet aussi de comprendre les réactions d'un individu face à une situation adverse.

Le CD-RISC est une échelle de format Likert en cinq points, allant de 0 à 4, le résultat final peut varier entre 0 et 100. Développée par Connor et Davidson (2003), elle comprend 25 items, lesquels sont répartis en cinq facteurs : le premier fait référence à la compétence personnelle, à un niveau d'exigence élevé et à la ténacité (huit énoncés) ; le deuxième correspond à la confiance en ses capacités, la tolérance aux émotions négatives et au renforcement des effets du stress (sept énoncés) ; le troisième concerne l'acceptation du changement et les relations interpersonnelles positives (cinq énoncés) ; le quatrième fait référence au sentiment de contrôle (trois énoncés) ; le cinquième est associé à la spiritualité (deux énoncés). Quant à lui, le test de l'Exercice de résilience (Strümpfer, 2001) comprend six situations auxquelles il faut imaginer comment l'individu peut faire face : deuil, perte d'emploi, difficulté financière, maltraitance, maladie physique et abus sexuel. Trois questions permettent de faciliter l'exploration de ce que le répondant imagine : que pense et ressent la personne ? Que va-t-il se passer ? Plus tard, que signifiera pour la personne l'expérience vécue ? Les réponses permettent de comprendre comment l'individu réagit à l'adversité.

### **1.3. Méthodes d'analyse et de traitement de données**

La méthodologie retenue est à la fois quantitative et qualitative. Les notes globales du CD-RISC ont été analysées conformément aux indications de Connor et Davidson (2003). L'exploitation de l'entretien clinique et de l'Exercice de résilience (Strümpfer, 2001) repose sur l'analyse des réponses du sujet. Dans le second test, les participantes ont été invitées à imaginer toutes les situations. La cotation repose sur le fait de se donner la résilience comme but, la signification, le soutien social auquel il fait appel ou qui est reçu. Nous adoptons donc la démarche suivante : vérification de la forme et du contenu de la réponse, des procédés utilisés et du processus de résilience pour chacun des six thèmes abordés.

## **2. Résultats**

### **2.1. Cas 1 : Y. K. 13 ans**

Âge au moment des faits : 12 ans

Lieu de l'agression : domicile familial

Durée de l'agression : 4 mois

#### **2.1.1. Anamnèse :**

Y. K. a 13 ans. Elle est en classe de quatrième. Son père est décédé quand elle avait 4 ans et depuis lors, elle vivait chez sa grand-mère avec sa mère, sa tante et sa cousine germaine. Cette dernière, plus âgée, est en charge de veiller sur elle, lorsque les adultes sont absents. Les agressions sexuelles ont commencé après que Y.K. ait eu ses premières règles, sous la menace d'un

couteau. La participante affirme qu'au début c'était des attouchements, puis des contacts bucco-génitaux. Ensuite, « elle a commencé à me toucher avec des objets, j'ai énormément saigné, c'est là que maman a su », dit-elle pour décrire l'agression sexuelle avec pénétration.

Le vécu de l'agression est marqué par des douleurs physiques, un mal-être et un sentiment de culpabilité « c'est pour ça que je n'ai rien dit à maman. J'avais peur, peur de maman même de Dieu, peur de Dani (c'est l'agresseur-e). Je ne sortais plus de la maison sauf pour aller prier avec mémé ». Il n'y a eu aucune plainte de la part de la mère. L'agresseur-e n'a donc pas été poursuivie en justice. Mais, elle a simplement été chassée de la maison, bannie de la famille. Y. K. n'a bénéficié d'aucun suivi psychologique. Sa grand-mère l'a conduite chez le pasteur de sa communauté pour des séances d'exorcisme « parce qu'elle avait peur que le démon qui habite ma cousine me possède aussi ... ça m'énervait d'y aller, je l'ai dit à mémé elle m'a dit que c'était le démon qui ne voulait pas prier et pas moi, donc elle allait m'obliger à partir. C'est pour cela que j'ai fui ». Se sentant coupable, elle a fugué. Elle est restée dans la rue pendant deux semaines et c'est ainsi qu'elle a rencontré les religieuses venues donner à manger aux sans-abris. « Les sœurs m'ont recueillie et sont allées rencontrer ma famille. Aujourd'hui, je préfère vivre au foyer. Je vais à l'école. J'ai de bonnes notes. J'ai terminé la première de ma classe, en cinquième. Mes profs m'apprécient et j'ai des amies. Ce n'est pas parce qu'une femme m'a fait ça que je suis lesbienne. J'ai tout le temps pour décider de qui je veux être. Je me sens bien ! ». Notons que Y.K. passe certains week-ends et les vacances dans sa famille.

### **2.1.2. Résultat aux tests**

Au test du CD-RISC, Y. K. a obtenu 76 points, ce qui correspond au niveau moyen-supérieur de résilience (la moyenne est de 50 points). Elle est donc résiliente. Les résultats au test de l'Exercice de résilience montrent qu'elle considère l'adversité comme un défi dont la finalité serait une réussite sociale, laquelle passerait par la réussite scolaire.

### **2.1.3. Analyse et interprétation**

Y. K. semble de prime abord une adolescence polie et respectueuse des normes. Elle se projette dans l'avenir. Elle veut devenir médecin. Elle reste persuadée que le traumatisme qu'elle a vécu est un défi de la vie et que « sa façon à elle de remporter le défi c'est de réussir ses études ». Ici, la résilience passe par la réussite scolaire. L'école est un facteur de résilience. C'est là un des éléments importants car Y. K. se décrivait avant les événements comme une élève moyenne. Elle n'a pas su expliquer pourquoi elle travaillait peu avant et s'était mise à avoir de meilleurs résultats. On pourrait supposer que l'insuffisance de rendement était liée à l'environnement familial... On pourrait

tout aussi bien, se dire qu'hors de cet environnement, l'agression sexuelle se révèle un mal pour un bien. La résilience de Y. K. lui permet alors d'aller de l'avant...La réussite scolaire y est certainement pour quelque chose...mais quoi ? Au-delà de son rôle « d'ascenseur social », le contexte scolaire peut offrir à Y. K. une riche palette de ressources défensives et de possibilités de développer des supports de protection. Les facteurs de protection peuvent être basés sur les liens amicaux, les contacts positifs avec les adultes, la possibilité de réussir et d'être valorisé. On peut appréhender l'école comme un espace de protection pour Y. K. à plusieurs niveaux. En premier lieu, elle lui permet de développer ses compétences et de renforcer ses ressources propres. Le fait qu'elle soit première de sa classe semble avoir contribué à renforcer son estime de soi et sa confiance en soi. En second lieu, l'école peut être un cadre de protection susceptible d'atténuer les facteurs de risque issus de sa famille.

Dans les suites de l'agression sexuelle et de sa révélation, la religion apparaît comme persécutrice et l'interprétation mystico-religieuse qui prévaut agit comme facteur traumatogène. La victime n'est pas entendue et elle est même aux bancs des accusés car, en refusant de prier, elle est coupable de collaboration avec la cousine et son démon (ce qui est l'explication plausible de cette passion masochiste). La bienveillance des religieuses agit à contrepied et ouvre à la possibilité d'une restauration psychique comme nous le voyons dans ce cas.

Le questionnement sur la féminité et l'identité sexuelle apparaît à la lisière du discours « Ce n'est pas parce qu'une femme m'a fait ça que je suis lesbienne ». Cette phrase appartient-elle à Y. K. ? N'est-ce pas un relent des perceptions mystico-religieuses familiales ? Si ces questions ne semblent pas résolues pour l'instant, car elles ne constituent pas une priorité pour l'adolescente, elles sont essentielles dans le processus de l'adolescence. Les possibilités d'un suivi psychologique à long terme, devraient s'organiser autour de ces questions comme enjeux du développement psychoaffectif d'Y. K. Ici, « J'ai tout le temps pour décider de qui je veux être. » sonne alors comme un possible être à soi.

## **2.2. Cas 2 : S. O., 15 ans**

Âge au moment des faits : 14 ans

Lieu : domicile familial de l'amie

Durée de l'agression : 1 jour

### **2.2.1. Anamnèse :**

S. O. est une adolescente de 16 ans qui fait la classe de Seconde C (seconde scientifique). Née dans une famille musulmane, elle en a été chassée après l'agression sexuelle. Elle vit donc au foyer de jeunes filles auprès des religieuses de la communauté. Elle a été droguée puis agressée sexuellement

par une de ses amies, pendant que le compagnon de cette dernière filmait les ébats. La participante affirme avoir été menacée : « ils ont menacé de divulguer les images à ma famille, dans mon école, si je ne leur donne pas l'argent que mon père cache dans son coffre. Je l'ai dit à papa. Il leur a donné de l'argent et m'a chassée de la maison. Il a dit que j'étais complice et que tout était de ma faute. » C'est sa mère qui l'a confié au foyer. Elle affirme qu'au début elle avait tout le temps peur, mais va mieux aujourd'hui. « Je me sens bien ici, je vais à l'école j'ai de bonnes notes, je vais à l'église maintenant, je prie et je demande à Dieu de m'aider à avancer. Je considère que mon passé ne détermine pas mon avenir. J'ai vécu quelque chose de difficile mais je m'en sors bien et c'est l'essentiel. Je sais que papa comprendra un jour. » Elle a toujours des contacts avec sa mère et ses frères. Pour S. O., le fait d'avoir été sexuellement agressée par une femme n'est pas différent d'une agression sexuelle commise par un homme. Elle ne se sent pas pour autant homosexuelle ou hétérosexuelle. Concernant le changement de pratique religieuse, elle dit : « j'accompagnais souvent mes amies à l'église avant l'agression, mais sans dire à ma famille. Au foyer je prie avec les sœurs... c'est venu comme ça... » Elle est convaincue que Dieu mettra sur son chemin la personne qu'*il faut au moment opportun*.

### **2.2.2. Résultats aux tests**

S. O. a obtenu un score de 72 points au CD-RISC, ce qui la place nettement au-dessus de la moyenne. Le test de l'Exercice de résilience montre qu'elle perçoit la résilience comme une forme de compensation du traumatisme vécu. Elle fait référence à sa foi comme facteur de protection.

### **2.2.3. Analyse et interprétation**

S. O. a de bons résultats scolaires et est admirée de ses enseignants qui la décrivent comme studieuse et exemplaire. Elle s'est décrite comme étant une élève moyenne, avant cette année scolaire. L'analyse de ses résultats aux tests montre qu'elle est résiliente. Elle fait souvent référence à ses croyances religieuses comme un fondement de cette reconstruction personnelle : « C'est Dieu qui m'aide et m'accompagne tous les jours ». Elle considère sa croyance comme une compensation au traumatisme vécu : « j'ai perdu un père, j'ai gagné un Dieu ». Cette façon de percevoir la religion comporte un facteur de résilience. En effet, S. O. est persuadée que sa capacité à surmonter le traumatisme vient de sa foi. Chez elle, la spiritualité donne « un accès » à un sentiment de transcendance, à un courage, une force qui aide et guide.

Aux yeux de son père, qui occulte l'agression sexuelle, S. O n'est pas une victime mais elle est complice du vol qu'il subit. Il la rejette. Sa mère échoue à la protéger et passe le relais à d'autres femmes. Si le Féminin doit s'interroger dans ce cas, tout comme le statut de mère, les questions qui

semblent prioritaires sont celles en lien avec l'identité : identité sexuelle, identité religieuse, estime de soi, confiance en soi... Chez S. O, plus que la scolarité, c'est la pratique religieuse qui est un facteur avéré de résilience. La sublimation comme mécanisme de défense la protège des effets désorganisant du rejet familial que le changement de pratique religieuse rend encore plus problématique...Car, au final, que devra comprendre papa : qu'elle n'est pas complice du vol ? Qu'elle est victime d'agression sexuelle, de harcèlement et de chantage ? Ou bien que pour survivre, elle a choisi le dieu qui ne l'a pas jugée ?

### **2.3. Cas 3 de M. K., 17 ans**

Âge au moment des faits : 15 ans

Lieu de l'agression: domicile de la tante

Durée de l'agression : 1 jour

#### **2.3.1. Anamnèse**

M. K. est une orpheline de 17 ans qui fait la classe de seconde C. Elle vivait chez une tante à Abidjan, après le décès de ses parents dans un accident de la voie publique. Avant l'accident elle vivait en zone rurale au domicile de ses parents. Elle s'est enfuie de chez sa tante après l'agression sexuelle. Selon la participante, sa tante est une prostituée. Elle a abusé d'elle sexuellement à la demande d'un client. Elle n'a plus de contact avec cette dernière, mais elle garde le contact avec sa grand-mère maternelle restée au village. M. K. est restée dans la rue pendant un an, avant de rejoindre le foyer de jeunes filles, où elle vit. Aujourd'hui, elle poursuit sa scolarité normalement. Elle a un partenaire sexuel qui est dans le même lycée.

#### **2.3.2. Résultats aux tests**

M. K. a le score le plus élevé de résilience. Elle a obtenu un score de 82 points au CD-RISC. Cela pourrait s'expliquer par des facteurs comme : une confiance en soi, en ses compétences, à la valorisation de soi que le test de l'Exercice de résilience a fait ressortir. Ce test a mis en exergue les traits narcissiques de la participante comme facteur de résilience.

#### **2.3.3. Analyse et interprétation**

Le discours de M. K. est coloré de confiance en soi et de valorisation de soi : « Je suis devenue l'une des meilleures élèves de ma classe, les sœurs et les professeurs me citent en exemple ». À ce niveau, la confiance en soi est un sentiment fondé sur l'estime de soi, sur l'appréhension de sa valeur : « j'ai découvert que j'ai de la ressource », dit-elle avec humour. Ici, la confiance en soi peut être reconnue comme un facteur de protection face au traumatisme. Elle vient former un rempart contre l'adversité. M.K. ne se perçoit pas comme

une victime mais plutôt comme *une survivante*. La question de l'identité sexuelle semble résolue. La participante se considère hétérosexuelle. Elle affirme: « le problème ne vient pas de moi, mais plutôt de ma tante. C'est elle qui va mal, pas moi. La sexualité est une bonne chose qui ne devrait pas être monnayée ». Elle se représente la sexualité de manière positive.

L'histoire de M. K. révèle non seulement un échec dans la protection de l'enfant, mais aussi les écueils du féminin. Sa tante brise la barrière maternelle protectrice en ayant une conduite incestueuse. D'où vient la force de cet enfant qui a perdu son enfance dans l'accident de ses parents, dans le déracinement et dans la trahison de la tante qui a abandonné la posture de protectrice pour se muer en persécutrice ? Le niveau d'estime de soi engendrerait cette résilience particulière qui lui permet, sans difficulté majeure, de vivre son corps et son adolescence et de s'ouvrir à une sexualité partagée avec un homme sans question sur son identité sexuelle. Ni la religion, ni la scolarité n'apparaissent au-devant du tableau des facteurs de résilience ou tout au moins à minima.

### **Discussion et Conclusion**

Ces trois vignettes cliniques ont mis en lumière, dans le sillage des agressions sexuelles commises par des femmes sur mineures : que l'agresseur était une personne de confiance ayant fonction de *care* (cousine, amie, tante). Aussi, la réaction de l'environnement perpétuait-elle la violence avec culpabilisation de la victime, rejet du milieu et contre-attitude de la victime qui fuyait le milieu ou choisissait une orientation de vie contraire aux choix familiaux. L'agression sexuelle qui a lieu à l'entame de l'adolescence a plus d'effet déstructurant sur l'identité sexuelle (YK et SO) que quand elle survient plus tard (MK). Cette violence perpétrée par des filles ou des femmes sur des filles questionne le féminin, l'identité et l'identité sexuelle/de genre. Cette problématique fera l'objet de recherches ultérieures.

Les facteurs individuels comme les compétences cognitives, les croyances religieuses et la confiance en soi sont déterminants dans l'analyse de la résilience chez les participantes. Ainsi, l'hypothèse générale est confirmée : les facteurs intra-individuels sont liés à la résilience chez les victimes d'agressions sexuelles commises par les femmes. Il faut noter qu'aucune des participantes n'a porté plainte pour agression sexuelle. Les agressions sexuelles des femmes sur les femmes sont peu documentées. Pour Sonia (2015), si la plupart de ces études soulignent un faible taux de femmes auteurs de violences sexuelles, cela est probablement lié à l'image traditionnelle de la femme, perçue comme nourricière et protectrice, à la difficulté, pour les victimes, à dénoncer les agressions ou encore à la tendance sociale à minimiser ces délits. C'est ce qui s'est passé pour les trois adolescentes. Pour S. O. et M. K., l'agression a lieu en présence d'un tiers



influenceur. L'agir sexuel violent des femmes agresseur-es, dans les vignettes cliniques que nous avons rapportées, semble porté par le désir de faire mal, de dominer... C'est une supposition car aucune des agresseur-es n'a été mise face à ses responsabilités ; aucune n'a été dénoncée. La non-dénonciation du crime et de la violence est potentiellement psychogène. Faire face au pouvoir destructeur et traumatogène de l'agression sexuelle, fait appel à la résilience des adolescentes.

Il est juste de penser que la résilience chez les victimes d'agression sexuelle passe par une possible réparation, par la condamnation ou par la judiciarisation de l'agresseur (Manciaux, 2005) mais ce n'est pas toujours le cas. En Côte d'Ivoire, peu de victimes portent plainte et peu d'agresseurs sont condamnés. Toutefois, des victimes surmontent leur traumatisme et parviennent à la résilience à l'image des participantes de la présente étude. Le construit de résilience pourrait revêtir un aspect culturel qui mérite qu'on s'y intéresse. Par ailleurs, les participantes à l'étude n'ont pas montré (au moment de l'étude) de trouble particulier lié à l'identité sexuelle. On peut prétendre que dans une agression homosexuelle, la représentation de la sexualité pourrait contribuer au processus de résilience chez les victimes. L'expérience de la sexualité est importante chez les adolescents, car ces premières expériences peuvent façonner la manière dont ils se représentent et vivent leur sexualité future. Les rapports sexuels exercés sous la contrainte sont plus susceptibles d'engendrer des expériences négatives. Ainsi, la sexualité peut être perçue comme une source de douleur. Or, M. K. donne une image positive de la sexualité. L'analyse des représentations ne constitue certes pas l'objet de la présente étude, mais le concept de résilience suppose une adaptation positive, dans le processus de protection. Aussi, la représentation positive de la sexualité pourrait-elle constituer une variable interne qui contribuerait à faciliter le processus de résilience.

Les observations faites dans la présente étude révèlent que les facteurs individuels comme la compétence cognitive (et la réussite scolaire), la spiritualité et la confiance en soi jouent un rôle dans le processus de résilience. Ces résultats rejoignent ceux de Sadia et Kouakou (2019), Ouatara et coll. (2014), ainsi que Kouakou-Mlan (2019). Les différences observées sont d'ordre méthodologique, notamment liées à la taille des échantillons. En effet, l'étude clinique de trois participantes ne permet pas de généraliser les résultats, même si cette méthode aurait l'avantage d'évaluer le fonctionnement psychique. Contrairement à l'étude de Sadia et Kouakou (2019), certains aspects de la personnalité, comme l'identité sexuelle, n'ont pas été examinés. Il aurait été intéressant d'observer la variabilité des représentations sexuelles chez les victimes d'agression homosexuelle, avec un échantillon plus grand.

Les questions relatives aux violences sexuelles sont encore taboues dans la société ivoirienne. On prétend souvent que les abus sexuels sur mineurs

d'âge entraînent tôt ou tard des troubles de natures diverses, y compris des troubles de l'identité sexuelle. Le discours et le sens commun alimentent cette croyance ; ce qui conforte les victimes d'agression homosexuelle à garder le silence. Mais ces trois adolescentes au parcours de résilience atypique, laissent entendre que malgré les événements de vie délétères et le traumatisme qu'elles ont vécues, la parole demeure la meilleure des armes contre les agressions sexuelles, qu'elles soient commises par un homme ou une femme. Les capacités individuelles dont elles font preuve sont des facteurs de protection contre l'adversité. L'institution en tant que lieu de vie, administrée par des femmes, redonne visage à la maternité, au féminin et au *care*. La bienveillance des religieuses qui transparaît dans les propos des adolescentes semblent les avoir réinscrites dans leur parcours existentiel. Sans toutefois nier la participation de l'institution qui les prend en charge, leur façon de percevoir le traumatisme et d'appréhender leur nouvelle vie met en lumière le rôle joué par les facteurs intra-individuels dans le processus de résilience.

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## Common Property: English as a Lingua Franca in Ghana, The Perspective of the College of Education Tutor

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### Abstract

The study sought to investigate English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) in the classroom of the College of Education tutor in Ghana using the Ashanti Region as a case. A total of 48 participants were selected from 9 Colleges of Education for the study using purposive sampling. Data were collected using a six-point Likert-type scale questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. Data analysis and presentation of results were done using mean and standard deviations. The study revealed that intercultural awareness was important for language users. These findings could be interpreted as the changing conceptualizations of English language and pedagogy among language tutors in various contexts. Tutors' awareness of the need to communicate in English was not restricted to native speaker communities. It was recommended that tutors should seek ways of acquiring attitudes that can help them create a congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning as/ this is needed by students to understand what their tutors teach them.

**Keywords:** ELF-aware, CoE, Tutors, Native Speakers, English, Variety

### Introduction

English as a lingua franca has gained a lot of recognition over the years due to the proliferation of English by non-native English speakers. English, also used as a "practical tool" and often as a "working language" (Crystal,

2003, p.426), has arisen as a lingua franca used by millions of people to participate in conversations with each other. Today, we live in an integrated globalized environment (a global village) where the number of non-native English speakers exceeds the number of native speakers (Crystal, 2003, p.426). Seidlhofer (2012) observed that, by necessity, the lingua franca does not have native speakers, but that all of its speakers must learn to use it. In describing what ELF is, Firth (1996) describes it as a communication language between individuals who do not share either a shared natural language or a common national culture. ELF analysis is not uncontroversial and has been blamed for being conceptually and technically underdeveloped. Contrary to Baker and Jenkins (2015) statement of a consensus over ELF theories as a use of English rather than a possible variety of English, Mortensen (2013) argued that ELF is "often implicitly conceptualized as a bounded object, a particular 'language system' with its own 'characteristic' lexicogrammatical and pragmatic features" (p. 35).

The history of English in Ghana, in particular the initial interaction between the British and the people of Ghana in the 16th century, tells the story of the advent of English as a language of commerce, schooling, government and as a cross-ethnic lingua franca (Adjaye, 2005; Boadi, 1994; Sackey, 1997; Sey, 1973). Sackey (1997) noted that some of these English schools, particularly those in Cape Coast, had survived colonial times due to the extraordinary effort of Philip Quaque, who taught his students reading, writing, and learning the Bible. Colonial and missionary language policies have also led to the consolidation of English in the region. Sey (1973), in his groundbreaking dissertation on and through the course of time in Ghanaian English, has experienced tremendous shifts in the history and sociology of Ghana, as well as in the global climate. There is a distinctive Ghanaian variation of English, the point of which was unquestionably expressed by Quarcoo (1994). Beyond morphology and syntax (which are often cited as fields of deviant use), the pragmatic use of English (for example, modes of application) is a clear direction in which non-native varieties can hold sway (Anderson, 2006; Dzameshie, 2001; Keleve, 1995).

It is worth mentioning that the linguistic standard has shifted and that English no longer belongs to a popular variety that has distinctive features at all linguistic stages (phonological, syntactical, lexical and semantics). It is actually a scenario composed of a wide variety of self-evolving varieties used in diverse sociolinguistic environments that are juxtaposed rather than subordinated. As Canagarajah (2005, p. xxiii) points out, "English has gained a life beyond its land of origin, acquiring identity and currency in new geographical and social domains as it is localized for a variety of purposes." Early differences between English varieties worldwide have been codified by Quirk et al (1972), who defined three types of English varieties: varieties in

which English is spoken as a natural language, varieties in which English is spoken as an additional language, and varieties in which English is spoken as a foreign language. The framework of Quirk et al is specifically based on the generalization of cultures and their socio-political systems, including the official language of the region and its language policy and language education system. Generalization is an important, conclusive aspect of theoretical construction; in order to create an overall structure for the representation of several variables and functions. Kirkpatrick(2006) postulates that, because of the historical authority possessed by some varieties, people prefer to argue for their innate dominance as linguistic templates over newly formed varieties. This process of reasoning is technically known as the Imposed Standard or Context-driven Theory (Giles et al, 1974).

The distinguishing characteristic of the ELF is its linguistic, pragmatic and cultural versatility as a medium of communication that is suitable for particular interlocutors under unique communicative circumstances (Jenkins, 2015; Mauranen, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011). The emphasis is therefore not so much on language itself, but on the sense of ELF contact and users, the "community rather than the code" (Kalocsai, 2014, p.2) and the "discourse communities with a common communicative purpose" (Seidlhofer, 2011, p.87). This poses fascinating observations as to what people do with English when they talk, and includes an understanding of the "unusually complex contact" situations (Mauranen 2012, p.29) between English and the other languages involved that make ELF a second-order language contact or a "hybrid of similarities" (Mauranen, 2012, p.30). ELF scholars found ELF to be culturally neutral (Meierkord, 2002); a flexible instrument for communicating in intercultural settings, but definitely not a language for recognition (House, 1999, 2003). Early conceptualizations regarded ELF as, for example, "a 'contact language' between persons who do not share a common native language or a common (national) culture, and for whom English is the chosen foreign language of communication" (Firth, 1996, p. 240) and as existing only in 'interactions between members of two or more distinct linguistic communities in English, for none of whom (House, 1999, p. 74). These definitions explicitly omitted native English speakers from the ELF, although this difference is not found in later definitions.

A core form of this dimension of ELF awareness is awareness of teacher-related experience, which revolves around what tutors do (and do not do) in the classroom, including their own teaching philosophies, corrective guidance (Lyster & Saito, 2010) and measuring and reacting to learners' needs. Again, beliefs and attitudes regarding the notion of error (Long, 1991) and its origins (i.e. L1 transition, omission and over-generalization or simplification of L2 rules (Ellis, 2010 ) are key considerations, as is the role of tutors as viewed and encountered by themselves and other stakeholders in their local

context (Sifakis, 2009). Other types of educational practice understanding are textbook-and policy-related. All of these types require an understanding of the degree to which the educational situation is directed towards a particular target (e.g. completing a high-stakes exam) and whether learning materials and instructional activities prioritize a norm-bound approach (Sifakis, 2004).

### **ELF Awareness in ESL classroom**

The sociolinguistic background of language education covers both the educational atmosphere within the classroom and the broader social landscape outside the classroom. Pennycook (2001) criticizes the fact that language teaching is mostly practiced in schools as distinct from the broader outside world. From the point of view of applied linguists, assisting students in studying English presupposes that the topic of learning in educational settings must represent the entity being observed on how it functions as a sociolinguistic phenomenon (Leung, 2013; McKay, 2000; Seidlhofer, 2011; Wang, 2015; Widdowson, 2003). It's not hard to realize that the understanding of what's going on in the use of English in the real-life world can better train students in the classroom for their future English-medium experiences in the classroom. It merits deliberation, though, where the emphasis can be on the wider social universe. Provided that ELF is a recently defined concept in the broader social world, linguists (Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Jenkins, 2007; Mauranen & Ranta, 2009) have warned of the difference between what is learned in the classroom and what is happening outside the classroom.

It is therefore high time that we explored the degree to which the ELF hypothesis is realized and expressed in learning settings in order, if it exists, to explore solutions to the void. The subject matter concerns the understanding of "English" in English education. The creation of ELF science has called for the restoration of "the thing that is called English" (Seidlhofer, 2011, p. 1). In this way, the conventional approach to English, which resembles the handling of languages as discreet linguistic structures, has become outdated. ELF study contributes to the perception of English as functional, changing, flexible, and multilingual (Baker, 2015; Cogo & Dewey, 2012; Jenkins, 2015a; Mauranen, 2012; Seidlhofer, 2011). Research also reveals that ELF users do not wish to join the native English-speaking community but are interested in becoming global citizens (Jenkins, 2007; Wang, 2012). Thus, although the conventional approach to second-language learning is native English-oriented, changes are required to re-approach second-language learners in response to the sociolinguistic development of the ELF.

### **Challenges for ELF-aware Teacher**

The concepts underpinning this multilingual approach to English-language learning are aimed at improving intercultural communication skills



for learners (Kohn, 2015; Kramersch, 2009), assessing and strengthening their multilingual vocabulary (Mauranen, 2012; Seildhofer, 2011), as well as encouraging the ability of learners to speak and translate (Canagarajah, 2011, 2013; Blommaert, 2010; Swain, 2006), and , in order to do this, the teacher could be faced with the following obstacles in the ELF classroom:

**Tutors' apparently innate aversion to change:** understanding ELF and introducing ELF-aware teaching are two things. This suggests the tutors may understand ELF but may not be ready or able to incorporate it in their context. This may be attributed to inherent confidence in the undisputed utility of Standard English (Suzuki, 2011). This is where the ELF-aware approach can be helpful in that it does not dictate a particular way of educating ELF but relies on social awareness and teacher freedom.

**Tutors' own views of their positions in the ELF classroom:** how tutors see themselves and their jobs and are perceived by colleagues can be a powerful barrier to ELF-conscious instruction. It poses important problems that also concern morals. For example, topics such as how ethical it is to be ELF-aware, the degree to which it is 'right' or 'wrong' for those concerned, and the ultimate obligation to interfere with the defined curriculum, chosen textbooks and stated directions. However, recognizing that ELF-aware instruction is not either/or a case, but adding to the current arsenal of tutors means that tutors do not have to teach ELF, they will give their learners more options.

**Learners' and other stakeholders' viewpoints and expectations:** a wider sense, including articulated and secret learning goals for English, and sponsors' (parents, companies) perspectives on what is expected and thus 'required' in the ESOL classroom. This, along with a long tradition of pedagogy focused on traditions that assign preference to native-speaking standards, creates an 'ecosystem' of existing culture that is not inherently conducive to ELF-conscious teaching and learning (Sifakis, 2009).

**Trends in curricular creativity and textbook-centered mentality:** Since more traditional EFL environments concentrate on training students for high-stakes tests, their curriculum appear to be largely standard-referenced and textbook-centered, and this typically adversely impacts teaching and learning (Wall, 2005). Even as the current curriculum prioritizes, in theory, at least multiculturalism and the function of English for global and cosmopolitan citizenship, the textbooks do not follow suit (Sifakis et al, 2012; Song, 2013). These procedures make it especially challenging for those tutors who serve in prep schools who wish to incorporate ELF-aware practices into their classrooms. ELF-aware training and teaching create resources for learning about ELF and playing with one's teaching background, which helps tutors to make sense of changing times in English. This also encourages them to

discover modern, innovative and independent ways of incorporating ELF into their own context.

Being an ELF-aware instructor involves seeking ways to inspire one's learners as capable non-native English-speaking users, effectively prompting them to become ELF-aware users themselves. The ecological emphasis and ultimately disruptive essence of the ELF-aware journey has ramifications beyond teaching and learning that can be extended to evaluation and research, policy-making and curriculum design. As such, more research should be done on ELF-aware applications in various teaching-learning environments to record (a) the level of meaningful thinking that different tutors are capable of and ready to participate in, and (b) the consistency and true effect of ELF-aware practices and classes. It is therefore important to build a way of calculating (a) and (b) and thus help ELF-aware teaching research to take a shape that would be more suitable for the use of the ELF-construction (with all its fluidity) in the classroom. These implementations will ultimately decide the degree to which ELF is truly teachable or whether the only practical way to incorporate ELF in a foreign language classroom is by ELF-awareness. After all, to mirror Elbert Green Hubbard's popular concept of art, ELF is not a feature, it's a way.

ELF transcends borders and allows for continuous variables, which is the product of the context of the consumer, both linguistic and socio-cultural, which affects their performance. While in the works of Jenkins (2000), Breiteneder (2005) or Dewey (2006), certain repeated ELF regularities have been found, they have not resulted in ELF being a codified variety and are still far from being regarded as normal. However, it suggests that there are several recommendations about the incorporation of some elements of the ELF into the teaching programmes (Lopriore, 2016). These will involve raising the consciousness of English tutors and ELF tutors. Elements that are already accepted as prevailing in the sense of the lingua franca. If English tutors know that tactics prevail, they will help their students to cope with the evolving atmosphere in which English is used worldwide, in line with the students' own communication needs in the lingua franca sense.

ELF-aware tutors in Ghanaian Colleges of Education are creating a view of English as a lingua franca that will have an effect on them. With their mindset towards the English language and how to present the language to learners in their pedagogical tasks and practices, a modern vision of language will be turned into a new method of teaching. However, shifting teacher perceptions to the point of accepting the concept of ELF and questioning existing norms and values regarding the importance of a traditional native language variety is a complicated process that will not happen by merely reminding tutors of the presence of ELF.

## **The study**

The idea of ELF knowledge is meant to act as an understanding of the role of tutors and learners, as well as other members of the ELT (e.g. decision-makers, curricula creators, textbook creators, evaluators and testers) in this building. The benefits of binding ELF to the English Language Teaching (ELT) classroom derive from the idea that English Language Learners are effective users of English in their own right. CoE English tutors continue to set unachievable targets, use unfriendly courseware and a conventional ELT approach. Students have to suffer excessively, not because they are linguistically handicapped or unintelligible, but because they are not taken into account in the preparation of the program and because their needs are not fulfilled. The English language is changing and the emphasis on English in the classroom has shifted. The CoE English tutors are not aware of the update. There is also a need to increase awareness about these improvements. The role of the ELF is a valid ingredient in the learning experience of learners. It has become clear that ELF has consequences for ELT classrooms, and this allows tutors to objectively focus on ELF, which is why this research aims to examine the understanding of ELF among tutors at the College of Education in Ghana. It is believed by the authors that ELF users must contend with a high degree of unpredictability in terms of oral contact due to the emerging fluid and existence of ELF. That is why there the need for these tutors to be aware of ELF and the ELF model

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

Forty-eight English tutors (31 female, 17 male) participated in the study. All of the participating tutors were instructors in the English language from Agogo Presbyterian College of Education, Agona SDA College of Education, Akrokerri College of Education, Mampong Technical College of Education, Offinso College of Education, Wesley College of Education, St. Monica's College of Education, St. Louis College of Education and Christ the Teacher College of Education. Findings of the background questionnaire indicated that twenty-five tutors had taught for over ten (10) years while fifteen had taught for between 5 and 10 years and eight had been teaching for less than five years.

### **Data Collection**

Data were collected from respondents using a questionnaire. The questionnaire had a number of statements that elicited information on demographic information and variables that determined participants' ELF Awareness. The questionnaire comprises two parts. Items in the first part tap the knowledge of tutors on ELF and tutors' beliefs regarding ownership and

use of English. Items in the second part, tap tutors' awareness of ELF and whether it informs their teaching practice. For the intelligibility and reliability concerns, the questions were checked by three experts in the field. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured after a piloting study with 10 English tutors. 5 of the participants of the pilot study and two experts in the field were interviewed to learn their ideas about the intelligibility of the items in this section. As a result of reliability measurement, the overall Cronbach's alpha result was found to be .86 which is high enough to administer the questionnaire. After the administration of the questionnaire, the overall reliability was calculated again and found to be .79.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were used for the analysis of the questionnaire data. The means and standard deviations were deemed to be appropriate because the import of the research was to weigh the views of the participants. According to Michael (2013), the standard deviation is used in conjunction with the mean to summarize continuous data, not categorical data. In addition, the standard deviation, like the mean, is appropriate when the continuous data are not significantly skewed or has outliers.

### Results

When asked about the understanding of the ELF model, all participants replied that they needed some linguistic and pedagogical knowledge and skills that would allow them to encourage foreign intelligibility in their classrooms.

**Table 1:** *Tutors awareness of ELF Model*

Statement	Mean	Std. Dev	rank
I localize English to suit the context in which I teach	2.85	.65	3rd
I allow my students to express themselves freely in class	2.41	.80	5th
I am conscious of the need to develop in my learners the capacity to communicate intelligibly with each other despite the inevitable existence of errors	3.13	.89	1st
I motivate my students to have self-confidence	2.44	1.09	4th
I sometimes deviate from the existing curriculum	2.88	1.06	2nd

Rank order on why the need for College of Education tutor to be aware of ELF and ELF model presented in Table 8 show that the consciousness of the need to develop learners capacity to communicate intelligibly is 1<sup>st</sup> (M = 3.13; SD =.89), deviation from the existing curriculum is 2<sup>nd</sup> (M = 2.88; SD = 1.06), and localization of the English to suit a context of teaching places 3<sup>rd</sup> (M = 2.85; SD = 0.65) are the most prevalent of all the variables that contribute to tutors awareness of the ELF model. Among the reasons provided by them,

the context was indicated as the most common source of miscommunication, with the participants stating:

*... you see, language is about context...so I always try to localize English to suit out context...I think the students love it...they are doing well....we are getting there(ETR 4)*

*...I think going forward I need to design my own activities to suit my learners and our Ghanaian context...I think it's the way to go....the students must be able to relate the content and practicalize in their own context (ETR 1)*

*most of our colleagues think they are going to teach themselves....sat in friend's lesson and I pitied the students....how can they understand?...when we understand the concept of ELF well we will prepare our lessons with my learners needs in mind .... (ETR 2)*

*the problem I have with the foreign courseware is that they were to suit their context....the conditions are different....when we as tutors even meet we speak how more the students? ....Most of them read some of the foreign textbooks and they can't even relate.....you and I know that Learners learn better when local courseware is used (ETR 3)*

As a result, tutors need to build a framework for assessing ELF-aware lesson plans, individual lessons and self-assessment of these lessons, taking into account both ELF-related concepts and local teaching and learning environments. What was very surprising about the responses given was that the participants appeared to be well conscious of their own talents and lack of them. They said they were scared to make a mistake, they did not want to joke about it. That may be attributed to the fact that they are actually uncertain in terms of their own abilities, which they measure against the regular English language, if their efforts are successful, the meaning is conveyed, grasped and acted upon, but rather whether they were grammatically right in doing so.

**Table 2: The need for ELF awareness for CoE Tutors**

Statement	Means	Std. Dev	rank
I need ELF awareness to understand what tutors should do and should not do in the English classroom	2.24	1.06	5th
I need ELF awareness to be able to give corrective feedback to my learners	2.19	.96	6th
I need ELF awareness to be able to respond to learners needs	2.04	1.01	7th
I need ELF awareness to understand learners errors and their sources	2.90	.91	1st
I need ELF awareness to understand so that I can treat my own non- native English spoken discourse as a viable model my learners can aspire to and help them become more confident	2.87	.87	2nd
I need ELF awareness so that I do not intervene to correct my learner's oral communicative activities that do not hinder comprehensibility	2.80	.81	3rd
I need ELF awareness to be able to put my personal theories about instruction aside	2.78	.88	4th

In responding to the statement, “*The need for ELF awareness for CoE Tutors*” all the respondents were very emphatic in their answers. Thirty-Seven (37) participants (77.1%) were in the affirmative and eleven respondents (22.9%) were of a neutral view. When reasons were sought for the responses, those who were affirmative were of the opinion that they need ELF awareness to understand what tutors should do and should not do in the English classroom; need ELF awareness to understand learners errors and its sources; need ELF awareness so that they do not intervene to correct learners oral communicative activities that do not hinder comprehensibility; and need ELF awareness to be able to put personal theories about instruction aside.

The activities on building an ELF skillset is useful and varied. Awareness-raising of borrowing vocabulary from L1 is a useful suggestion. There are activities that raise awareness of common features of ELF interactions like complement ellipsis, and there are others that encourage learners to question whether certain grammatical variations should be deemed incorrect. However, there are some that, with all the best intentions, take the idea of ELF too far. It is certainly useful to promote an ELF mindset to learners if they are likely to critically engage in the topic, but we are talking about time in the classroom here. This confirms the statement of this participant:

*.....as I have said earlier, English is not our language....I need ELF awareness to understand the concept...you see you cannot give what you don't have...when I get I better ELF awareness and what the whole concept is about then I can treat my own non- native*

*English spoken discourse as a worthwhile model which my learners can learn from (ETR 3)*

In a similar way, another participant added that

*.....we are models for our learners ....they look up to us....they cannot use the language wrongly and we also do same.....I need ELF awareness to be able to give corrective feedbacks to my learners (ETR 5)*

According to another participant, most tutors are more interested in developing some level of competency with regards to things like dealing with business transactions in a global context, how to interpret the English language and so on. That’s why the skillset is useful, but the mindset is ideal. Teaching ELF does a very good job of linking theory to practice. This is an understated skill in the education sector.

**Table 3: The benefits of ELF awareness**

Statement	Means	Std. Dev	rank
ELF awareness helps the CoE tutor of English to accommodate learners of diverse L1 backgrounds	2.68	.95	4 <sup>th</sup>
ELF awareness helps the CoE tutor of English to motivate the student teacher to learn the language in a flexible atmosphere	2.76	.63	3rd
ELF awareness equips the CoE tutor of English with the skills needed to prepare the student teacher to teach basic school learners	3.60	.88	1st
ELF awareness helps the CoE tutor of English to select the appropriate instructional materials that fits their context	2.96	.90	2nd
ELF awareness helps the CoE tutor of English to adopt the right pedagogy to help the student teacher-succeed	2.47	.77	5th

From Table 3, it can be observed that the participants revealed that what they considered as most beneficial was “ELF awareness equips the CoE tutor of English with the skills needed to prepare the student teacher to teach basic school learners” (M = 3.60, SD = .88). This was followed by “ELF awareness helps the CoE tutor of English to select the appropriate instructional materials that fit their context” (M = 2.96, SD = .90).

ELF transcends the boundaries and allows for constant variation that is the result of the user’s backgrounds, both linguistic and sociocultural, which influence their performance. language is the most essential tool for all human communication and learning; it is integral to every person’s

identity and it is one of the core elements of a culture. In education, language plays a crucial role because it is mainly through the interactions between the teacher and the learners, and amongst the learners themselves, that knowledge is produced and acquired in the teaching-learning process. It was also found that tutors used pragmatic strategies, such as repetition, questions, and comments to ensure that students comprehend what is being taught. It is worthy to state here that naturally, the students' language use situations are different from tutors. ELF is viewed in its strict sense: as a lingua franca among those who do not share a common language.

### **Limitations of the study**

The study did not reflect the entire population of English tutors at all levels of education in the region. Only those teaching at the Colleges of Education were used in this study. The sample size used in this research also limits the generalizability of the findings. Another limitation of the study was that it was impossible to judge if the responses given by the participants were accurate or not. Although participants had been briefed about the purpose of the research, social desirability bias could possibly occur as the scales were self-report scales and were subject to participants' influence.

### **Discussion**

In this study, we wanted to see to what extent English language tutors were aware of ELF in their English language classrooms. The findings suggest that there is a disconnection between what tutors believe, how they perceive the ELF construct and their teaching practices as revealed in previous studies (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b). The findings indicated that participant tutors' awareness of the need to communicate in English was not restricted to native speaker communities. They also agreed that intercultural awareness was important for language users. These findings could be interpreted as the changing conceptualizations of English language and pedagogy among language tutors in various contexts. Nevertheless, their tendency to see the native speaker as a yardstick and the importance they attach to linguistic accuracy perhaps shows that a traditional EFL perspective is still preferred by English language tutors (Illés & Csizér, 2015). However, how these tendencies relate to English language tutors' awareness of ELF depends on their local contexts. In different contexts, tutors may have different conceptualizations of ELF, and there can be a number of factors influencing their English language teaching practice, such as the presence of immigrants in their classrooms, linguistic and cultural differences between the immigrants and locals, attitudes of local students towards immigrants. Previous studies have documented that although tutors seem to welcome the idea of an ELF approach in their teaching practice, tutors do not know how to implement an ELF-aware approach to their



language teaching materials since such materials hardly exist in the field (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b; Kemaloğlu-Er & Bayyurt, 2018; Sifakis & Bayyurt, 2018). The results of the current study showed that tutors favour the idea that cultural diversity should be integrated into the English language teaching materials. In other words, they supported the idea that the cultures of both native speakers and nonnative speakers should be part of the English language classrooms (Bayyurt, 2006, 2017).

However, a great majority of the tutors in this study seem to be indecisive about the role of the inclusion of the non-standard varieties of English in their language teaching practice. In addition, the tutors, who participated in the study, had differing views on the role of grammatical accuracy in successful communication. While some of them agreed with the idea, others were not sure about what the role of grammatical accuracy is in successful communication (Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b). Moreover, they did not show a clear tendency towards supporting the idea that nonnative tutors should have a native-like competence-accent or native-like proficiency. Tutors highlighted the idea that intelligibility was more important than having a native-like accent especially in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Although these results support the findings of earlier studies (Bayyurt, 2017; Bayyurt & Sifakis, 2015a, 2015b; Biricik-Deniz, 2017; Biricik-Deniz et al., 2016; Kemaloğlu-Er, 2017) on perceptions of ELF and its involvement in ELT, the intention of the researcher was not to generalize the results to the whole population of English language tutors in their contexts. Fostering awareness of the current diversification of English in teacher education can thus set the basis for acknowledging that WE and ELF can no longer be ignored in class: Rather than one single variety (standard British English) or NS reference model, students should be presented with exemplifications of different accents, lingua-cultural varieties and contexts of use, going beyond static and monolithic representations of the language, as is still largely the case in ELT. In Kramsch's (2014) words, the purpose is not to abandon all standards pedagogic norms of language use as the goals of instruction. It is, rather, to strive to make our students into multilingual individuals, sensitive to linguistic, cultural and, above all, semiotic diversity, and willing to engage with difference, that is, to grapple with differences in social, cultural, political and religious worldviews.

### **Pedagogical implications**

Based on the findings from the study, some pedagogical implications are drawn. English tutors should avail themselves of in-service training, workshops and seminars to abreast themselves with appropriate instructional methodologies for effective teaching. The Ministry of Education, through the Ghana Universities Council, mentoring universities and Colleges of Education

should provide stimulus packages for teachers to acquire and develop effective teaching and learning materials for their lessons. Tutors should endear themselves to reading various write-ups and conversations of students to help them identify the errors they make and correct them. Tutors should seek ways of acquiring attitudes that can help them create a congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning as/ this is needed by students to understand what their teachers teach them. Tutors of English should ensure that classroom materials reflect the purpose for which English is learned. They should ensure that their teaching approach is geared towards motivating to be confident ELF speakers. Finally, they should create an atmosphere that will accommodate all learners irrespective of their L1 backgrounds.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the finding of the study and subsequent discussions, the major conclusion is that, some tutors of English in the colleges were ELF aware practitioners even though they were unaware of their own practice. Tutors taught the way they did of the high- stake examinations their learners write at the end of the semester or training. It can be stated that tutors of the English Language in colleges of education should be made aware of the multifaceted reality of the English Language today. It is our hope that by raising awareness and linguistic diversity early in the course of a teacher's professional development, the practical relevance of ELF in tutors' perceptions of expertise will feature more prominently in their approach to language learning materials and tasks.

The study revealed that awareness of ELF is beneficial and therefore there is a need for it. It has also illuminated the level of knowledge of tutors on ELF.

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## Assessing Energy Source Preference of Household and Stand Diversity in the Catchment Area of Bamako, Mali

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### Abstract

Wood fuel as a domestic combustible plays a major role for the Malian population (more than 90% of households depend on it for domestic cooking). It is used in rural as well as in urban areas. This paper focuses on assessing the energy source preference of households and stand diversity in Bamako catchment area. We have surveyed 200 households and 70 firewood and charcoal sellers in the District of Bamako. Forest inventory was carried out in Famana and Kassela within the Bamako catchment area where plots have been established (10 plots of 50 x 20 m per site). Plots were separated from each other by 50m. Results showed that the use of charcoal is higher than firewood in the urban households due to its availability and easy handling. 71.50% of households in Bamako use charcoal for cooking meals. Charcoal has become the most preferred source of energy for households in Bamako. The main factors for this trend are related to poverty, cooking habits of households, and urbanization. The two sites (Famana and Faya) are characterized by high diversity. Famana has a Shannon Diversity Index of 2.92 while Faya has 2.55. The study revealed a strong capacity of woody formations to provide species such as *Combretum glutinosum*, *Combretum micranthum*, and *Lannea velutina* which is very convenient for domestic combustion. These species have a rapid regeneration capacity and can grow in many types of ecological environments. Species such as *Parkia biglobosa*, *Vittelaria paradoxa*, *Ficus*

*gnaphalocarpa*, and *Khaya senegalensis* (protected species) that are highly appreciated by households of Bamako have a great economic value and are constantly under threat. Households demand for these species exceeds the production capacity of forests. Immediate actions are needed to promote modern energy in order to ensure sustainable development.

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**Keywords:** Wood fuel, energy preference, household, stand diversity, Bamako

## Introduction

Fuel wood as domestic energy is one of the oldest sources of energy in the world. It was used not only for household energy through cooking and heating but also as a source of energy to run industries. Nowadays, the issue of domestic energy consumption has become a major concern around the world mainly in developing countries (IRENA, 2019). Most African countries remain dependent on traditional energies such as firewood, charcoal, and agricultural residues for cooking (Bangirinama et al., 2016).

In the Sahel region, households rely entirely on biomass for domestic cooking which affects human health, forest survival, and ecological balance leading to climate change (Jagger & Kittner, 2017). Firewood and charcoal continue to attract more and more people because of the affordable price and easy access (CEREDEC, 2015). The high demand expressed by households has led operators to use all types of wood species without taking into account the ecological factor, the impact on the environment, and the sustainability (Teplitz-Sembitzky & Schramm, 1989). People depending on fuel wood will increase by 2030, and this is a call on stakeholders to tackle factors influencing the growing demand (Bentsen & Felby, 2012). As a result, deforestation continues to threaten natural environment through the loss of biodiversity, soil erosion, ecosystem degradation, and climate change (Nicolas, 2011; Zilihona et al., 2011).

In Mali, wood fuel plays a major role in meeting energy needs which represents 90% of domestic energy consumed by households (Fonabes, 2017a). The impact of consumption on forests especially in the vicinity of Bamako is increasing. The persistence of biomass energy use is partly due to the non-competitiveness of modern energies (electricity, butane gas, solar energy). This is also due to the lack of reliable information regarding social and individual benefits of energy transition (Schlag & Zuzarte, 2008). The high cost and poor infrastructures have prevented many countries to adopt new technologies. Due to its easy handling and storage, charcoal has become the most appreciated domestic energy for households in Bamako (Gazull, 2009).

Currently, the trend of demand of firewood and charcoal from the population of Bamako is associated with the rapid population growth and



rampant urbanization (Gazull et al., 2013). Therefore, these populations lack option for modern energy due to poverty. Cooking meals depending on fuel wood represents more than 90% of households consumed energy (Keïta, 2014). Cuts intensity is preventing new species from reaching their full capacity from growing. Protected species such as *Vitellaria paradoxa* (Shea) and *Parkia biglobosa* (Néré) which play a considerable economic part in the life of rural populations are directly threatened. Those activities generate a huge income for rural populations but reduce the ecosystem services and the carbon stocks of forests (Gingrich et al., 2019). As a result, forests are exposed to a gradual degradation.

The objective of this work was to assess the energy source preference of household and stand diversity in Bamako catchment area. As the supply area of Bamako is expanding to the region of Sikasso and Kayes, new alternatives should be explored in order to reduce the increasing pressure of urban households.

## Materials and Methods

### Study Site

This study was conducted in three (3) locations within Bamako catchment area. The survey was done with households in Bamako city and completed with forests inventory in Famana (municipality of Keleya) and Kassela (municipality of Banguineda).

Bamako fuel wood catchment basin has 150 km<sup>2</sup>, and it stretches over four (04) regions (Kayes, Koulikoro, Sikasso, Ségou) and the district of Bamako (Figure 1). It encompasses one hundred and fourteen (114) municipalities, plus the urban municipality of Bamako and ten (10) circles.

The village of Famana is located at -7.85401 longitudes and 11.86006 latitudes in the Bougouni circle, 3km from the village of Keleya, which is the main city in the commune. Forest massif of the village covers a total area of 1,219 ha, and this belongs to the village of Famana (Fonabes, 2017b). This massif is mainly exploited for firewood and charcoal production. The climate is tropical wet. The rainfall varies between 800 mm to 1200 mm per year which is favorable to the growth of many types of species. The annual average temperature is varying between 25 °C to 30 °C. As for the relief, a few small elevations are scattered across the commune. In general, the relief is flat. The hydrographic network is very poor and intermittent streams drain torrential water just after heavy rains. Their soils present very shallow depth, a gravelly structure with an accumulation of organic matter, favorable to the savannah area in which some species are convenient for domestic energy.

The site of Kassela is located in the protected forest of Faya in the region of Koulikoro (2nd administrative region of Mali), surrounded by the circles of

Kati, Dioila, and Koulikoro. The RN6 (National roads) towards Ségou divides the massif into two distinct zones:

- To the south, the landscape is marked by vast Bowes which connects with the colluvium or alluvium near the rivers by fairly steep slopes (3 to 6%).
- In the North, the topography turns to a monotonous plain with a slope of around 1%. The climate is tropical and characterized by the rotation of three seasons (hot, cold and rainy).

The average rainfall recorded in the protected forest varies between 750 to 950 mm. The soil types encountered are depleted tropical ferruginous soils. These are pseudo-gley soils of depth with spots and concretions on clay colluvium at gravel level on shell. The hydrography of the protected forest of Faya is very rich. It is made up of the Faya River and its tributaries (Fardjalanko, Farako, Ounou, Solonko, Syenko, Zabanko, Sirakolobako, Tontanako, N'tjibougouko, Mousounko and Wankolen).

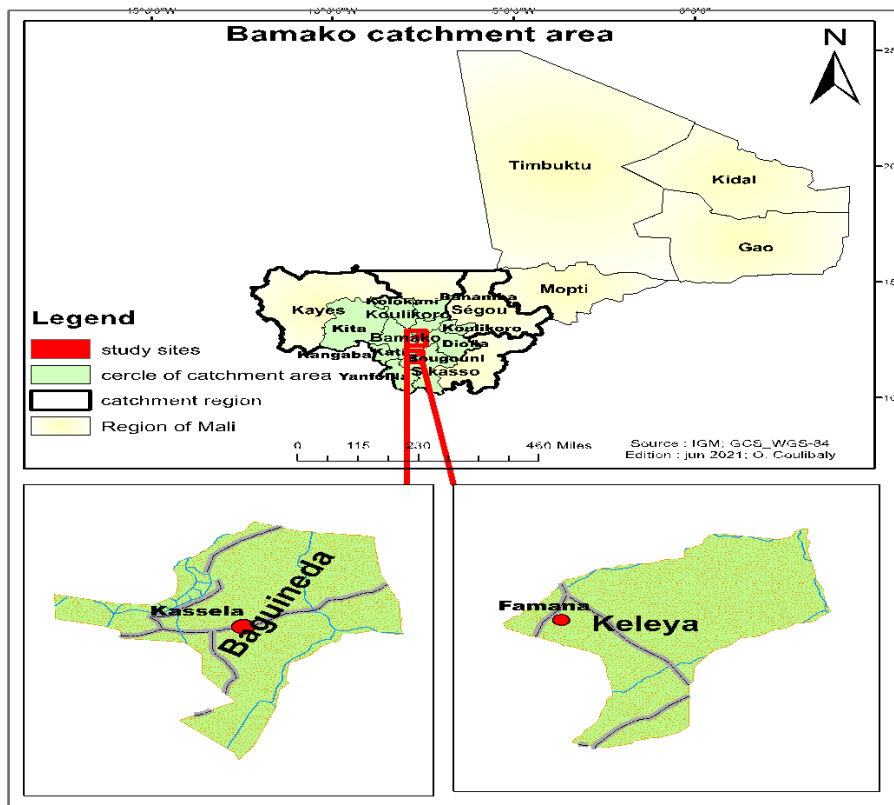


Figure 1. Bamako Catchment Area

## Methodological Approach

We used qualitative and quantitative method. The qualitative method involved documentary research, field observations, and interviews. The

quantitative method includes inventories of forest and questionnaire recorded with households in Bamako city.

### **Data Collection and Sampling**

Field survey included questionnaires submitted to households and wood fuel suppliers in the Bamako District. The questionnaires included open and closed questions to allow respondents to provide as much information as possible. Many of our respondents were illiterate people. Questions were translated into the local language Bambara, the most spoken language by all residents of Bamako. The inventory work was focused on counting species and diameter measurements of adult individual tree at 1.30cm from the ground called Diameter at Breast Height (DBH). Species having a diameter greater than 10cm were selected and measured in a predefined direction as indicated by Thiombiano et al. (2016).

### **Household and Wood Fuel Suppliers**

In total, 200 households were selected among residents within the six communes and 68 total neighborhoods of Bamako District by using multi-stage sampling. Multi-stage sampling is the process of selecting a sample with two or more successive stages (Statistique Canada, 2003). Neighborhoods were selected according to the mode of settlement, the formerly populated neighborhood, and the newly populated neighborhood. These neighborhoods were situated alongside both banks of the Niger River. The left bank was composed of old neighborhoods (Niarela, Bamako coura, Banconi and Hamdalaye) and the right bank of new neighborhoods (Kalaban coura, Yirimadio; Senou). In total, 7 neighborhoods were selected from those six communes in order to constitute the study sample. Systematic random sampling method was used to select households (Yiran et al., 2020). Thereafter, the random choice was used to select household heads or his representative in each dwelling. We then started with the neighborhood chiefs. From their houses, we continued in the same street and each 3rd house was selected (same process for the streets). The selection interval was randomly chosen. The use of systematic sampling method is justified by its simplicity, and it offers better precision. In order to obtain the numbers to be surveyed by neighborhood, we used the following formula:

$$\text{Sample size} = nh * N/NH$$

nh= number of households by neighborhood ; N= total number wanted  
(200)

NH= total of households in all neighborhood selected

In order to survey wood fuel suppliers, we assume that firewood and charcoal are sold in Bamako mainly in the central markets of every

neighborhood, along roads by individuals, or door to door by carts. In this study, we focused on market sellers and those along roads. We started by targeting the central markets in the selected neighborhoods. In total, 60 wood fuel suppliers were randomly selected in those different markets, and 10 others were selected along the main roads through the six municipalities of Bamako. In total, 70 wood fuel suppliers were interviewed.

### **Forest Inventory**

The fieldwork was conducted between May-June 2019. The inventory was focused on two sites (Famana and Faya). We have established 10 plots per site. Each plot measures 50 x 20m separated by 50m as indicated by Kakaï et al. (2016). In total, 4 ha were inventoried (2 ha per site). The site of Kassela was located in the protected forest of Faya (south side) and Famana, which is an old fallow land located to the east of the village. A random choice described by Kuma and Shibru (2015) was used to select these areas in order to avoid places populated by exotic species as much as possible. All collected firewood species were identified during field survey and the unidentified specimens were submitted to the national service of water and forests. We have used equipment such as:

- GPS to record the geographical coordinates of plots
- Measuring Tape of 5m, 30m, and 50m to measure the diameter of the inventoried species
- Stakes to delimit plots
- Data recording sheets and pencils to record all data collected

### **Data Analysis**

We used descriptive analysis performed by SPSS software, IBM 25, and Excel. Thereafter, data were sorted to determine the energy source preference of households. Forest inventory data were recorded in Excel software in order to compute the Shannon diversity index (H) and Shannon equitability (EH). The use of this mathematical formula helps to obtain a lot of information on forest such as forest diversity and evenness (Maishanu et al., 2019; Zimudzi et al., 2013). The formula is as follows:

$$H = - \sum_{i=1}^s p_i \ln p_i$$

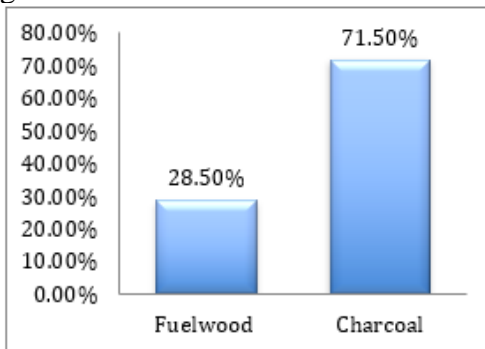
Where H is the Shannon index;  $\Sigma$  is the sum of the calculation;  $p_i = n_i / N$ ;  $n_i$  is the number of individual tree present for species  $i$ ,  $N$  is the total number of individuals;  $S$  is the total number of species;  $\ln$  is the natural log

$EH = H/H_{max}$  ; Where EH is Shannon equitability; H is the Shannon index;  $H_{max}$  is  $\ln S$

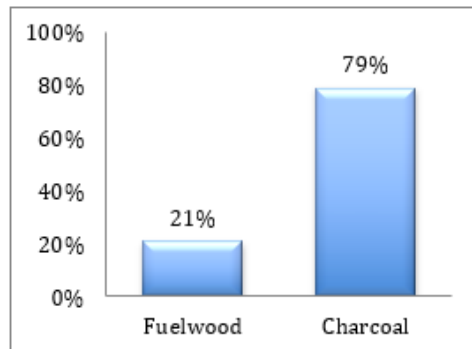
## Results

### Determinants of Wood Fuel Consumption in Bamako

We noticed that charcoal is the most consumed energy by households in Bamako (Figure 2 and 3). This study showed that 71.50% of household heads have declared to use charcoal, and 28.50% preferred firewood as their main source of energy. Among those 71.50% using charcoal, 79% of them claimed to associate butane gas. Among the 28.50% of firewood users, 21% use butane gas as well.



**Figure 2.** Main Energy Use by Bamako's Household

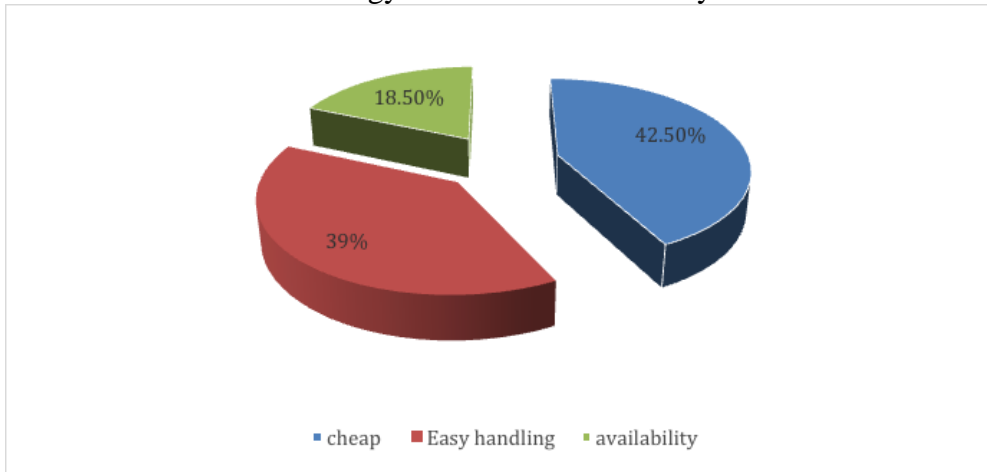


**Figure 3.** Household Combining Butane Gas with Wood Fuel Energy

The result showed the shift from firewood to charcoal consumption. In the city of Bamako, a great majority is stacking fuel (firewood, charcoal, and butane gas). Most of the household use butane gas as secondary energy to heat water and cook breakfast, but rarely for the main meals. The main reason behind this situation is the lack of financial resources. The findings revealed that 42.50% of households explained their choice by the low price of charcoal (poverty of households), and another 39% emphasized the easy handling of charcoal.

During the survey, some households reported that in rainy season, its use becomes more comfortable as it is very easy to procure and stack inside the kitchen. The stoves used for cooking foods are protected from humidity and rain. Around 18.50% emphasized the availability and the easy access because sellers are in every corners of the city. During the interviews, many head of households reported that they prefer to avoid butane gas because of its high cost and non-availability at all time. The cooking habits are considered to be another discouraging factor. Most traditional meals such as Toh (dish made of millet floor) beans and head of animals (lambs, beefs and goats) remain exclusively prepared with firewood. Therefore, this requires high calorific power and very long time of combustion. Some of them reported that

butane gas is not convenient for Malian context. As a result, butane gas has become a back-up source of energy because of its rapid use, and especially during the month of Ramadan for heating meals and boiling water for coffee. Household size, cooking habits, and lack of space in houses raise some fears in the event of fire. In many households, the use of gas tank is prohibited for maid and children. Moreover, its availability is not guaranteed throughout the year due to external dependency and incapacity of the government to pay subsidy to suppliers on time. Therefore, butane gas is perceived by households in Bamako as source of energy for the Western country.



**Figure 4.** Determinants of the Choice of Households

### Floristic Composition

The two sites selected have different floristic composition. The results showed that the site of Faya is abundant with species such as *Cassia sieberiana* (sinjan) with 92 individuals, *Lannea acida* (pekuni) with 72 individuals, *Combretum micranthum* (golobe) with 38 individuals, *Combretum glutinosum* (tiangara) with 32 individuals, *Anogeissus leiocarpus* (galama) with 21 individuals, *Vitellaria paradoxa* (shi) with 25 individuals, *Prosopis africana* (gelé) with 17 individuals, *Pterocarpus erinaceus* (guénou) with 16 individuals, and *Diospyros mespiliformis* (sunsun) with 14 individuals. In total, the site of Faya counts 32 species, 11 families, and 398 individuals (Table 1).

Regarding Famana site (Table 1), the dominant species are *Combretum glutinosum* (tiangara) with 76 individuals, *Detarium microcarpum* (taba koumba) with 56 individuals, *Combretum micranthum* (golobe) with 53 individuals, *Cassia sieberiana* (sinjan) with 44 individuals, *Guiera senegalensis* (kounjie) with 27 individuals, and *Afzelia africana* (lengué) with 20 individuals. Overall, the Famana site has 27 species, 11 families, and 486 individuals.

**Table 1.** Abundance of Species Recorded in Both Site

<b>Species</b>	<b>Faya</b>	<b>Famana</b>	<b>Total number of individuals</b>
<i>Acacia ataxacantha</i>	0	13	13
<i>Acacia macrostachya</i>	0	15	15
<i>Azelia africana</i>	0	20	20
<i>Anogeissus leiocarpus</i>	21	0	21
<i>Bombax costatum</i>	5	4	9
<i>Boscia senegalensis</i>	6	0	6
<i>Burkea africana</i>	0	6	6
<i>Carapa procera</i>	1	0	1
<i>Cassia sieberiana</i>	92	44	136
<i>Cola cordifolia</i>	0	9	9
<i>Combretum glutinosum</i>	32	76	108
<i>Combretum micranthum</i>	38	53	91
<i>Combretum molle/velutinum</i>	2	0	2
<i>Combretum nigricans</i>	6	0	6
<i>Combretum paniculatum</i>	0	1	1
<i>Cordia myxa</i>	6	0	6
<i>Cordyla pinnata</i>	0	2	2
<i>Crossopteryx februfiga</i>	0	18	18
<i>Detarium microcarpum</i>	3	56	59
<i>Dichrostachys cinerea</i>	1	0	1
<i>Diospiros mespiliformis</i>	14	0	14
<i>Entada africana</i>	2	0	2
<i>Grewia mollis</i>	3	6	9
<i>Guiera senegalensis</i>	0	27	54
<i>Isoberlinia doka</i>	0	13	26
<i>Lannea acida</i>	72	9	81
<i>Lannea microcarpa</i>	0	14	14
<i>Lannea velutina</i>	0	1	1
<i>Lonchocarpus laxiflorus</i>	1	0	1
<i>Opilia celtidifolia</i>	0	3	3
<i>Parkia biglobosa</i>	6	9	15
<i>Piliostigma reticulatum</i>	0	15	15
<i>Prosopis africana</i>	17	14	31
<i>Pseudocedrela kotschyi</i>	3	0	3
<i>Pteleopsis suberosa</i>	0	21	21
<i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i>	16	0	16
<i>Pterocarpus indicus</i>	0	5	5
<i>Pterocarpus lucens</i>	2	0	2

<i>Saba senegalensis</i>	0	2	2
<i>Tamarindus indica</i>	1	2	2
<i>Terminalia macroptera</i>	1	15	16
<i>Vitellaria paradoxa</i>	25	6	31
<i>Ximenia americana</i>	12	7	19
<i>Ziziphus mucronata</i>	10	0	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>923</b>

### Species Richness

During plots investigation, the following results were obtained (Table 2). The Shannon diversity index of Famana site and Faya site are 2.92 and 2.55 respectively. These results showed a high floristic diversity of the two sites because they are all above the standard limit of 2.5, which is considered as the threshold of high diversity. Meanwhile, the Shannon equitability of Famana and Faya sites, which have 0.85 and 0.77 respectively, has an even community. Equitability assumes a value between 0 and 1 with 1 being complete evenness. The closer to 1, the more the evenness of the plant community is significant. By comparing both sites, Famana site is more even than Faya.

**Table 2.** Diversity of Famana and Faya

Site of Famana		Site of Faya	
LAT: 11,86006		LAT: 12.5937	
LONG: -7,85401		LONG: -7.66084	
Abundance	486	398	
Density	243/ha	199/ha	
Number of species	30	27	
Shannon diversity index	2,92(2,5)	2,55(2,5)	
Equitability index	0,85 (1)	0,77 (1)	
Family	11	11	
Genre	22	23	

### Household Preference and Response of Forests

Household preference was studied according to the production potential of forest response in both sites. The result showed a high diversity of forests as the demand of household is increasing. Households were grouped by preference and compared to the supply capacity of Famana and Faya of each species. The following graph (Figure 5) indicates that a great potential of species such as *Combretum glutinosum*, *Combretum micranthum*, and *Lannea velutina* are very convenient for domestic combustion. These species appeared to have rapid regeneration rate and fit many types of ecological environments. However, species such as *Parkia biglobosa*, *Vittelaria paradoxa*, *Ficus gnaphalocarpa*, and *Khaya senegalensis* (protected species) are highly appreciated by households. They also have high economic value and are under serious threat. Households demand for these species exceeds the production



potential of woody formations. Despite the ban, the market is still illegally supplied with these species.

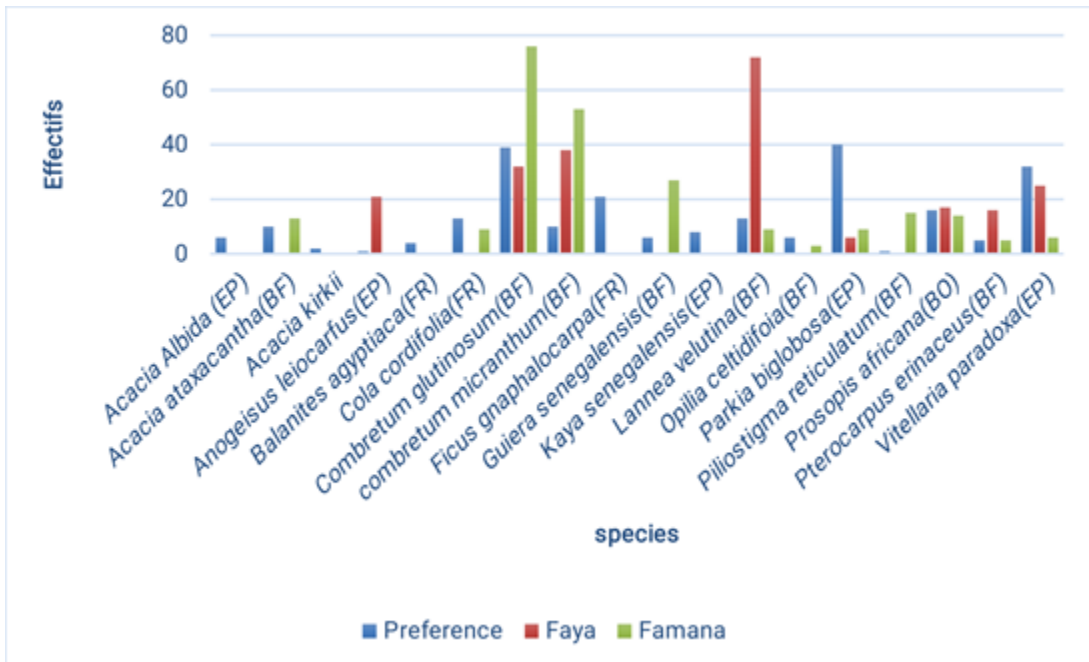


Figure 5. Household Preference and Forests Response

## Discussion

### Determinants of Wood Fuel Consumption

Energy transition is not yet reached in the Sahel countries (Gautier et al., 2007). This study reveals that charcoal is the most consumed energy by households in Bamako. The findings indicate that 42.50% of households justify their choice by the low price of charcoal (poverty of households), and another 39% emphasize the easy handling of charcoal. In rural areas, households use firewood, while in urban centers the choice is oriented towards charcoal combined with other modern energies (Doggart et al., 2020; Heltberg, 2004). In Bamako, charcoal is cheaper and available at every corner of the city. Additionally, low transportation cost, lack of smoke, and packing condition makes it more attractive as most formerly populated neighborhood have small size houses. High price of modern energy prevents low revenue households to buy it (Gazull et al., 2019). The poverty of households contributes significantly with 46.8% of households whose annual expenditure does not exceed 175,000 FCFA around \$130 (EMOP, 2020). The consumption of charcoal increases with urbanization in many Sahelian cities because of poverty (Ouedraogo, 2006). Zou and Luo (2019) states that low-income households prefer stacking fuel (firewood, charcoal, butane gas and electricity).

Urbanization through population growth increases the pressure on woody formation and become a major determinant (Babanyara & Saleh, 2010; Yiran et al., 2020). Population growth in the city of Bamako exposes many people to poverty because of unemployment. Volatility of price and unavailability of modern energy has led households to maintain their cooking habits. Furthermore, land speculation has changed the vocation of forests and cultivated lands (Diallo et al., 2020). This situation is aggravated with insufficient and poor distribution of precipitation. The decline in agricultural yields has brought peasants to uncontrolled loggings (Maiga et al., 2019). Nowadays, conflicts are recurrent between peasants, breeders, land speculators, and loggers in Bamako catchment area (Gautier et al., 2011).

Our findings are in line with Choumert-Nkolo et al. (2019), Gioda (2019), Onyeneke et al. (2015), Ouedraogo (2006), Sabuhungu (2016), and Sharma et al. (2019) studies. They indicate urbanization, poverty of households, and cooking habits as determinants of wood fuel consumption. These results are also similar to D'Agostino et al. (2015), who emphasize the packing condition, easy handling, and the absence of smoke. In most cities, firewood consumption is shifting to charcoal due to the preference of city dwellers. Charcoal has become more convenient and available in the city. The energy ladder hypothesis evoked by Choumert-Nkolo et al. (2019) indicates that the increase of the revenue of households reduces the use of traditional energies, which does not occur in Mali. As a result, we notice a shift from firewood to charcoal (Montagne, 2018). Firewood is no longer very appreciated by urban dwellers due to pollution generated and additional work required for its use.

### **Preference and Forests Diversity**

The two forests (Faya and Famana) are rich and much diversified with a Shannon diversity index of 2.92 for the site of Famana and 2.55 for the site of Faya. Despite high pressure on woody formations, they present a high diversity. The Famana fallow land is denser and more diversified than the Faya forest. In the Malian context, the fallow formation actively contributes to the production of fuel wood, especially if the collection only focuses on dead wood, as illustrated by Morton (2007) in Dafela region of Kita (Nouvellet et al., 2003). As Famana site is part of fallow land, located on the edge of Guinean climate with substantial rainfall, in the non-protected domain, the fertility of soils promotes rapid regeneration and growth of new species. The fallow time, which is normally 5 years, has been exceeded contributing to the high diversity. Furthermore, this zone has been long time spared from the pressure of rural wood markets, which are important determinants for the intensification of cuts (Hautdidier, 2007).

The protected forest of Faya very close to Bamako has been under exploitation since the colonial period. Firewood was exploited to run steam locomotive from Bamako to Dakar. Its location near Bamako with increasing population accentuated the pressure. In addition, the legislation enacted better management. Neighboring communities are still cutting firewood for commercial use, thereby preventing it to attain its full capacity of regeneration. These loggers as suppliers of wood markets infringe those restrictions (Raton, 2012). They have the feeling of being excluded by forest protection officers.

During exploitation, the rural communities have the choice to discriminate between species when cutting. However, we noticed a great potential of forests to provide species such as *Combretum glutinosum*, *Combretum micranthum*, and *Lannea velutina* which are ideally indicated for domestic combustion. They have a rapid regeneration capacity according to Ngom et al. (2012) and tolerate many types of ecological environment. Accordingly, its market offers great economic service to neighboring communities by alleviating poverty. The preference of households for these species is due to its accessibility and calorific power. They generate less pollution and produce more blazes. At the same time, they are very convenient to produce firewood and charcoal.

These results are confirmed by Kouyate et al. (2020) in the woody formations of Sikasso, in southern Mali, with shannon diversity index of 4.99 and that of Giliba et al. (2011) in the Miombo forest in Tanzania with Shannon diversity index of 4.27. The increasing demand for firewood and charcoal has not prevented the woody formation to be diversified. This disparity between a fallow land and forest is in line with another study undertaken in Southeast Angola by Goncalves et al. (2018), which presents that a diversity of fallow lands are greater than forests.

This situation predicts a better future for the consumption of wood fuel in the Bamako catchment area. Given the preference of households, the exploitation of species has become selective. They are selected according to their calorific value, the combustion time, and the degree of pollution generated. These selective cuttings have positive effects on woody formations in term of good management (Hosier, 1993). According to the findings of his study in Tanzania, selective logging for charcoal is a good technique for keeping forests alive. It demonstrates the great capacity of woody formation to regenerate. Verburg and Van Eijk-Bos (2003) agree with these findings by indicating that selective logging does not have negative impact on forest diversity. Therefore, it facilitates forest regeneration and the growth of new species.

Hall et al. (2003) in Central Africa found similar Shannon diversity index between exploited forest and unexploited forest with  $H = 1.89$  and  $H = 1.94$  respectively. In addition, the high intensity of forest exploitation for

firewood has low impact on the structure, composition, and regeneration of forests. Furthermore, it reduces the basal area of plant (Parrotta et al., 2002). Nowadays, the impact of selective harvesting depends on the intensity of cuts. If the intensity is low, it has less effect on forest degradation (Harun et al., 2017).

## Conclusion

This study showed that poverty, types of meals, and cooking techniques are the main determinants of the use of solid energies in Bamako. The preference of households is reducing the capacity of forests to meet the growing demand of urban households. Species, such as *Combretum glutinosum*, *Combretum micranthum*, and *Lannea velutina*, ideally indicated for firewood are in abundance. However, households demand for species such as *Vittelaria paradoxa*, *Ficus gnaphalocarpa*, and *Khaya senegalensis* (protected species), highly appreciated by households, surpass the production potential of woody formations. Consequently, forests are under serious threat due to population growth and rampant urbanization. In addition, loggings intensity in Bamako catchment area would have negative impact on forest regeneration. Although Famana and Faya site remain diversified, efforts need to be made in order to accelerate the energy transition. Despite numerous policies initiated to shift from traditional energies to modern energies, wood fuel sector has developed a strong resilience and remains the preferred cooking energy of urban dwellers. Stands diversity appeared as boosting factor even though questions remain regarding the capacity of woody formations to respond sustainably to the growing demand of populations. Due to the need to implement new policies to organize and regulate forests logging, it would be necessary to assess the regeneration capacity of forests and explore new alternatives (modern energies, reforestation) in order to guaranty a sustainable supply chain for Bamako households.

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## **Contraintes d'accès aux Soins de Santé Face à la Croissance Démographique de la Zone Sanitaire Ouidah/Kpomasse/Tori-Bossito**

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### **Résumé**

La nécessité, voire l'exigence de disposer des services de santé de qualité, accessibles géographiquement s'impose à une population sans cesse en croissance. Les infrastructures sanitaires, les équipements médicaux, la disponibilité du personnel soignant nécessaire pour accueillir et prendre en charge cette population font toujours défaut. La présente étude aborde les contraintes d'accès aux soins de santé face à l'explosion démographique de la zone sanitaire Ouidah/Kpomassè/Tori-Bossito. Les observations, la recherche documentaire et les travaux de terrain sont les principales étapes de la méthodologie adoptée. Les données utilisées ont été collectées auprès de 900 ménages et 78 personnes ressources. L'Indice de Confort Matériel (ICM) a été calculé pour déterminer le confort des enquêtés. Les Analyse Factorielle des

Composantes (AFC) ont été réalisées pour évaluer le lien entre l'accès aux soins de santé et les différentes variables indépendantes. Le modèle SWOT (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) a permis d'évaluer les contraintes liées à l'accessibilité aux soins face à la croissance démographique observée dans la zone sanitaire Ouidah/Kpomassè/Tori-Bossito (OKT). Les résultats ont révélé que la disponibilité, la répartition des infrastructures sanitaires et du personnel soignant, le confort matériel du ménage, l'état de praticabilité des voies d'accès aux centres de santé conditionnent l'accessibilité aux soins des ménages. Malgré les efforts fournis par l'Etat et les collectivités territoriales, l'offre de soins de santé est insuffisante au regard du croît démographique.

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**Mots-clés :** Ouidah/Kpomassè/Tori-Bossito, croissance démographique, contraintes, accès, soins de santé

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## **Constraints of Access to Health Care Facing the Demographic Growth of the Ouidah/Kpomasse/Tori-Bossito Health Zone**

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### **Abstract**

The need, indeed the requirement, to have quality health services that are geographically accessible is imposed on an ever-growing population. Health infrastructure, medical equipment and the availability of the nursing staff necessary to welcome and take care of this population are still lacking. This study addresses the constraints of access to healthcare in the face of the demographic explosion in the Ouidah/Kpomassè/Tori-Bossito health zone. Observations, documentary research and fieldwork are the main stages of the methodology adopted. The data used was collected from 900 households and 78 resource persons. The Material Comfort Index (ICM) was calculated to

determine the comfort of the respondents. The Component Factor Analysis (AFC) was carried out to assess the link between access to health care and the various independent variables. The SWOT model (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) made it possible to assess the constraints related to access to care in the face of the demographic growth observed in the Ouidah/Kpomassè/Tori-Bossito (OKT) health zone. The results revealed that the availability and distribution of health infrastructure and nursing staff, the material comfort of the household, the state of practicability of access routes to health centers condition access to household care. Despite the efforts made by the State and local authorities, the supply of health care is insufficient in view of the demographic growth.

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**Keywords:** Ouidah / Kpomassè / Tori-Bossito, population growth, constraints, access, health care

## **Introduction**

La zone sanitaire Ouidah/Kpomassè/Tori-Bossito (OKT) à l'instar des zones sanitaires du Bénin a connu une croissance démographique au cours des dernières décennies avec pour corollaire l'essoufflement du système public de santé qui n'arrive pas à s'adapter au rythme démographique (SANTANA, 2016). La population de la zone est passée de 151659 habitants en 1992 à 331689 habitants en 2018 (INSAE, 2013). Cette croissance démographique exerce une très grande influence sur l'évolution de la demande sociale notamment en matière de services de santé (PNDS, 2009). Le Bénin à l'instar des pays en développement, se trouve alors dans une situation délicate : la couverture sanitaire, mesurée en termes de disponibilité d'infrastructures, de densité ou de desserte médicales ou encore de lits d'hospitalisation, y est limitée (Richard, 2001). Malgré les efforts fournis par l'Etat et les autorités locales, l'offre de soins de santé n'arrive toujours pas à suivre la demande de la population de la zone OKT en matière de santé. Ainsi, une grande partie de la population se sent exclue, ou s'exclue du système de santé pour plusieurs raisons : accessibilité géographique, insuffisance de personnels soignants qualifiés, incapacité financière, etc.

Dans ce contexte où la croissance démographique a une influence inéluctable sur l'organisation et la structuration du système de santé du fait d'un déficit en ressources humaines et matérielles, il est impérieux d'étudier les contraintes actuelles à l'accessibilité aux soins de santé des communautés.

La présente recherche aborde donc la question des difficultés d'accès aux soins de santé dans un contexte d'accroissement démographique dans la zone sanitaire Ouidah/Kpomassè/Tori-Bossito. Elle présente la situation sanitaire actuelle de la zone d'étude, les gaps selon les normes de l'OMS et les contraintes à lever pour améliorer la situation.

La Zone sanitaire Ouidah/Kpomassè/Tori-Bossito est située au Sud du département de l'Atlantique entre 6°17'25'' et 6°37'27 de latitude Nord et entre 1°56'13'' et 2°16'29 de longitude Est (Bureau de zone OKT, 2020). Elle est limitée au Nord par la commune d'Allada, à l'Est par la zone sanitaire d'Abomey-Calavi et la commune de Zè, à l'Ouest par le lac Ahémé qui constitue une frontière naturelle avec le département du Mono, au Sud par l'Océan Atlantique sur une distance d'environ 60 km. La figure 1 présente les situations géographique et administrative de la zone sanitaire OKT.

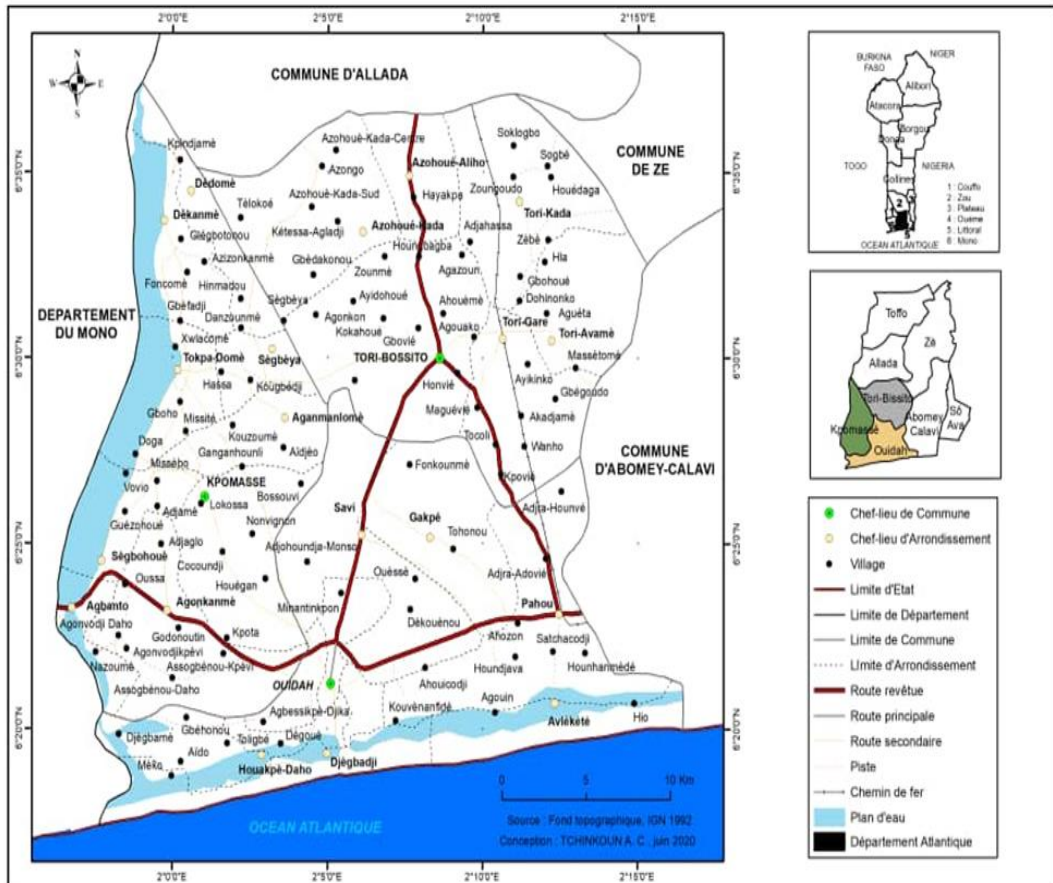


Figure 1 : Situations géographique et administrative de la zone sanitaire OKT

## 1. Données et Methodes

### 1.1. Données collectées

Pour étudier les difficultés d'accès aux soins de santé dans la zone OKT, des données quantitatives et qualitatives provenant de diverses sources ont été collectées. Il s'agit des données démographiques issues des recensements de la population de 1992, 2002 et 2013, de la répartition des

infrastructures sanitaires, de la disponibilité du personnel de santé, de la capacité financière des ménages.

## **1.2. Méthodes**

### **1.2.1. Collecte des données**

Le premier groupe cible est constitué des ménages des communes de Ouidah, Kpomassè et Tori-Bossito. A ces ménages s'ajoutent les autorités communales, les élus locaux et les responsables des différentes formations sanitaires publiques et privées de la zone sanitaire.

### **Matériels et outils de collecte des données**

Les matériels utilisés pour la collecte des données sont: un GPS pour relever les coordonnées géographiques des différentes formations sanitaires, un appareil photographique pour la prise des vues illustratives, l'application ODK Collect installée sur des tablettes pour la collecte des données socioéconomiques, un carnet de note et des porte-fiches. Trois outils d'investigation ont été utilisés. Il s'agit : d'un questionnaire à l'endroit des chefs de ménages, des guides pour les entretiens avec les agents de santé, les responsables des centres de santé communaux des trois communes de la zone sanitaire, les élus locaux des trois communes de la zone sanitaire et d'une grille d'observation.

Les données ont été collectées à travers les trois axes que sont : la recherche documentaire, les enquêtes puis les observations.

### **Echantillonnage et échantillon**

Compte tenu de la population d'étude, deux méthodes d'échantillonnage ont été retenues. Il s'agit de la méthode probabiliste appliquée aux groupes de ménages et la méthode non probabiliste qui a pris en compte les personnes ressources auprès de qui il a été collecté des informations relatives à la situation sanitaire de la zone OKT face à la croissance démographique.

Tous les arrondissements de la zone d'étude ont été impliqués dans la présente étude et leur échantillon représentatif est déterminé. Le nombre de ménage enquêtés a donc été défini par la méthode de SCHWARTZ (1995). Sa formule se présente comme suit :

$$N = \frac{Z\alpha^2 Pq}{d^2 x Fc}$$

Avec :

N : taille de l'échantillon

Z $\alpha$  : Niveau de confiance déduit du taux de confiance (1.96 pour 95%)

P : taux d'accroissement de la population de 2002 à 2013

q : 1-P

d : marge d'erreur égale à 5%

Fc : facteur de correction de l'effet grappe ici égal à 4

La taille de l'échantillon dans chaque commune est récapitulée dans le tableau I.

**Tableau I : Répartition par commune de l'échantillon**

<b>Communes</b>	<b>Effectif des ménages</b>	<b>Ménages à enquêter</b>
OUIDAH	36 459	405
KPOMASSE	15 280	270
TORI-BOSSITO	11 879	225
<b>OKT</b>	<b>63 618</b>	<b>900</b>

*Source : Résultats d'enquêtes et calculs, Janvier 2021*

### **1.2.2. Traitement des données et analyse de résultats**

La base de données obtenue a été apurée et les données exportées dans le logiciel SPSS, version 25.0 pour la tabulation. La tabulation a été réalisée grâce au même logiciel. La mise en forme des tableaux et graphiques a été faite avec les logiciels Excel 2013 et Word 2013. Une fois que la base de données est traitée, il a été procédé à des analyses.

Des analyses bi variée et multi variées sont faites pour comprendre les associations et les forces des relations entre la variable dépendante qu'est « l'accès aux soins de santé » et les variables indépendantes que sont « l'ICM », « le coût des services, des actes en santé », « l'effet de la distance sur l'utilisation des services de soins de santé », « la répartition des infrastructures sanitaires modernes publiques et privées », « la disponibilité de personnels soignants », « le niveau d'instruction des interrogés » et « l'état des voies d'accès ». Ces analyses sont faites pour apprécier la ou les variable (s) indépendante(s) qui influencent surtout la variable dépendante.

La zone tampon ou le buffer est une méthode d'analyse spatiale qui consiste à créer une zone d'extension aux dimensions définies (appelées rayon) par l'opérateur, autour d'un point, d'une ligne ou d'un polygone. Ainsi, des zones tampons de cinq (05) kilomètres de rayon ont été fixées autour des formations sanitaires publiques pour mettre en évidence les liens de proximité entre les formations sanitaires publiques et les populations. Des zones tampons d'un (01) kilomètre de rayon ont également été fixées autour des formations sanitaires publiques en estimant que cette distance est suffisamment petite pour être parcourue à pied avec les jeunes enfants, les vieilles personnes et en peu de temps.

## 2. Resultats et Discussion

L'offre de soins de santé en quantité et en qualité, continue d'être un casse-tête pour les pouvoirs publics béninois qui sont confrontés aux défis de la pression démographique. Cette situation est aggravée avec le contexte démographique actuel.

### 2.1. Caractéristiques de la population de la zone sanitaire OKT

Les caractéristiques démographiques de la zone sanitaire OKT peuvent être appréhendées grâce aux indicateurs de valeurs absolus (taille de la population, densité) analysés à travers le tableau II.

**Tableau II :** Evolution de la population et des densités par commune

Communes	Sup au km <sup>2</sup>	Populati on en 1992	Densité en 1992	Populati on en 2002	Densité en 2002	Populati on en 2013	Densité en 2013	Populati on estimée en 2018	Densité estimée en 2018
Ouidah	337	64433	192	76555	228	162034	481	187064	555
Kpomassè	294	50059	170	57190	194	67648	230	78098	266
Tori-Bossito	329	37167	113	44569	136	57632	175	66535	202
OKT	960	151659	159	178314	186	287314	296	331697	341

Les résultats des Recensements Généraux de la population et de l'habitat RGPH (1992 à 2013) et la projection en 2018 faite par l'INSAE (Institut National de la Statistique et de l'Analyse Economique) montrent que la population de la zone sanitaire OKT a augmenté de façon significative passant de 151659 habitants en 1992 à 331697 habitants en 2018, soit un coefficient multiplicateur de 2,19. La densité de population de la zone OKT quant à elle, est passée de 159hab/km<sup>2</sup> en 1979 à 341hab/km<sup>2</sup>. Elle est en forte croissance dans toutes les communes à ces différentes dates. Cette pression de la croissance démographique est appréhendée dans la zone d'étude à partir des contraintes sur l'offre des services de soins de santé.

### 2.2. Couverture en infrastructures sanitaires et normes selon l'OMS dans la zone OKT

Bien que le taux de couverture en infrastructures sanitaires soit acceptable pour l'ensemble de la zone, l'offre publique de services de santé est encore insuffisante, au regard de la taille de la population. Les normes OMS en matière d'infrastructures sanitaires sont d'un hôpital de zone pour 150.000 habitants, un centre de santé de commune pour 50.000 habitants et un centre de santé d'Arrondissement pour 10.000 habitants (OMS citée par BONI (2014)). Le tableau 3 présente la disponibilité des infrastructures sanitaires publiques de la zone OKT et les normes selon l'OMS.



**Tableau III : Normes OMS et Infrastructures sanitaires publiques de la zone OKT**

	Pop totale en 2018	HZ disponible	HZ/normes de l'OMS	CSC disponible	CSC/normes de l'OMS	CSA disponible	CSA/normes de l'OMS	Besoins en infrastructures
<b>Kpomassè</b>	78098		1	1	2	9	8	<b>1 CSC</b>
<b>Ouidah</b>	187064		1	1	4	14	19	<b>3 CSC, 5 CSA</b>
<b>Tori-Bossito</b>	66535		0	1	2	8	7	<b>1 CSC</b>
<b>Total ZS OKT</b>	<b>331697</b>	1	2	3	8	31	36	<b>1HZ, 5CSC, 5CSA</b>

*Source : Résultats d'enquêtes et calculs, Janvier 2021*

*HZ : Hôpital de zone ; CSC : Centre de Santé Communal ; CSA : Centre de Santé d'Arrondissement*

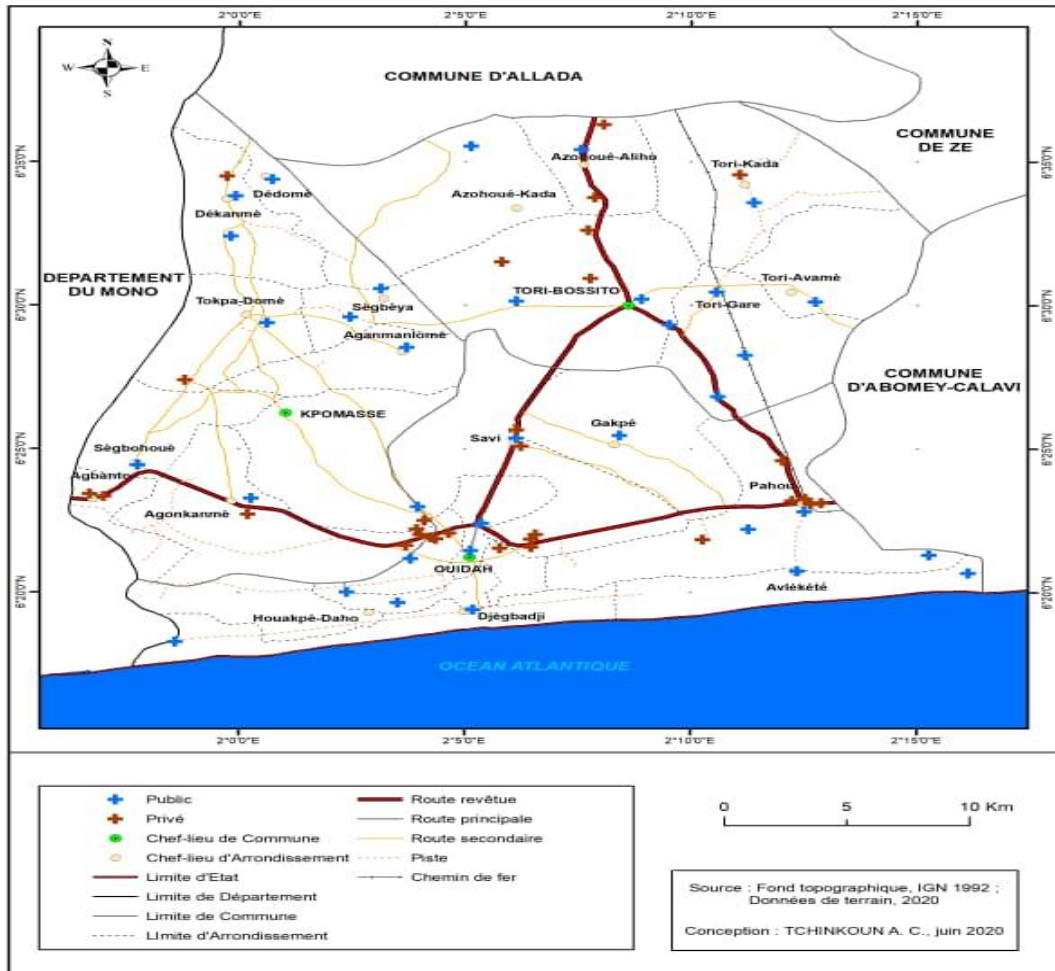
De l'analyse des résultats du tableau III, il ressort que des efforts ont été fournis par l'Etat et les collectivités locales dans la construction des infrastructures sanitaires dans la zone sanitaire OKT. Sur les 36 CSA et 8 CSC nécessaires selon les normes de l'OMS, 31 CSA et 3 CSC sont en activité. Il ne reste donc que 10 centres de santé à construire sur 45 soit une couverture d'infrastructure sanitaire de 77,77%. Selon les normes de l'OMS, la zone sanitaire OKT devrait avoir deux (2) hôpitaux de zone mais elle n'en a qu'un seul.

La réorganisation du système sanitaire béninois intervenu en 1997, prévoit une zone sanitaire pour une population allant de 100.000 à 200.000 habitants. La zone sanitaire compte aujourd'hui environ 331.697 habitants mais reste toujours avec une seule zone sanitaire.

Il a été remarqué au cours des enquêtes que peu d'infrastructures disponibles sont conformes aux normes de l'OMS surtout dans la Commune de Ouidah où les centres de santé sont vétustes, et ne disposent pas de logement pour le personnel soignant. Il faut noter qu'au cours de la période de 2012 à 2017, le plateau technique de la zone sanitaire a connu une amélioration grâce au Financement Basé sur les Résultats (FBR).

Les arrondissements de Ouidah IV et d'Agbanto n'ont pas encore de centre de santé d'arrondissement alors que le nombre d'habitants dans ces localités est sans cesse croissant. D'après le dernier recensement général de la population et de l'habitation (RGPH4) de 2013, les arrondissements de Ouidah IV et Agbanto comptaient respectivement 9475 et 5694 habitants (INSAE, 2013). C'est le centre de santé privé " Adolph kolping" qui fait office de centre de santé d'arrondissement dans l'arrondissement de Agbanto. L'absence de centre de santé dans l'arrondissement de Ouidah IV rend les populations plus vulnérables à toutes sortes de maladies surtout pour rallier un centre de santé de niveau périphérique.

La figure 2 présente la répartition des infrastructures sanitaires dans la zone sanitaire OKT.



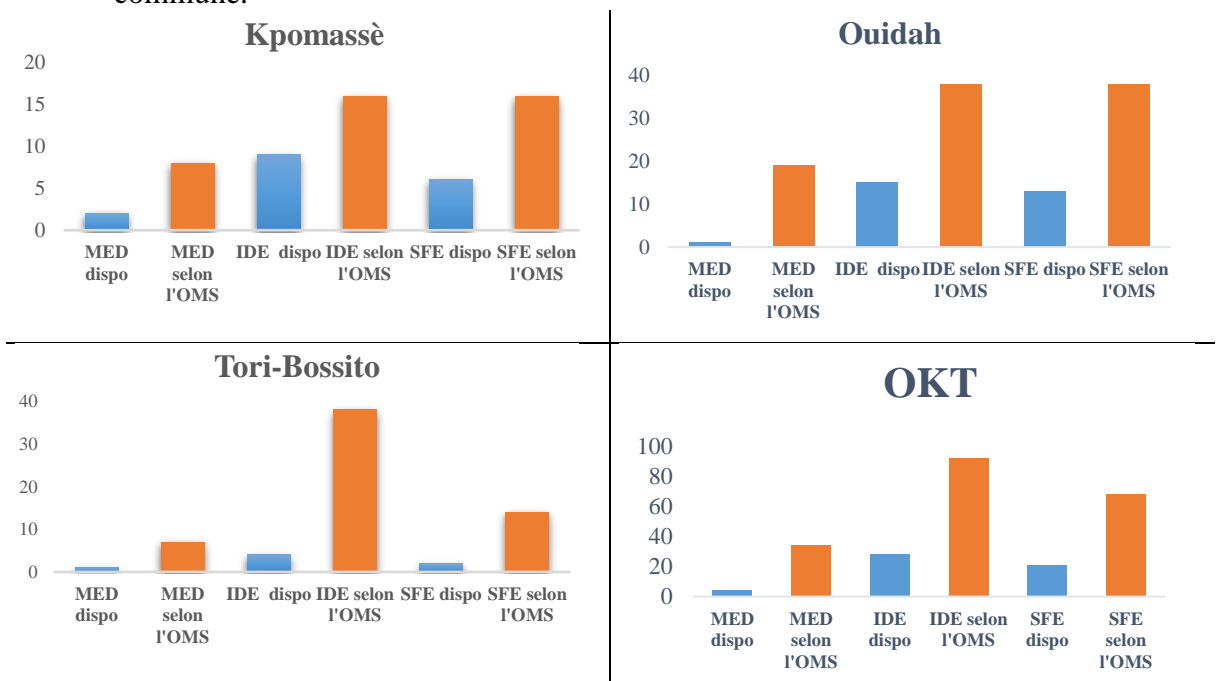
**Figure 2:** Répartition des infrastructures sanitaires dans la zone OKT

De la figure 2, on retient que la zone sanitaire dispose de trente-cinq (35) centres de santé publics fonctionnels, de deux (02) centres de détection de la tuberculose, d'un (01) centre de détection de la lèpre, de trente-cinq (35) centres de santé privés autorisés et de deux (02) centres confessionnels. La commune de Kpomassè dispose de dix (10) centres de santé publics fonctionnels, de trois centres de santé publics non fonctionnels et de quatre (04) centres de santé privés autorisés. La commune de Ouidah dispose quant à elle de seize (16) centres de santé publics fonctionnels, d'un centre de santé public non fonctionnels, d'un centre de détection de la tuberculose, d'un centre de détection de la lèpre, d'un centre de santé confessionnel et de vingt-six (27)

centres de santé privés autorisés. Celle de Tori-Bossito compte neuf (9) centres de santé publics tous fonctionnels et cinq (5) centres de santé privés autorisés. On remarque une inégale répartition spatiale des centres de santé dans la zone d'étude. Cela s'explique par le fait que pour des raisons politiques, certaines autorités ou élus locaux exercent une influence pour dévier dans leur localité l'installation des infrastructures de santé.

### 2.3. Personnel soignant

De nombreux spécialistes sont déployés dans les formations sanitaires de la zone OKT pour répondre à la demande en soins de santé des populations. En se référant à la taille de la population, on pourrait s'interroger sur l'effectif du personnel disponible et les réels besoins sanitaires de ces populations. Pour mesurer la relation entre la densité de la population et l'effectif du personnel soignant disponible, les ratios médecin/habitants, IDE/habitants et celui SFE/habitants sont calculés en tenant compte des normes de l'OMS qui sont de 1 Médecin pour 10 000 habitants, 1 IDE pour 5000 habitants et 1 SFE pour 5000 habitants (OMS citée par BONI (2014)). La figure 3 présente la comparaison du personnel de santé disponible aux normes de l'OMS par commune.



**Figure 3 :** Comparaison du personnel de santé disponible aux normes de l'OMS par commune et dans la zone sanitaire OKT

Source : Résultats d'enquêtes et calculs, Janvier 2021

IDE : Infirmier Diplômé d'Etat ; SFE : Sage-femme d'Etat ; MED : Médecin

L'analyse de la figure 3 montre qu'il y a quelques disparités entre les aires sanitaires. En effet, le ratio de 1 médecin pour 10.000 habitants n'est atteint dans aucune des communes. La zone sanitaire OKT compte trois (04) médecins sur les trente-quatre (35) qu'il en faut.

Il existe un grand écart entre l'effectif de médecin disponible en rapport avec la taille de la population. Un recrutement de trente et un (30) médecins s'impose pour toute la zone sanitaire. Le même phénomène est observé au niveau des Infirmiers Diplômés d'Etat (IDE). Sur les quatre-vingt-douze (92) infirmiers diplômés d'Etat dont la zone sanitaire a besoin pour répondre aux attentes sanitaires de la population selon les normes de l'OMS, elle n'en compte que vingt-huit (28). Un équilibre s'impose alors avec une mutation de cinquante-quatre (54) IDE.

Les centres de santé tels que : Houakpè-Daho, Ganlononcodji, Adouanko, Houndjava, Djègbadji, Djondji, Akadjamè, Kpassè, Ouidah2, Aganmalomè, Agonkanmey, Dékanmè, Avamè, Azohouè-Aliho, Azohouè-Cada, Acadjamè, Houénonko, Hèkandji n'ont pas d'IDE. Certains centres disposent d'au moins 01 IDE mais aucun ne respecte les normes de l'OMS en rapport avec le personnel IDE disponible. Un recrutement de soixante-quatre (64) IDE s'impose donc à l'Etat et aux collectivités locales afin de respecter les normes de l'OMS.

L'effectif des sages-femmes d'Etat (SFE) dans tous les CSA est inférieur à la norme de l'OMS. Aucun des CSA ne respecte les normes de l'OMS en rapport avec le personnel SFE disponible. Un recrutement de quarante-sept (47) SFE est nécessaire pour répondre aux besoins actuels des populations.

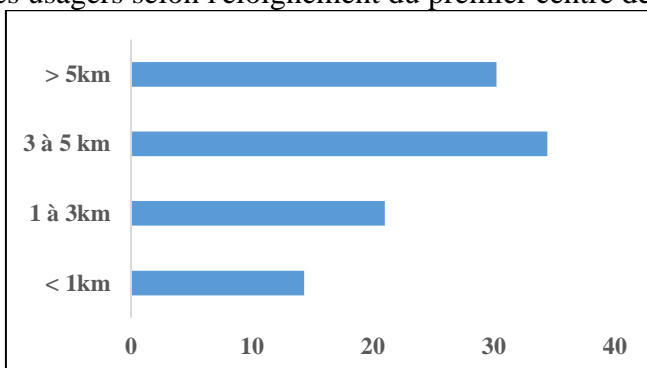
On retient que le personnel soignant est insuffisant malgré les efforts fournis par l'Etat pour recruter du personnel dans les centres de santé de la zone OKT. Certains centres de santé ne disposent pas d'infirmiers diplômés d'Etat et de sages-femmes et tout repose souvent sur les aides-soignantes et/ou infirmières brevetées qui ne sont pas habilités à administrer des soins. La preuve que le problème est beaucoup plus au niveau du personnel soignant que des infrastructures sanitaires. Toutefois, chacun des centres souffre du manque soit de salle d'hospitalisation, de laboratoire, de boîtes à pansement, de lits, de tensiomètre, de tables d'accouchement, ou d'obus d'oxygène, etc.

#### **2.4. Contraintes géographiques de l'accès aux soins de santé dans la zone sanitaire OKT**

La friction de la distance a un impact sur le recours aux soins de santé. Or atteindre un centre de santé suppose qu'il faut franchir une distance, un certain nombre d'obstacles lié au relief, aux voies d'accès, etc.

### ***Répartition des usagers selon l'éloignement du premier centre de santé***

Plus un centre de santé est proche, plus vite on peut s'y rendre et plus il est loin, plus on a des difficultés pour y aller. La figure 4 présente la répartition des usagers selon l'éloignement du premier centre de santé.



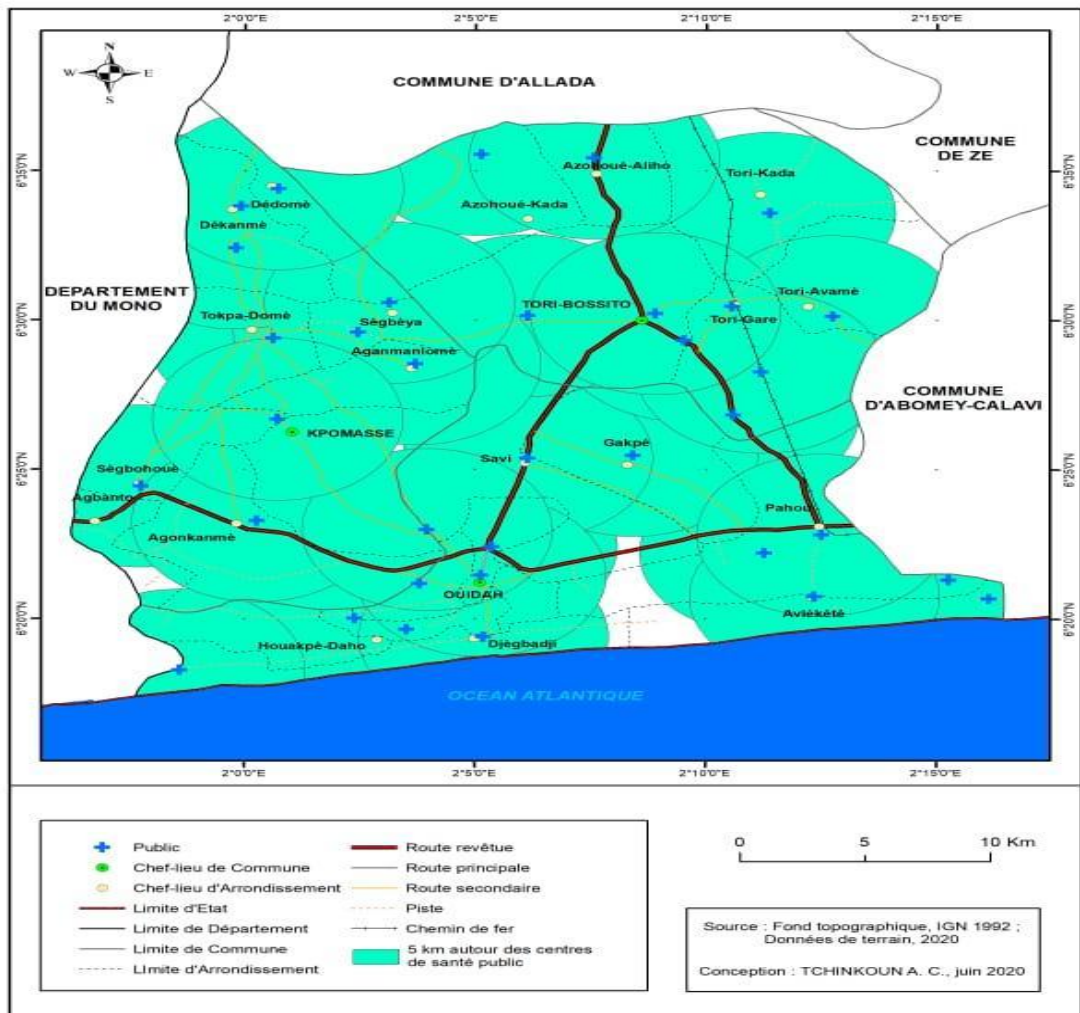
**Figure 4 :** Répartition des usagers selon l'éloignement du premier centre de santé dans la zone OKT

*Source : Résultats d'enquêtes de terrain, février 2021*

On retient de l'analyse de la figure 4 que 30,22% des ménages se trouvent à plus de 5 kilomètres du premier centre de santé. L'éloignement des centres de santé publics oblige les malades soit à rester chez eux et pratiquer l'automédication, soit à s'intéresser aux guérisseurs traditionnels ou à aller vers des centres de santé privés qui sont moins éloignés. Dans le même sens, 48,3% des personnes enquêtées estiment qu'il leur faut trente (30) minutes pour se rendre dans le centre de santé qu'ils fréquentent à pieds. Ceci pose un véritable problème d'accessibilité géographique aux centres de santé publics.

### ***Méthode des zones tampons***

Le maillage géographique des centres de santé publics justifie le temps de parcours pour s'y rendre. Selon l'OMS, le premier centre de santé doit être au plus à 5 km des populations (OMS citée par BONI (2014)). Les zones tampons de 5 km de rayon autour des formations sanitaires publiques dans la zone sanitaire OKT sont présentées par la figure 5.



**Figure 5 :** Zones tampons de 5 km de rayon autour des formations sanitaires publiques dans la zone sanitaire OKT

Il ressort de l'analyse de la figure 5, que les zones tampons de 5km définies autour des formations sanitaires publiques se chevauchent largement. Ce maillage montre que la couverture sanitaire de la zone OKT est dense et donc les formations sanitaires publiques peuvent être ralliées facilement par les populations. Toutefois quelques déserts sanitaires ou espaces de ségrégation sanitaire sont observés à : Lokossa dans l'arrondissement de Aganmalomè, à Vovio dans l'arrondissement de Sègbohouè, à Doga et Missèbo dans l'arrondissement de Kpomassè centre, à Nazoumè dans l'arrondissement de Agbanto et à Ahouicodji et Adjra-Hounvè dans l'arrondissement de Pahou. La grande superficie de la zone sanitaire (ZS) OKT (960km<sup>2</sup>) est à la base de ces poches de déserts sanitaires.

### ***Etat de praticabilité des voies***

La fréquentation des centres de santé dépend surtout de la praticabilité des voies d'accès. Certains phénomènes rendent parfois difficile le parcours pour atteindre les centres de santé. Les pistes et voies non bitumées sont pour la plupart très dégradées dans la zone sanitaire du fait surtout de l'inondation alors qu'elles sont les plus pratiquées par la population pour aller dans leur centre de santé. En effet les voies d'accès aux centres de santé dans la zone sanitaire sont pour la plupart impraticable et ce en toute saison du fait des sols, des pentes et surtout des précipitations. Seules les voies menant vers les centres de santé de Ganlononcodji, Kpassè, Kpoviè, Savi, Kindji, Kouénonko, Azohouè Aliho, Tori-Bossito, Sègbohouè, Adolphkolping, Pouponière, CS Kpassèton, Clinique Beaux Bébés, Dispensaire St Camille de Sègbanou sont praticables à cause de leurs situations géographiques. Ces centres de santé sont en fait situés au bord ou non loin des voies bitumées. Cette impraticabilité des voies rend difficile l'accès aux soins de santé dans la zone sanitaire OKT. La photo 1 illustre l'état de la voie menant vers l'hôpital de zone qui est le premier centre de référence de la zone sanitaire OKT.



**Photo 1 :** Voie menant à l'Hôpital de zone OKT impraticable  
(Carrefour Gbèna dans l'arrondissement de Ouidah 2)  
*Prise de vue: TCHINKOUN, juin 2021*

La photo 1 montre une vue partielle de la voie menant à l'hôpital de zone OKT. La voie d'accès à l'hôpital de zone n'étant pas bitumée, elle présente tout le long de l'année un état de dégradation. Elle est parfois rechargée par la mairie mais ce reprofilage ne règle que temporairement et à court terme le problème qui malheureusement demeure à moyen terme. Elle est très souvent impraticable surtout en saison pluvieuse. Ceci pose un problème crucial pour l'accessibilité aux soins de santé étant donné que cet hôpital est le seul Hôpital de référence de la zone sanitaire.

## 2.5. Capacité financière des enquêtés dans la zone sanitaire OKT

Accéder aux services de santé, suppose que l'on ait les ressources financières nécessaires pour faire face aux coûts des différents actes. Le revenu du ménage, sa taille, c'est à dire le nombre de personnes à charge du chef de ménage influence l'itinéraire de soins de ceux qui ont des contraintes budgétaires selon Djigbenoudé cité par (TCHAOU, 2013 p. 23). L'indice de confort matériel a donc été calculé afin d'apprécier le niveau de vie et le confort des populations enquêtées en relation avec leur prise de décision. Le tableau 4 présente le récapitulatif du confort matériel des enquêtés.

**Tableau IV :** Confort matériel des enquêtés

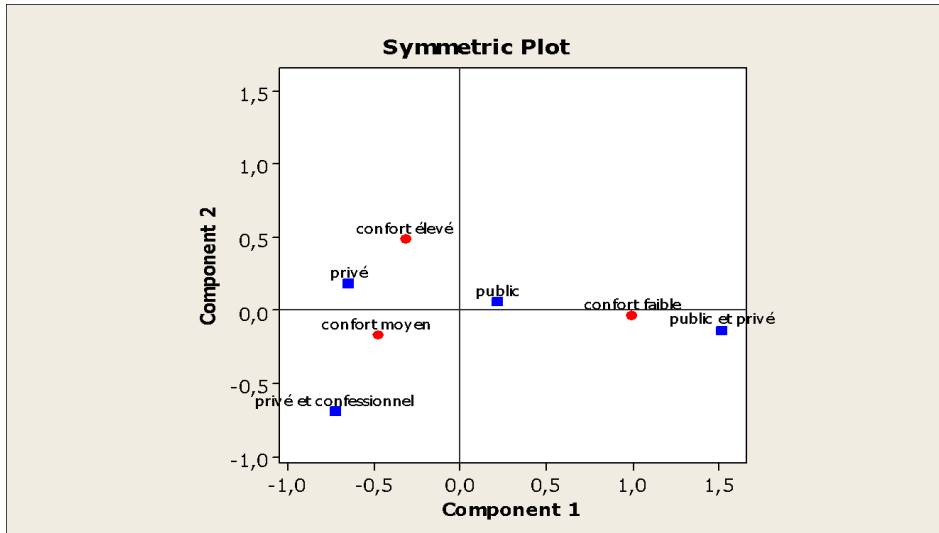
	<b>Effectifs</b>	<b>%</b>
confort faible	270	30
confort moyen	450	50
confort élevé	180	20
Total	900	100

L'analyse du tableau IV montre que 30% des enquêtés vivent dans un confort faible, 50% dans un confort moyen et 20% dans un confort élevé. On en déduit donc que les populations de la zone OKT ont un niveau de vie plutôt acceptable. Le niveau de vie étant l'un des facteurs majeurs qui empêchent les populations d'utiliser les services de soins de santé moderne, une corrélation a été faite pour apprécier la relation entre le niveau de vie du ménage et l'utilisation des types de centres de santé modernes.

### *Analyse de la relation entre l'ICM et l'utilisation des centres de santé modernes*

Pour déterminer l'utilisation des différents types de centres de santé, une analyse factorielle des correspondances simple (AFC) a été effectuée sur le confort matériel des enquêtés. Les résultats de cette analyse révèlent que le premier axe explique à lui seul 87.47 % des informations obtenues (figure 6), ce qui est largement suffisant pour faire une bonne synthèse des informations.





**Figure 6 :** Représentation des variables sur les plans factoriels 1 et 2  
 Source : Analyse des résultats, juin 2020

L'analyse factorielle retient deux axes factoriels (figure 6). A l'axe factoriel 1 sont corrélées toutes les variables sauf la variable confort élevé qui est corrélée à l'axe 2. Les variables "confort faible", "CS public", "CS public et privé" sont corrélées positivement tandis que les variables "confort moyen", "CS privé" et "CS privé et confessionnel" sont corrélées négativement. La variable "confort élevé" est corrélée quant à elle positivement à l'axe factoriel 2. On en déduit que les populations utilisent tous les types de centres de santé quel que soit le confort. Mais les centres de santé publics sont plus utilisés par les populations vivant dans un confort faible faute de moyens financiers. Le coût des prestations pourrait donc être l'une des raisons qui amènent les populations à fréquenter les centres de santé publics.

### Analyse de la relation entre l'ICM et le recours à l'automédication

**Tableau V :** Corrélation entre l'ICM et le recours à l'automédication

ICM	Proportion des enquêtés ayant recouru à l'automédication en fonction du confort
confort faible	72.22
confort moyen	80
confort élevé	10
<b>Chi2 = 29 ***      V de Cramer = 0,492 ***</b>	
Test significatif à 1 % (***), à 5 % (**), Non significatif (ns)	

Source : Analyse des résultats, juin 2020

L'analyse du tableau 5 montre une corrélation modérée (V de Cramer = 0,492) entre le confort matériel du ménage et le recours à l'automédication.

On retient que, ce sont les ménages qui vivent dans des confort faibles ou moyens c'est-à-dire qui ont des contraintes budgétaires qui s'adonnent plus à l'automédication. Les 10% d'enquêtés vivant dans un confort élevé et ayant recours à l'automédication montrent que les populations s'adonnent à l'automédication indépendamment du confort dans lequel ils vivent. Le manque de temps, la récurrence des épisodes morbides et la facilité d'acquisition de médicaments pour des symptômes d'une affection déjà traitée sont entre autres des facteurs prédisposant les populations à adopter, en première instance l'automédication. Le recours à l'automédication ne dépend donc pas du confort dans lequel vit le ménage. Notons que le paiement des coûts de services et soins de santé et des médicaments dépend fortement du niveau de vie du ménage.

L'évaluation de l'accès aux soins de santé montre que le système de santé du milieu d'étude est défaillant. De fait, l'offre de soins est très peu respectueuse des normes de l'OMS. Cette situation trouve son fondement dans la croissance incontrôlée de la population qui se fait ressentir sur d'autres facteurs à savoir le déficit d'infrastructures sanitaires, la carence en ressources humaines. D'autres facteurs que sont l'impraticabilité des voies d'accès aux centres de santé, l'incapacité financière d'une certaine tranche de la population à souffrir des soins de qualité menacent également le système de santé dans le milieu d'étude

## **Discussion**

Les politiques sanitaires actuelles n'arrivent pas encore à suivre la croissance de la population. Pour preuve, la zone sanitaire compte environ 331.697 habitants mais reste toujours avec une seule zone sanitaire alors que la réorganisation du système sanitaire béninois intervenu en 1997, prévoit une zone sanitaire pour une population allant de 100.000 à 200.000 habitants. Aussi, peu d'infrastructures disponibles sont conformes aux normes de l'OMS surtout dans la Commune de Ouidah où les centres de santé sont non seulement pour la plupart vétustes, mais ne disposent pas non plus de logement pour le personnel soignant. L'absence de centre de santé dans certains arrondissements comme celui de Ouidah IV rend les populations plus vulnérables à toutes sortes de maladies. Ces résultats concordent avec ceux de Zondji (2019) qui selon les résultats de ses recherches sur la dynamique démographique et l'accès aux soins de santé modernes dans la zone sanitaire Allada-Toffo-Zè affirme que malgré les efforts fournis par l'Etat pour améliorer l'accès aux soins dans les hameaux du pays, l'offre publique de services de santé est encore insuffisante, au regard de la taille de la population. Abondant dans le même sens, Lerberghe et ses pairs (1997) affirment que le premier défi de bon nombre de pays en développement reste la mise en place effective d'un système de santé de base. Dans beaucoup de pays, la couverture

sanitaire des populations rurales reste incomplète. En termes d'infrastructures, les systèmes de santé sont souvent en retard sur une croissance démographique soutenue.

Le nombre de cas de la plupart des pathologies augmente au fil des années avec l'évolution démographique ce qui induit une augmentation des besoins en personnel de santé. Aucun des ratios médecin / habitants, IDE / habitants et SFE / habitants ne respecte les normes de l'OMS (1 Médecin pour 10 000 habitants, 1 IDE pour 5000 habitants et 1 SFE pour 5000 habitants) dans la zone sanitaire. Alors qu'en dessous de ces différents seuils, la qualité des soins peut se dégrader en termes d'accueil des patients, de leur suivi et de la célérité dans les prestations. Certains centres de santé ne disposent pas d'infirmiers diplômés d'Etat et de sages-femmes et tout repose souvent sur les aides-soignantes et/ou infirmières brevetées qui ne sont pas habilités à administrer des soins. Pour les communes de la zone sanitaire, on note un taux de couverture de 8.82% de médecin, 30.43% d'infirmiers d'Etat et 30.88% de sages-femmes d'Etat. Cette insuffisance quantitative en personnel de santé affecte négativement la qualité des soins offerts aux populations de la zone OKT. Ces résultats confirment ceux obtenus par Zambo (2012) et Tchaou (2013) sur les facteurs associés aux recours aux soins de santé primaires dans les formations sanitaires. Marchal (2003) vient confirmer que l'insuffisance d'un personnel qualifié est une autre contrainte majeure de l'offre de soins. Formé en nombre insuffisant, ce dernier est également mal distribué. Partout, les zones rurales restent mal couvertes.

La question de l'accès se pose également en termes de disponibilité de l'offre de soins. Le maillage géographique des centres de santé publics montre que la couverture sanitaire de la zone OKT est dense avec le rayon de 5 km et donc les formations sanitaires publiques peuvent être ralliées facilement par les populations. Toutefois quelques déserts sanitaires ou espaces de ségrégation sanitaire sont observés. Aussi, les pistes et voies non bitumées sont pour la plupart très dégradées dans la zone sanitaire du fait surtout de l'inondation alors qu'elles sont les plus pratiquées par la population pour aller dans leur centre de santé. Les résultats obtenus confirment les conclusions de l'OMS en 1995 qui stipulent que : la distance constitue un facteur très déterminant dans l'accès aux centres de santé. L'accessibilité physique et l'effet de distance sont de ce fait des variables indépendantes importantes dans le choix du type de recours aux services, aux soins de santé modernes. Ces résultats concordent également avec ceux de Franckel (2004) qui montre que l'éloignement par rapport aux structures sanitaires a une incidence majeure sur les pratiques thérapeutiques : la propension à consulter en structure sanitaire diminue avec la distance et, au contraire, la pratique d'automédication augmente.

Accéder aux services de santé, suppose que l'on ait les ressources financières nécessaires pour faire face aux coûts des différents actes. Les résultats sociologiques montrent que le confort et la taille du ménage influence l'itinéraire de soins surtout de ceux qui ont des contraintes budgétaires. Ces résultats concordent avec ceux de Franckel (2004) qui montre que les pratiques thérapeutiques des différents ménages varient en fonction du statut économique et social de la cellule familiale : les cellules familiales de grande taille, qui jouissent d'une position avantageuse, consultent plus en structure sanitaire, alors que la précarité économique des ménages comptant un petit nombre d'enfants explique leur moindre propension à consulter en structure sanitaire.

### **Conclusion**

La présente étude expose les contraintes liées à l'accès aux soins de santé face à l'explosion démographique de la zone sanitaire Ouidah/Kpomassè/Tori-Bossito. Au terme de cette étude, l'on retient que le sous-système de santé de la zone sanitaire OKT, s'il s'insère dans le système national de santé ne répond plus aux normes démographiques actuelles et présente des dysfonctionnements qui l'empêchent de répondre à la demande d'une population croissante. Il y a donc urgence pour les autorités du secteur de la santé d'accompagner véritablement la croissance de la population en mettant à sa disposition des établissements hospitaliers et un nombre suffisant de professionnels de santé à la mesure de l'évolution démographique de ladite population. La construction des voies et la mise en œuvre des projets de mutuel de santé par l'Etat aideront à corriger les insuffisances de l'offre de soins dans la zone OKT.

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