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## ***Generativity is a Core Value of the ESJ: A Decade of Growth***

Erik Erikson (1902-1994) was one of the great psychologists of the 20th century<sup>1</sup>. He explored the nature of personal human identity. Originally named Erik Homberger after his adoptive father, Dr. Theodore Homberger, he re-imagined his identity and re-named himself Erik Erikson (literally Erik son of Erik). Ironically, he rejected his adoptive father's wish to become a physician, never obtained a college degree, pursued independent studies under Anna Freud, and then taught at Harvard Medical School after emigrating from Germany to the United States. Erickson visualized human psychosocial development as eight successive life-cycle challenges. Each challenge was framed as a struggle between two outcomes, one desirable and one undesirable. The first two early development challenges were 'trust' versus 'mistrust' followed by 'autonomy' versus 'shame.' Importantly, he held that we face the challenge of **generativity** versus **stagnation in middle life**. This challenge concerns the desire to give back to society and leave a mark on the world. It is about the transition from acquiring and accumulating to providing and mentoring.

Founded in 2010, the European Scientific Journal is just reaching young adulthood. Nonetheless, **generativity** is one of our core values. As a Journal, we reject stagnation and continue to evolve to meet the needs of our contributors, our reviewers, and the academic community. We seek to innovate to meet the challenges of open-access academic publishing. For us,

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<sup>1</sup> Hopkins, J. R. (1995). Erik Homburger Erikson (1902–1994). *American Psychologist*, 50(9), 796-797. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.50.9.796>

generativity has a special meaning. We acknowledge an obligation to give back to the academic community, which has supported us over the past decade and made our initial growth possible. As part of our commitment to generativity, we are re-doubling our efforts in several key areas. First, we are committed to keeping our article processing fees as low as possible to make the ESJ affordable to scholars from all countries. Second, we remain committed to fair and agile peer review and are making further changes to shorten the time between submission and publication of worthy contributions. Third, we are looking actively at ways to eliminate the article processing charges for scholars coming from low GDP countries through a system of subsidies. Fourth, we are examining ways to create and strengthen partnerships with various academic institutions that will mutually benefit those institutions and the ESJ. Finally, through our commitment to publishing excellence, we reaffirm our membership in an open-access academic publishing community that actively contributes to the vitality of scholarship worldwide.

*Sincerely,*

***Daniel B. Hier, MD***

*European Scientific Journal (ESJ) Natural/Life/Medical Sciences*

*Editor in Chief*

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## Suspicious of Occult Medicine Murders in the Context of Democratic Elections in Contemporary Côte d'Ivoire

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### Abstract

The article contributes to contemporary discourses on so-called occult medicine practices and the associated human murders within the context of democratic elections in Côte d'Ivoire. The study is grounded in anthropological fieldwork conducted in Abidjan from 2018 to 2020. Additionally, information on occult medicine murders from local and international media has been gathered to enrich the reflections further. The study reveals that in the prevalent public discourse, politicians are accused of employing occult medicine to enhance their power and ensure their success by collaborating with ritual specialists. The paper argues that, in everyday discourse, occult medicine murders can be perceived as being ontologically motivated.

**Keywords:** Côte d'Ivoire, elections, occult medicine murders

### Introduction

In recent years, so-called occult medicine practices – and human murder associated with them – have become a serious issue in Côte d'Ivoire (cf. Aboa 2015; Deveaux 2018; Duhem 2018; Fancello 2011; Koenig 2014; Newell 2021; Ouattara & Wedel 2020), as in several other African countries (cf. Kohnert 2003; Max-Wirth 2016; Myhre 2017; Oduro-Frimpong 2014; Owusu 2022; Rannditsheni et al. 2018; Schühle 2013; Tanner 2010). Occult

medicine practices typically refer to esoteric or hidden healing and well-being methods often associated with mystical, spiritual, or supernatural elements. These practices may involve the use of rituals, spells, or unconventional remedies that go beyond conventional medical approaches (see Bastien 1988; Kedzierska & Jouvelet 2006; Memel-Fotê 1998; Ouattara and Wedel 2020; Traore 1983; Yangni-Angaté 2004).

In various cultures, there are beliefs and traditions surrounding occult medicine, which may include the use of herbs, amulets, incantations, animals, human blood or body parts, or other elements. It's important to note that the term "occult" in this context doesn't necessarily imply negative or malevolent practices. Instead, it highlights the hidden or mysterious nature of these medicinal traditions (cf. Cissé 1985, 1994; Gnonsoa 2007; Hellweg 2004; Kélétiogui 1978; Ouattara 2008). The most common practices associated with the occult include divination, magic, and spiritualism (also known as spiritism). There are numerous and diverse religions that have occult theologies. Occult religions are typically founded on nature-based polytheistic ideologies; their members believe they can magically intervene in the universe through specific spells, ceremonies, or rituals (Perlmutter 2003, p. 2).

A central feature of the notion of occult medicine is that it links occult forces to political power and material wealth and, more generally, to vitality and prosperity (Comaroff & Comaroff 1999). However, occult medicine is also occasionally used with lethal effect, perhaps increasingly so – as in the case of the medicine murders, the killing of human persons to harvest body parts for making and selling medicine (cf. Bernault & Tonda 2000; Fancello 2011; Masoga & Rugwiji 2018; Newell 2021; Schühle 2013; Tanner 2010).

According to numerous scholars, occult medicine practitioners believe that the efficacy of a medicinal charm or ritual is directly proportional to the value of the object utilized in its creation. Consequently, there is a prevalent notion that including human blood or body parts in ritualistic or magical medicine relates to understanding humans as the highest form of existence on earth. This perspective asserts that medicines containing human flesh and/or blood inherently possess greater potency than those crafted with non-human ingredients. Larsson & Viktorelius writes that “A possible psychological explanation [for this] is that the idea of magic is embedded in a view of a reciprocal universe, where a great reward can only be achieved through a great sacrifice” (2021, p. 4). Upon consultation with a client, the occult medicine specialist evaluates the nature of the request or supplication, determining whether the optimal medicine should be derived from leaves/plants, animals, human blood and body parts, or other objects/ingredients (see Owusu 2022, p. 6).

Although occult medicine practices have since long experienced the influence of Islam and Christianity as well as the secular heritage of colonial

and post-colonial regimes, they remain alive and active, not only in their traditional roles but also in addressing and resolving contemporary issues and problems, in rural and urban areas alike. As highlighted by Dirk Kohnert (1996), the belief in occult forces is still deeply integrated in many African societies, regardless of the educational level, religion, and social class of the people concerned. According to many Sub-Saharan Africans, its incidence is ever-increasing due to social stress and strain caused (among others) by modernization (Kohnert 1996, p. 1). Occult forces beliefs have increasingly been exploited for political purposes. They lend themselves to support any kind of political system, whether despotic or democratic. Strategic groups, notably the power elite, are prone to use it systematically in their struggle for command and control. Thereby, they are likely to add further social stress to an already endangered precarious balance of power, which makes accusations of occult medicinal practices flourish (Kohnert 1996, p. 1347).

It should also be noted that the occult medicine complex is not limited to the African continent (see for example, Bernardi Junqueira 2021; Hanegraaff 2003; Larsson & Viktorelius 2022; Wedel 2004). Growing numbers of Africans – such as migrants, refugees, and victims of sex trafficking – now live and work outside Africa, in Europe, the Americas, and Asia, bringing problems associated with these beliefs and practices – including threats of curses by feticheurs/marabouts and the fear of witchcraft – with them (see Geldenhuys 2019; Lo Iacono 2014; Nagle & Owasanoye 2015; Siegel & De Blank 2010). Furthermore, experts in occult forces rooted in Islamic knowledge and tradition – commonly called ‘marabouts’ – travel between West Africa and Europe, the United States and Asia. They offer their knowledge to a West African diaspora population and a local clientele that also includes non-Muslims (cf. Gemmeke 2009; Kuczynski 2002; Parish, 2018). In an effort to negotiate their expert status publicly, occult medicine specialists mediatize and advertise their services on social media, in printed press, and in radio and television shows – both in Africa and abroad. The article aims to contribute to contemporary discourses on occult medicinal practices and the associated human murders within the context of democratic elections in Côte d’Ivoire.

## **Method**

The paper is grounded in a qualitative study, leveraging insights from anthropological fieldwork carried out in Abidjan spanning the years 2018 to 2020. A set of semi-structured interviews was conducted with 10 relevant individuals, consisting of 6 males and 4 females. The interviewees represented a diverse range of professionals, including academics such as criminologists and sociologists, as well as human rights defenders, investigative journalists, and parents of pupils. The selection of participants was either directly

facilitated by the researcher or recommended by other professionals, based on their expertise and knowledge in areas such as child welfare, crime, and ritual murder.

The criteria for selecting interviewees was their interest or active involvement in combatting and prosecuting criminal activities, as well as safeguarding children's rights. All interviews were originally conducted in French and later translated into English by the article's author. The participants provided their consent for the interviews to be recorded. Following the recording, the interviews were transcribed and subjected to a manual analysis conducted by the author. This analysis included an immersion stage preceding the synthesis phase, which relied on identifying prevalent themes in the material. Thematic content analysis was then applied to the collected data to better understand the significance of the respondents' statements within their respective contexts.

The primary sources of information about this elusive yet very public subject is gossip and rumors (radio *trattoire*), conspiracy theories and urban legends, and news reports in conventional media, television, and, increasingly, internet and social media. Thus, in addition to the conducted interviews information on occult medicinal practices has been gathered from local and international media to deepen my reflections. Furthermore, understanding and knowledge of the topic spring from the author's own background as a native Ivorian who grew up in the country's urban and rural environments. As a professional anthropologist he has carried out several research projects in his native country as well as in neighboring West African countries (Mali and Guinea). As a native Ivorian he has thus studied familiar phenomena from a relatively "alien" academic and professional perspective.

### **Occult medicinal practices in Côte d'Ivoire**

The use of occult medicine is not limited to the treatment of illness or other physical ailments. It is used for any number of purposes; ambitious politicians use it to gain or stay in power, businessmen to accumulate wealth and status, street peddlers to earn a modest living, and the spurned lover to regain his/her partner's affection (see Kélétiogui 1978; Ouattara 2008; Touré and Konaté 1990).

In Côte d'Ivoire, as in most African francophone countries, in popular discourse, occult medicine practices are often described as "doing a work" (*faire du travail*) or "doing medicine" (*faire du médicament*). People frequently turn to occult medicine specialists who are deemed capable of interpreting and manipulating these invisible forces. They may seek specialist knowledge to determine whether the root cause of their misfortune is occult in nature or because they seek magical protection and healing. In cases where occult medicine experts use their special powers to bring order to a chaotic

world, they attract large audiences (cf. Adou 2022; Bassett 2003; Gnonsoa 2007; Koenig 2014; Newell 2021; Touré and Konaté 1990; Ouattara 2008; Ouattara and Touré 2020; Ouattara and Wedel 2020).

A social space where the use of occult medicine is rapidly growing is the internet. Cyber-crimes – internet scams of all sorts – are becoming a lucrative criminal activity in Côte d’Ivoire and West Africa in general, where so-called “grazers” or *brouteurs* are suspected of operating in collusion with reputed *feticheurs* and *marabouts*. There also circulate rumors that *brouteurs* are involved in child killings to harvest their organs for medicine and blood sacrifices, presumably to become successful in their criminal activity and protected from detection (see Adou 2022; Koenig 2014; Newell 2021).

### **Occult medicine murders in Côte d’Ivoire: types and profile of perpetrators**

According to a Lecturer/Researcher at the Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny in Côte d’Ivoire, the majority of occult medicine murder cases involve an intricate network of stakeholders organized across three levels: (a) ‘occult medicine specialists,’ including fetishists, marabouts, or self-appointed pastor-prophets, who play a role in instructing clients about the required body parts for occult medicine or even selling them; (b) clients who pay the killers to acquire the necessary body parts of the victims if the occult medical specialist does not provide them; and (c) the murderers—referring to those who are paid to carry out the actual killing of the victims and harvesting their organs (Interview conducted by article author in Abidjan, 2019).

The most frequent occult medicine murders in Côte d’Ivoire are murders linked to: (1) elections, (2) cybercrime or “grazing,”; (3) social or economic promotion, (4) trafficking in human organs, and (5) sports competitions (see Bazare et al. 2017; Fancello 2011; Koenig 2014; Newell 2021; Ouattara 2008; Touré and Konaté 1990). One of the central factors in occult medicine murders is that the perpetrators often act under the guidance of someone who gives advice on how to proceed.

In Côte d’Ivoire, this person may be a “fetishist” (*féticheur*), *marabout*, or self-appointed pastor-prophet who has the trust of his clients. In Côte d’Ivoire, election periods and government reshuffles are favorable times for occult medicine specialists to coach politicians by offering them their services and medicines. Ritual sacrifices or medicine murders multiply on the eve of electoral deadlines (cf. Guibléhon 2011; Touré and Konaté 1990). Below, I present some contemporary discourses on occult medicinal practices – and the human murders associated with them, unfolding in the shadows of democratic elections in contemporary Côte d’Ivoire.

## **Suspicious of occult medicine murders in the context of democratic elections**

In Côte d'Ivoire, anxieties about medicine murder typically occur during political upheavals, in view of the fact that occult medicine murders seem to increase in number during electoral periods in the country (cf. Aboa 2015; BBC News 2015; The Japan Times 2015). One of Aboa's sources in Abidjan also remarked, "These are mystical and occult practices [...]. This is about black magic, and they need these human sacrifices to get money and power" (Aboa 2005). In 2015, a year when Côte d'Ivoire had a presidential election, more than 24 children were kidnapped and killed across the country within a period of two months before the elections. Most of the bodies of the victims were mutilated, and several body parts were missing. Ivorian authorities deployed around 1,500 police, soldiers, and gendarmes as part of an operation aimed at stopping these killings and identifying the culprits (cf. Aboa 2015; Abidjan.net 2015; BBC News 2015; The Japan Times 2015). On January 27, 2015, Ange Aboa reported in Reuters that "Many Ivorians suggested that the kidnappings were possibly connected to ritual killings orchestrated by corrupt businessmen and politicians. These individuals allegedly employ body parts in ceremonies believed to bestow supernatural powers."

There was also a wave of similar occult medicine murders on the sidelines of the 2006 and 2010 elections (BBC 2015). The Minister of the Interior at the time reported to BBC News on 29 January 2015, "We have these ritual crimes, and we know very well the type of criminal who commits them in other countries. They do it to get power and money." On January 27, 2015, Reuters reported that:

At least 21 children have been kidnapped in Ivory Coast since December [2014], and most have been found dead with their bodies mutilated, authorities said, in a wave of ritual killings some residents fear may be linked to upcoming elections. [...]. Many said the kidnappings were likely linked to ritual killings by corrupt businessmen and politicians, who used body parts in ceremonies supposed to confer supernatural powers. [...]. Presidential and possibly legislative elections are scheduled to take place toward the end of the year in the world's largest cocoa producer and the economic motor of francophone West Africa. A spate of child abductions was recorded ahead of elections in 2010. The kidnappings have led to calls for action from the U.N. children's agency UNICEF, which urged authorities to do everything possible to quickly identify those responsible.

A school manager in Abidjan reported to the BBC News on 29 January 2015, “We have been more vigilant. We have taken the names of all accompanying children. And security has been reinforced at the entrance.” A father in Abidjan expressed his fear to BBC News in the following terms: “I am really afraid because this could happen to us too. I have taken measures; I have talked to the maids and to those working in my house. I told them not to leave my son alone” (BBC News 2015).

In 2018, the year of municipal and regional elections in Côte d'Ivoire, national and international media outlets reported that more than 40 children had disappeared in the country in less than two months. On April 4, 2018, the journalist Stéphanie Aglietti published an article in *Libération*, a French daily newspaper, titled *Côte d'Ivoire: A Supposed Resurgence of Ritual Crimes Creates Psychosis*.

In July 2019, the corpses of 25 infants were discovered in sachets at the Gagnoa municipal cemetery in west-central Côte d'Ivoire. Local and international media suggest that the children might have been murdered by a network that deals with human blood and body parts for “magical” purposes—occult medicine murders, in other words (see BBC News 2019; RFI 2019; Paris Match 2019). According to one of my respondents, a sociologist at the Université Félix Houphouët-Boigny, Abidjan, “some politicians ritually bury live animals [e.g. chickens, cows, dogs, goats, sheep] and even human beings as a symbolic way to bury their opponents and their chances of winning the elections, in order to have an advantage over them” (Interview in Abidjan, 2019). In 2018, during the campaign of the municipal and regional elections for example:

[...] in Korhogo, four gravediggers were sent to dig a grave. When they arrived at the cemetery, they saw two gravediggers digging a grave and walked over to them. The two gravediggers then started to run away. However, the four gravediggers were able to catch one of them. They found a five-year-old girl alive, wrapped in a white fabric next to the grave that the two gravediggers were digging. They uncovered the child and took her as well as the gravedigger they caught to the police. The gravedigger told the police that they were sent by a *marabout* to bury the five-year old girl alive. The police informed the city prefect and decided to arrest the *marabout* in question. However, this case was closed without follow-up (Interview in Abidjan, 2019).

In Côte d'Ivoire, one of the occult medicine murder cases that caught the attention of national and international media was the case of Bouba, a four-year-old boy. He was kidnapped on February 24, 2018, in Abidjan and found two days later, slaughtered, drained of blood, and buried. The Ivorian police reported that it was a young jeweler, who had killed the four-year-old boy on



the advice of a *marabout*, to become wealthy (see Aglietti 2018; Deveaux 2018; Duhem 2018; Lauvergnier 2018; Le Parisien 2018; Tounkara 2018). On January 27, 2018, Radio France Internationale (RFI) reported that: "According to a police source, five members of an organized criminal group have been apprehended, and two have been referred to the prosecution. The marabout is still at large" (my translation).

In the face of these disappearances of children, which had increased since the beginning of 2018, President Alassane Ouattara promised a strong response: "I have given firm instructions that our defense and security forces be deployed on the ground to protect all populations" (RFI 2018, my translation). Several media linked the case of Bouba to upcoming municipal, regional, and senatorial elections scheduled for 2018 (see Aglietti 2018; Lauvergnier 2018). One of my respondents who works at the National Human Rights Commission of Côte d'Ivoire (CNDH-CI) stated:

The high number of ritual murders and the disappearance of children reported in the media keep people in a state of stress, especially when it comes to the safety of their children who have to go to school every morning. Schools are taking new precautions in light of the recent kidnappings, including asking parents to pick their children up from inside the school, encouraging school bus drivers to drop children off closer to home, and telling unaccompanied children to walk home in small groups. There are fears that these ritual killings are linked to upcoming elections later this year. Legislative elections are more likely than presidential ones to result in this type of murder, since there are more seats to be filled and therefore more candidates (Interview in Abidjan, 2018).

Another respondent summed up the problem rather well in the following quote:

It is always the same, as the election approaches, the ritual murders increase. It is a lucrative business for *marabouts* and other occult medicine specialists. During pre-election periods, they come to Côte d'Ivoire from the whole sub-region. Sometimes, they fly here in business class, to sell their services to politicians (Interview in Abidjan, 2020).

These accounts above illustrate well that for most people, these occult medicine murders are politically motivated. In most cases, it is believed that politicians are behind these occult medicine murders. In the course of the electoral season, a range of discourses has been spreading about electorally motivated occult medicine murders in Côte d'Ivoire. The increased frequency

of reported murders at times of elections seems to support this link between murders linked to occult medicine and the political struggle.

## Discussion

The article emphasizes that understanding murders associated with occult medicine requires consideration within a broader framework encompassing sociocultural, economic, and political factors alongside ontological ideas related to supernatural forces. Throughout the electoral seasons in Côte d'Ivoire, various discourses emerge concerning occult medicine murders motivated by electoral considerations. The findings from the study indicate that: (1) In ongoing discussions, a consistent theme emerges, connecting medical practices to instances of harm to individuals in the lead-up to each election in Côte d'Ivoire (cf. Lauvergnier 2018); (2) in popular discourse, politicians are often accused of harnessing occult medicine to strengthen their influence and ensure their ongoing success, often with the assistance of occult medicine specialists, (3) in many instances, there is a prevailing belief that politicians are connected to occult medicine practices – and human murder associated with them, (4) the primary victims of ritual murders in Côte d'Ivoire are children.

Numerous scholars have emphasized a recurrent theme during electoral seasons in sub-Saharan Africa: the notion of an "invisible hand," occult power, or a secret society manipulating the dynamics of power (cf. Bernault & Tonda 2000; Duhem 2018; Newell 2007; Sanders 2003; Sarkisova-Kouamé & Kouamé 2019). Sarkisova - Kouamé Vlada & Caummaueth- Kouamé Reine (2019:14) highlights that:

In sub-Saharan Africa, presidential elections are always organized with the assistance of marabouts or *féticheur*. Moreover, there is the allocation of ministerial portfolios or government reshuffle. Even coups are planned and carried out only after consultation with the "workers" of the invisible world (my translation).

The engagement of individuals in occult medicine practices is frequently rooted in their cultural or spiritual beliefs, as they seek healing and well-being through methods that may deviate from mainstream medical perspectives. This observation is consistent with findings from previous works (Hellweg 2004; Kélétiogui 1978; Newell 2022; Ouattara 2008), which have delved into the cultural and spiritual dimensions of such practices. These studies collectively highlight the diverse ways in which individuals draw upon occult medicine, influenced by their cultural backgrounds and spiritual orientations, as an alternative approach to address health and well-being concerns.

According to several scholars, murders that involve the practice wherein parts of the victim's body are removed for making "medicine" to strengthen politically, professionally, or economically those who use it, the use of the term "ritual murder" is misleading. The killing of the victim is not in itself ritualized. In this sense, the use of the term "ritual murder" is incorrect (see Kuper 2006; La Fontaine 2011; Minnaar 2003; Prinsloo and Du Plessis 1989). This view supports that of Prinsloo and Du Plessis (1989), who argued for a distinction between "ritual murder," when a victim is sacrificed for the benefit of the whole community, and "medicine murder," where a victim's body parts are harvested to make magic potions that individuals use for selfish reasons (1989, p. 617).

Aligned with Adam Kuper (2006), we can classify the murders discussed in this paper as "medicine murders", as people are killed so that their body parts can be used in magical concoctions that are supposed to guarantee strength, courage, and political success (Kuper 2006, p. 1). Jean La Fontaine (2011) also emphasized that the acquisition of body parts does not always require killing. Some unfortunate victims have been left alive after limbs have been severed (La Fontaine 2011, p. 9). However, in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, we can speak of occult medicine murders because the victims are killed (see Aglietti 2018; BBC News 2015; Fancello 2011).

Regarding the occult medicinal practices and associated human murders that resurface every time there's an upcoming election in Côte d'Ivoire, an Ivorian political leader reported to *Jeune Afrique*, a French-language pan-African weekly news magazine, on March 5, 2018, explaining, 'We live in a society where the belief persists that making human sacrifices can influence election results. The idea is that to stay in power, you have to sacrifice a human being' (Duhem 2018, my translation). According to Perlmutter (2003: 30): "The significant ideology behind sacrificial ritual is that blood consists of life force energy [...]. In specific occult worship, bloodletting or imbibing blood from a victim represents the assimilation of raw power". For a more in-depth exploration of the association between blood and life force energy, refer to additional sources (Cissé 1985; Jonckers 1976; Mellott 1984; Nabofa 1985; Wise 2006).

The study has brought to light a disturbing revelation that the primary victims of ritual murders in Côte d'Ivoire are children. This vulnerability is attributed to their physical inability to defend themselves against attacks. Moreover, a number of studies indicate that a deeply unsettling belief exists that certain occult medicines attain heightened potency and efficacy when crafted with ingredients derived from young victims. A prevailing perception among some 'occult medicine specialists' is that virgins embody qualities of cleanliness, purity, or even magical essence. There is a widespread belief that rituals or medicines stand a significantly higher chance of producing the

desired effects if a virgin or items directly associated with a virgin are incorporated (see Ashforth 2005; Owusu 2022; Perlmutter 2003; Tanner 2010). As a result, individuals seeking wealth, protection, power, longevity, and other aspirations through spiritualists may receive instructions from occult medicine specialties to engage in acts such as sleeping with virgins or providing sexual fluids or body parts of virgins as integral components of the rituals necessary for fulfilling their requests (Owusu 2022, p. 25).

However, as Dirk Kohnert (1996) points out, unfortunately, a significant portion of Western development experts perceives these occult medicine practices as mere manifestations of irrational or "primitive" behavior, leading them to overlook the need for addressing these issues professionally using established scientific methods. Some might believe that the process of modernization, investing in human capital and education, and exposure to the supposedly European culture through development aid would automatically resolve these problems (see Kohnert 1996, p. 15). However, as this study demonstrates, this assumption is flawed.

A fundamental understanding of the role played by the occult medicine practices and the ontological framework that deems it real holds crucial practical significance for aid workers and development initiatives throughout Sub-Saharan Africa. This importance is highlighted by the challenges encountered during the two significant Ebola epidemics in West- and Central Africa over the past decade and the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in Africa as a whole (Saba et al. 2020; Ouattara and Århem 2021). This understanding is particularly pertinent in addressing the influence of occult medicine, witchcraft- and sorcery beliefs in local resistance to relief efforts. The multitude of NGO- and UN-reports in recent decades addressing human-rights issues arising from violence linked to witchcraft- and sorcery beliefs, including the persecution of alleged witches and the brutal treatment of individuals with albinism, further underscores the imperative nature of comprehending the underlying cultural ideas motivating these acts (Cimpric 2010).

The article reveals that, during electoral seasons, these discourses gain significant traction in Côte d'Ivoire, attracting extensive media attention. Within this popular discourse, politicians are accused of utilizing occult medicine, facilitated by ritual specialists, to empower themselves and secure success in elections. Put briefly, my argument will be this: in daily discourse, these occult medicine practices are perceived as ontologically motivated. When employing the term "ontologically motivated," I aim to convey the idea that historical influences inherently mold contemporary socio-cultural phenomena. Consequently, past cultural orders wield a profound impact on the present. Individuals consistently strive to comprehend new realities by

interpreting them through established frameworks and drawing upon culturally transmitted conceptual systems.

This approach delves into the fundamental conceptual underpinnings and paradigms shaping cultural phenomena. This perspective starts with the premise of ontological plurality, asserting that various cultural frameworks are structured by distinct and sometimes markedly different, conceptual foundations. These foundations derive from generic ontological premises that contribute to and impact specific cultural structures, institutions, and phenomena (see Descola, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

The subsequent reflections were formulated to contribute to the contemporary discourse on occult medicinal practices and their correlation with human murders in the context of democratic elections in Côte d'Ivoire. The study highlights the prevalence of discussions concerning politically motivated occult medicine murders during electoral seasons in the country. Contrary to expectations, modernization and democratization processes have not diminished occult convictions, a finding supported by other prior research. Within the intricate intersection of politics and occultism, the latter remains a significant force.

The perceptions of occult medicine and its practices in Côte d'Ivoire are dynamic and deeply ingrained in ontology. Practitioners often engage in these rituals guided by cultural or spiritual beliefs, seeking healing and well-being beyond conventional medical perspectives. Murders associated with occult medicine must be scrutinized within the broader framework of socio-cultural, economic, and political factors, interwoven with ontological notions of supernatural forces. Given that these occult medicinal practices are intricately linked to enduring beliefs in supernatural forces, a comprehensive understanding is imperative.

The persistence of occult convictions, even amidst modernization and democratization, underscores their enduring influence. These practices, deeply rooted in ontology, offer an alternative lens through which healing and well-being are sought. The connection between occult medicine and supernatural forces necessitates a holistic examination, considering socio-cultural, economic, and political contexts.

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# Unveiling the Dynamics of Ethiopian Defence Diplomacy: A Focus on Peacekeeping Contributions

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## Abstract

This paper mainly addresses Ethiopia's defence diplomacy through its participation in peace support operations. This qualitative research study aims to analyze and synthesize the findings from relevant literature reviews to show to what extent Ethiopia has used peacekeeping participation as a tool of defence diplomacy in contributing to peace and security, especially in the Horn of Africa region. The paper finds that Ethiopian defence diplomacy is essential for Ethiopia to achieve its global foreign policy objectives, promote regional stability and cooperation, and seek regional influence.

**Keywords:** Ethiopia, Defence Diplomacy, Peacekeeping, ENDF, Horn of Africa

## 1. Introduction

Military power is one of the most crucial tools in international relations. The military's role is very significant in implementing any foreign policy (Chatterjee, 2010). Military forces have many tasks, 'ranging from defending national territory to invading other states, hunting down terrorists, coercing concessions, countering insurgencies, keeping the peace, enforcing economic sanctions, showing the flag, or maintaining domestic order' (Biddle, 2004). The military apparatus is vital in formulating and implementing foreign policy and the state's functioning in the international system. In the words of Alexander L. George, 'the proposition that force and threats of force are a necessary instrument of diplomacy and have a role to play in foreign policy is

part of the conventional wisdom of statecraft' (George, 1998). Thus, it is clear that military power in a hard power sense is apparent. Likewise, military power has a soft power role besides the direct use of force. The term 'defence diplomacy' is widely used to describe this role.

Defence diplomacy can be considered merely 'tasks and international functions completed by the armed forces and the leadership of the ministries of national defence' (Drab, 2018). Defence diplomacy has emerged as one of the most essential tools of military statecraft amid this effort to move past the use of force, and it is generally considered the nonviolent use of a state's defence apparatus to advance the strategic aims of a government through cooperation with other countries. (Winger, 2014).

The origin of the term 'defence diplomacy' lies in the Strategic Defence Review carried out by the UK in 1998 to describe all activities carried out in favor of peace and stability by its armed forces and other Ministry of Defence organisms (Morabety, 2017). The term 'defence diplomacy' is sometimes used interchangeably with military diplomacy in literature (Tan, 2016; Pajtinka, 2016). However, according to Singh (2021), 'Defence' (related to all components of the Ministry of Defence) is a broader umbrella term that subsumes the 'Military' (Army, Navy, and Air Force), and hence, Military Diplomacy is a subset of Defence Diplomacy (Singh, 2021).

Defence diplomacy is deployed through the defence ministry and the armed forces as the executing agency (Cheyre, 2013). According to Juan E. Cheyre, the defence attachés are the first defence diplomacy implementers of the practice that emerged in Europe in the middle of the 19th century, when officers were assigned to overseas missions with diplomatic status in 1857 (Cheyre, 2013). In addition, peacekeeping operations are other key areas for deploying defence diplomacy (Cheyre, 2013). Educational exchanges, international conferences, and activities related to weapons and military equipment purchases are also the main tools for implementing defence diplomacy. Winger (2014) adds that defence diplomacy can take many forms; activities like joint military exercises, gunboat diplomacy, foreign disaster relief, and military bases abroad would all be classified as defence diplomacy. Muthanna (2011) asserts that participation in United Nations or regional peacekeeping operations or coalitions and humanitarian assistance and relief in joint operations is a cornerstone of military diplomacy as it indicates a country's willingness to stand and be counted in international relations.

Nyamao (2021) also identified five means of defence diplomacy in stabilizing the African region: defence attaches, peacekeeping operations, defence multilateral and bilateral engagements, foreign training and learning opportunities, and foreign aid and donor assistance. Similarly, Drab (2018) and Bond (2013) agree that the goal of defence diplomacy is to use military and defence-related activities to build trust and cooperation between countries

and to promote peace and security in the international system. Furthermore, defence diplomacy can help prevent conflicts and promote stability by fostering understanding, collaboration, and trust between nations (Edmonds & Mills 1998). It can also help to advance national interests, such as ensuring access to critical resources and protecting national security.

Pajtinka (2016) defines defence diplomacy as a specific field of diplomacy that focuses primarily on the pursuit of foreign policy interests of the state in the field of security and defence policy. This can be sending defence attaches to foreign states, training foreign military personnel, or joint military exercises to deploy troops to peace missions and operations in a foreign state. Martin Edmonds and Greg Mills define defence diplomacy as "using armed forces in operations other than war, building on their trained experience and discipline to achieve national and foreign objectives abroad" (Winger, 2014).

Thus, defence diplomacy, or the use of military power as a foreign policy instrument in today's international relations, manifests itself mainly in peacekeeping operations (Cheyre, 2013). Cheyre (2013) further says, "Peacekeeping operation is one of the best expressions of defence diplomacy." In addition, developing the peacekeeping capabilities of foreign militaries so they can contribute to peacekeeping operations, the number of which has increased considerably since the end of the Cold War, is another way of defence diplomacy (Storey, 2012).

The use of peacekeeping in Africa as defence diplomacy as part of regional efforts to address regional security challenges since the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s is steadily on the rise (Nyamao, 2021). Thus, understanding Ethiopian defence diplomacy is crucial for comprehending the country's strategies and actions in safeguarding its national security interests. Equally, understanding Ethiopia's peacekeeping contributions allows for a nuanced understanding of its defence diplomacy objectives. Analyzing its defence diplomacy efforts provides insights into how Ethiopia navigates regional and international security challenges, contributes to peacekeeping missions, and promotes stability in the Horn of Africa. Moreover, examining its defence diplomacy initiatives provides insights into the motivations and role of its peacekeeping commitments in fostering peace and stability in conflict-affected regions.

Ethiopia's use of peacekeeping as a form of defence diplomacy has increased, with the number of troops involved in such activities growing exponentially. Since the 1950s, more than 130,000 Ethiopian peacekeepers have been deployed to peacekeeping operations worldwide, mainly in the Horn of Africa region (Sigatu, 2021). For instance, from 2010 to 2019, about 12,000 uniformed personnel rotated yearly under the UN and AU flag (Sigatu, 2021).

## **2. Methods**

This qualitative research study aims to analyze and synthesize the findings from relevant literature reviews on peacekeeping as a defence diplomacy tool for Ethiopia. The research will employ a systematic literature review methodology, including searches of electronic databases, academic journals, books, reports, and policy documents. The inclusion criteria for the literature will focus on publications that specifically address the role of peacekeeping in defence diplomacy, with a particular emphasis on all of Ethiopia's engagement in peacekeeping missions. Data extraction will involve categorizing and summarizing each selected source's key findings, themes, and arguments. The researcher's reflexivity will be demonstrated through transparent documentation of the steps taken in the literature review process and potential biases taken into consideration. The findings of this study will provide a comprehensive overview of the existing literature on peacekeeping as a defence diplomacy tool for Ethiopia, helping to identify gaps, strengths, and areas for further research in this field.

## **3. Discussion**

### **3.1 Historical Background of Ethiopian Defence Diplomacy**

Ethiopia has a long military and diplomatic engagement dating back to ancient times. During the first half of the third century, the Aksum Empire engaged in military campaigns and established diplomatic relations with neighboring states (Munro-Hay, 1991). Ethiopia's strategic location and trade routes made it a key player in regional dynamics, necessitating diplomatic and defence engagements. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, during modern Ethiopia's history, military diplomacy was used to pursue Ethiopia's foreign policy interests. Successive Ethiopian rulers practiced it. Emperor Tewodros wanted to acquire firearms and ammunition to equip his army, so he wrote many letters requesting assistance from countries like Britain (Venkataram, 1973). Emperor Yohannes IV was also active in pursuing military diplomacy, defending his country against external aggressions perpetrated by the Egyptians, the Italians, and the Mahdists (Zewde, 2002).

The Battle of Adwa in 1896, where Ethiopian forces defeated Italian colonialist troops, was a significant moment in Ethiopian defence diplomacy, demonstrating the country's resilience and ability to resist colonization. This victory elevated Ethiopia's reputation internationally and contributed to its recognition as an independent state. Scaling up the experiences of his predecessors, Emperor Menelik II was successful in using foreign skills to train his troops and import firearms from Italy and France, as well as in erecting a small gunpowder factory near his capital at Ankobar (Pankrust, 1967).

Defence diplomacy began to be employed more or less in an organized way during the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I. Though it was to no avail, the Emperor's reliance on collective security caused Ethiopia to join and ask for support from the League of Nations during the second Italian invasion of Ethiopia. Since the Emperor was also an advocate of pan-Africanism had a role in the fight against colonialism. After the second Italian invasion and after gaining freedom, the Emperor created solid diplomatic and defence relations with the United States. The MAAG - the military advisory group trained up three Ethiopian army divisions of 6,000 men each between 1953 and 1960, and the US was the leading supplier of military equipment; moreover, the US established Kagnev Station, US's global radio communications network base in Asmera, northern Ethiopia (Halliday, 1977). The military base was named 'Kagnev' after the Ethiopian contingent fought with the US in the Korean War. During the Emperor's era, the first Ethiopian peacekeeping troops were deployed.

Under Emperor Haile Selassie I, another distinctive and fundamental feature of Ethiopian defence diplomacy of the day was its unwavering policy of supporting African liberation struggles. A prominent instance of support was military training and an Ethiopian passport with an altered name given to Nelson Mandela during his battle against the South African Apartheid system by the government of the Emperor (Nelson Mandela Foundation, 2008). The former Ethiopian Air Force officer and later Chief of Staff Brigadier General Addis Tedla described another case of foreign support in his memoir as follows:

In the 1960s, many African countries were liberated from colonial rule, and Tanzania became independent. However, its neighbor, Mozambique, was still a Portuguese colony. Tanzania began to support FRELIMO, the Liberation Front of Mozambique. As a result, when Portuguese fighter aircraft began to enter Tanzanian airspace and threatened, Julius Nyerere was confused because they did not have air power. Therefore, he appealed to Emperor Haile Selassie I to let the Ethiopian fighter jets go there and protect Tanzanian airspace. As the Emperor agreed, a squadron of the Ethiopian Air Force was sent to Tanzania as a show of force to the Portuguese (Tedla, 2022).

The 1974 Ethiopian Revolution took place, and *Derg* (The Armed Forces, the Police and Territorial Army Council), later in its official name, 'Provisional Military Administration Council' (1974-1991), took power. During this time defence, and diplomacy was mainly characterized by robust military cooperation and partnership with all countries, including Cuba, East Germany, and the Soviet Union (Unfried, 2016). The military leader, Colonel Mengistu Haile Mariam, continued his predecessor's policy of supporting



African liberation movements and giving military supplies. For instance, the Ethiopian army provided training camps to the then Rhodesian (Zimbabwean) guerrillas led by Robert Mugabe in Ethiopia while they were fighting against the white minority government (The New York Times, 1991).

In 1991, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF) took power, which witnessed the military's excellent record of accomplishment in its role in the regional peace and security, counter-terrorism, and alliance in the region and beyond. Currently, Ethiopia's military holds a significant position in Africa, boasting one of the largest and most powerful armed forces on the continent. According to 2024 Military Strength Ranking of Global Firepower ranking Ethiopia ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> from Sub-Saharan African states after South Africa and Nigeria (GlobalFirepower.com, 2024 a). Ranking 49 out of 145 states in the world with an estimated total number of 162,000 military personnel (GlobalFirepower.com, 2024 b).

Moreover, its long history of military prowess and a well-established defense infrastructure, the Ethiopian military is renowned for its role in regional peacekeeping operations and its active participation in international security efforts. Ethiopia's strategic location in the Horn of Africa enables its military to play a crucial role in maintaining stability and security in the region, making it a key player in African geopolitics. It is also worth mentioning that the National Security Strategy of the US considers Ethiopia as one of the "countries with major impact on their neighbourhood and anchor for regional engagement and required focused attention" (The White House, 2002). Defence diplomacy, therefore, has been an important avenue in pursuing Ethiopia's foreign policy during successive periods, primarily through the UN and AU peacekeeping missions. These were the main features of the EPRDF era, which is discussed below.

### **3.2 Ethiopian Peacekeeping Participation**

Ethiopian peacekeeping engagements can be categorized into four phases. The first was the Imperial Army's peacekeeping deployment from 1950-1967. The second was the peacekeeping deployment of EPRDF's Rebel Army from 1994-95. The third was the Ethiopian National Defence Force (ENDF) engagement in 'African Solution for African Problems' from 2003-2010. The fourth and last phase is since 2011 when ENDF became 'the peacekeeper army' (Sigatu, 2021).

During Emperor Haile Selassie I, Ethiopia's first notable participation in UN peacekeeping was the Republic of the Congo in 1960. However, under Resolution 84 (1950), the United Nations Security Council recommended that all member states provide military forces under the United States's command using the United Nations flag for operations against North Korean forces (United Nations, 1950). Ethiopia provided 6,037 troops in rounds of battalions

made up of volunteers from Emperor Haile Selassie's Imperial Guard from 1951 to 1954 to the United Nations Command (UNC) in Korea.

During this time, Ethiopia wanted to get prestige and international recognition by participating in this operation as one of the two states in Africa that contributed to the Apartheid South African State (Techane, 2006). Moreover, the Emperor's decision to send his troops with the United Nations operation under the leadership of the United States was due to the regional security threats he had at the time (Halliday, 1977). He was looking for arms procurement or support from the United States, and it was an excellent opportunity to persuade the United States to dispense its negligence towards Ethiopia and value and welcome Ethiopia's arms request (Techane, 2006). William Stueck described the Ethiopian willingness and motive for deployment as follows:

When Ethiopia expressed its desire to contribute a British-trained battalion with English-speaking officers, the State Department was more receptive. But the overture from Ethiopia, whose government in the 1930s had been a victim of the failure of collective security, hardly represented a selfless gesture. The fates of neighboring Eritrea and Somaliland were now in the hands of the United Nations. Ethiopia was an interested party, especially intent on acquiring the former and thus keen on enhancing its position in the international body. Another method of enhancing its bargaining power was to strengthen its army. Exchanges between Washington and Addis Ababa soon revealed that Ethiopia hoped to receive enough equipment from the United States to arm two or three divisions (Stueck, 1995).

With the same motivation, the Imperial government of Ethiopia deployed its peacekeeping troops to the Republic of the Congo in the United Nations Operation in the Congo, ONUC (Opération des Nations Unies au Congo) from 1960 – 1964. In addition, to the India-Pakistan border in the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) in 1966. Ethiopia Contributed a total of 10, 625 of which 6,911 contingents, 2,960 Junior Officers, and 754 Officers in four rotations to ONUC and seven officers to UNMOGIP (Sigatu, 2021; Yeshumnes, 2017; WoldeTinsai, 2008). It is important to note that during this time, Ethiopia's long independent existence and statehood provided it with a unique position to be active in international affairs (Yihun, 2014).

The Ethiopian experience is one of few instances indicating the significance of peacekeeping participation as a tool of defence diplomacy, especially from 1994 onwards. After the change of government in 1991, the new government participated in United Nations peacekeeping missions after more than two decades of interruption. After the Rwandan genocide, the

United Nations deployed the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), in which Ethiopia deployed 1,694 troops from 1994 to 1995 (Sigatu, 2021).

Later, in July 2009, on the Rwandan Liberation Day, President Paul Kagame of Rwanda presented to the late Meles Zenawi, the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, with "Uruti" (National Liberation Medal) and "Umurinzi" (Campaign against Genocide Medal). The first medal recognized Meles's contribution to toppling the former regime and bringing peace and socio-economic development to Ethiopia. The second medal was given in recognition of Ethiopia's contribution to deploying peacekeepers to help Rwanda (Rwanda News Agency, 2010).

The ENDF opened a new history of peace and partisanship, completing all their missions. Though the long-standing United Nations Peacekeeping principles advocate a peacekeeper should not respond in fire even if he is shot at, instead of retreating, the Ethiopian army respected this and had a saying that 'retreating while there is a clear attack against civilians is not a virtue' (EGCA, 2012). As a result, the army has won the people's affection by protecting the lives of innocent civilians and working with the Rwandan military to ensure the country's security. The Ethiopian troops' conviction of defending civilians later led to the '*Kigali Principles on the Protection of Civilians*,' a non-binding set of eighteen pledges for the effective and thorough implementation of civilians' protection in UN peacekeeping (Global Center for Responsibility to Protect, 2015).

After the African Union was officially launched in July 2002, "African Solutions to Africa's Problems" became a principle that emphasized the importance of African countries taking the lead in addressing the challenges and conflicts within the continent (Solomon, 2015). This led to a series of African Union-led peacekeeping operations on the continent and has been the driver of the majority of diplomatic defense activities (Potgieter, 2002). In 2003, the first mission was wholly initiated, planned, and executed by African Union members, the African Union Mission in Burundi (AMIB), and was deployed to Burundi (Murithi, 2008). In 2004, the UN Security Council established United Nations Peace Operations in Burundi (ONUB), and AMIB troops were incorporated into the ONUB (Murithi, 2008). In September 2003, the United Nations established the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) in Liberia. Likewise, after the Darfur crisis in Sudan, the AU set up a peacekeeping operation in 2004, the African Union Mission in Sudan. By 2007, the Security Council established the AU/UN Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID) and incorporated AMIS personnel (UNSC, 2007). Furthermore, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) was created by the African Union's Peace and Security Council in January 2007 with the approval of the

United Nations. In April 2022, it transformed into the African Union Transitional Mission in Somalia (ATMIS).

Ethiopia deployed its peacekeeping troops to all peacekeeping missions stated above, including other United Nations missions in Africa, the Central African Republic, and Côte d'Ivoire. The idea of African solutions for African problems was taken sincerely by Ethiopia, especially in the Horn of Africa region. From 2003 to 2007, Ethiopia sent a total of 2,747 contingent and five military observers, including the position of Deputy Force Commander of ONUB. In Liberia, to the UNMIL mission, Ethiopia contributed 17,453 contingents and 17 military observers from 2003 to 2009, which necessitated eight brigades in nine shifts and one battalion (FDRE-PSTC, 2015).

Continuing its aggressive peacekeeping participation, Ethiopia started deploying its peacekeepers in neighboring Sudan to the UNAMID mission in February 2008 by sending 11 troops, one military observer, and an entire battalion beginning in 2009. In 2019, Ethiopia contributed six experts to the mission, 821 contingent troops, 19 police officers, and five staff officers; 18,901 personnel were deployed between 2009 and 2019 to UNAMID (Sigatu, 2021). Moreover, Ethiopia deployed 15 personnel to the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) from 2009 to 2010 and 2 military observers to the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) in 2016 (Sigatu, 2021).

In 2011, the ENDF Peacekeeping Main Department was established under the Chief of Staff, which oversees the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia - Peace Support Training Center (FDRE-PSTC), currently named the International Peace Support Training Institute (FDRE-IPSTI), which specializes in training and research on peacekeeping missions. Opening an organizational structure for peacekeeping that coordinates thousands of troop deployments transformed the ENDF into a peacekeeping army. Furthermore, in 2011, an exceptional peacekeeping deployment took place in Abyei, the border region of Sudan and South Sudan, under the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA). Moreover, since 2011, Ethiopia has participated in three more small deployments, in the Caribbean, to the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), in Sudan, to the United Nations Mission (UNMIS), in Mali, to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), and in Yemen, to the United Nations Mission to Support the Hudaydah Agreement (UNMHA). Moreover, one enormous deployment in South Sudan to the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) is continuing, and as of July 2023, there are 834 contingents (UNMISS, 2023).

In June 2016, Ethiopia secured a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council (UNSC). The position requires that countries garner at least

a two-thirds vote to win the position, and Ethiopia ran without competition, with 185 votes out of 190 votes cast, one vote being invalid while two other members abstained (Shaban, 2016). Ethiopian Foreign Minister at the time, Tedros Adhanom, said the election indicated that the country had won respect and trust of the world (Akwei & Southard, 2016). This respect and trust mostly come from Ethiopian peacekeeping involvement. Back in 2015, Tedros said the following at the Chatham House event.

We realize that the durability of the successes we have achieved as a country depends on the prevalence of peace and security in the whole of our sub-region. Ethiopia firmly believes that its peace and security are the peace and security of its neighbors and vice versa. This explains Ethiopia's commitment to peace and security, as demonstrated by our participation in the various peacekeeping operations within our sub-region in particular and our continent in general. In our sub-region, the deployment of Ethiopian troops in Darfur, Abyei, and Somalia has made a significant contribution to the maintenance of regional peace, security, and stability. Especially if you take Abyei: it is just Ethiopian troops keeping the peace of that disputed border between Sudan and South Sudan. During the last five years, we have increased our contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations fourfold. Currently, Ethiopia is the second-largest troop-contributing country to UN peacekeeping missions. If we add to this our involvement in African Union peacekeeping missions, we will find that Ethiopia is the largest contributor of peacekeeping troops in the world (Gebreyesus, 2015).

The two most prominent Ethiopian peacekeeping deployments, which have more excellent defence diplomacy, were in Abyei (2011-2022) and Somalia (2014-up to now). When UNISFA was established, it took the United Nations Security Council just five minutes to unanimously agree to send 4,200 Ethiopian troops to Abyei as a peacekeeping force (McConnell, 2011). UNISFA's establishment came in June 2011, after the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) reached an agreement in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to demilitarize Abyei. Both sides claimed the region and allowed Ethiopian troops to monitor the area under the 'Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area' (United Nations, 2016).

UNISFA is exceptional because, unlike most peacekeeping missions worldwide, it is almost entirely composed of Ethiopian peace troops. For instance, as of January 2020, 35 countries sent their military and police personnel 3,772, to the mission. Ethiopia contributed a total of 3,642 personnel, 79 experts, five police officers, 69 staff, and 3,489 contingents, which made up 96.5 % of the peacekeepers in the mission. The 35 other states

contributed only 130 military and police personnel (United Nations, 2020). Moreover, all UNISFA's force commanders were Ethiopians until 2022. Chris Johnson commented about Ethiopian in deployment as follows:

The involvement of Ethiopian troops in UNISFA is unprecedented; a neighboring power invited by both Sudan and South Sudan to provide an interposition force to keep the peace between them. This is seen as evidence of Ethiopia's good relations with both states and its neutral position in the conflict, and Ethiopia takes pride in this regional role. UNISFA is viewed as a success story and has shown Ethiopia that it is not only possible but 'a good thing' to contribute troops to a peace operation in a neighboring country (Johnson, 2012).

The second noticeable Ethiopian peacekeeping deployment is in Somalia. ENDF's first unilateral intervention in Somalia was in 1995 to remove the Islamic insurgent Al-Ittihad Al-Islamiya (AIAI). In 1998, Ethiopia launched a second military intervention at the time of the Ethio-Eritrean war, following Eritrea's effort—in collaboration with a Baidoa-based Somali warlord Hussein Aideed and involving the Oromia Liberation Front (OLF) and the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) to open a second front (Beyene, 2018). Ethiopia's third intervention was in 2006, against the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) threat and supporting the Somali Transitional Federal Government. Lastly, Ethiopia joined AMISOM/ATMIS in 2014, simultaneously deploying troops outside the AMISOM/ATMIS command to support its forces under AMISOM/ATMIS. AMISOM was a multidimensional Peace Support Operation mandated to reduce the threat and conduct offensive operations against al-Shabaab and other armed opposition groups. ATMIS was created in April 2022 and was operational until the end of 2024, after it handed all security responsibilities to the Somali Security Forces (ATMIS, 2023).

Nevertheless, Ethiopian intervention in Somalia has been contentious. Napoleon A. Bamfo described it as 'Ethiopia's invasion of Somalia in late 2006 may go down in history as one of the most daring if not imprudent strategic decisions any African government has made on its neighbor' (Bamfo, 2010). Others argue, 'Ethiopia has a long and ugly history of perennially intervening in Somalia to weaken the political independence of the country and to pursue narrow political objectives' (Horn Observer, 2020). On the other hand, regarding the 2006 intervention, the former Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi said Ethiopia did not invade Somalia. We were invited by the duly constituted government of Somalia, the internationally recognized government of Somalia, to assist them in averting the threat of terrorism (Al Jazeera, 2007). Some also argue that Ethiopian interventions are based on 'the inherent right to self-defence, a terrorist threat, intervention by invitation, and

the protection of the right to self-determination of the Ethiopian Somalis' (Yihdego, 2007).

Generally, Ethiopia's extended involvement in Somalia in the name of intervention can be considered as 'hegemonic peacekeeping.' Shaw and Ihonvber (1996) called the Nigerian participation in the regional peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, in Liberia as 'hegemonic participation in peacekeeping' (Shaw & Ihonvber, 1996). Similarly, Adebajo (2003) asserted Nigeria's case from 1990-1998 and the United States in 1993 in their interventionists in Liberia and Somalia, respectively, as hegemonic peacekeeping. This is "a situation in which a powerful state with strong global or regional interests can deploy a preponderance of troops to manage a conflict and convince other states to accept its leadership of the mission. By shouldering a greater military and financial burden (Adebajo, 2003).

Since the beginning of AMISOM, peacekeepers from the region have relied on Ethiopian soldiers to provide the bulk of the security functions required to keep the Transitional Federal Government safe in its compounds and from any counter-attacks from Somali factions (Mays, 2009). This is because 'Ethiopian troops know the land, are used to the temperatures, are the only ones who have previous experience fighting both guerrilla and conventional warfare' (France24, 2016). In addition, Ethiopia pursued its regional interests multilaterally, mainly through a dominant role in IGAD (Maru, 2014).

Ethiopia's troop contribution to AMISOM was 4,400 (Williams, 2018); however, all ENDF forces in Somalia were not part of AMISOM, and in fact, the burden of defeating al-Shabaab in its strongholds was left primarily to the Ethiopian troops. According to the Ethiopian former ambassador to Somalia, Wendimagegn Asaminew, Ethiopia's non-AMISOM forces were deployed on bilateral understandings with the SFG (Asaminew, 2020). Ethiopia deployed an additional 10,000 – 15,000 troops outside the command of AMISOM (Vidija, 2019). Such a trend was also continued in deploying non-ATMIS troops by newly formed 'Somalia-Frontline States,' which are Djibouti, Kenya, and Ethiopia (Garoweonline, 2023). In February 2023, Ethiopia dispatched at least 1000 soldiers not part of ATMIS, which Djibouti and Kenya will continue (Garoweonline, 2023).

The former Ethiopian Foreign Affairs Minister, the late Seyoum Mesfin, and his former colleague at the ministry, Abdeta Dribssa, argued the necessity of Ethiopia's presence in Somalia, especially in places near the Ethiopia border, as follows:

In fact, the government of Somalia is unable to credibly guarantee to Ethiopia that these territories will not be used to threaten Ethiopia, so Ethiopia often is blamed for interference. This criticism highlights the paradox in which Ethiopia has to infringe on Somalia's sovereignty in

territories that Mogadishu is unable to control in order to ensure the fulfillment of basic obligations required of a sovereign state. Conventional tools of international relations, such as pressuring a national government to fulfill the obligations of its sovereignty, do not work when a state lacks a government with the capacity or political will to exercise even minimal control over its territory and armed forces (Beyene & Mesfin 2018).

Their argument is based on the TFG, later the Somalia Federal Government (SFG), which has no power to control its entire territory, so Ethiopia needs to keep its sovereignty inside Somalia. In this regard, Mesfin and Abdeta (2018) were applying the concept of a 'buffer zone.' Their argument about the need for an Ethiopian buffer zone in Somalia is as follows:

Buffer zones play their paradoxical role while states with stronger domestic capabilities that develop their own broader dimensions of effective internal and external sovereignty, such as Ethiopia, step in to manage the effects of this extreme asymmetry of domestic control. The stronger state then violates the sovereignty of the weaker to provide the basis for the semblance of an orderly state system in the region. This hegemony can appear as domination, but to its architects, it is also the only viable alternative to manage the destabilizing regional effects of state failure and collapse. This is particularly important for states like Ethiopia, which shares a long border with Somalia, a failed state that generates violent illicit activities, cross-border insurgencies, refugee flows, and other disruptions that threaten efforts in Ethiopia to transform its domestic political economy. Disorder in the borderlands is a historical problem for state-builders, but the difference now is that stronger states no longer have the option (or are no longer inclined) to solve this problem through conquest. Instead, they have to maintain order in weak states (Beyene & Mesfin 2018).

### **3.3 Rationales of Ethiopia's Defence Diplomacy in Peacekeeping**

Peacekeeping participation as defence diplomacy refers to the involvement of a country's armed forces in peacekeeping operations to serve diplomatic objectives. The following are the main rationales of Ethiopian defence diplomacy through peacekeeping participation, especially in the Horn of Africa region.

#### **3.3.1 National Security**

Participation in peacekeeping operations in the Ethiopian context can be considered as a vehicle for its national security strategy. Ethiopia is located in a region known for civil wars and state failures. Most of the problems are



transnational, as social and economic problems in one country would have intended and unintended spillover effects on neighboring countries (Berhe, 2016). Out of six states with which Ethiopia shares borders, except for Kenya and Djibouti, Ethiopia was in conflict with (Eritrea and Somalia), or there were intrastate armed conflicts. In Somalia, Sudan, and South Sudan, the UN deployed troops because of intrastate conflicts and interstate conflicts in the case of Abyei. This left Ethiopia without any other option than sending its troops to UN or AU peacekeeping operations to the troubled neighboring states for its own security.

The post-1991 collapse of the government in Somalia, which resulted in the civil war and the rise of radical Islamists in the country, has been a significant security threat in the region. The Sudanese civil war, which resulted in the breakaway of South Sudan, still has not brought peace since the division between South Sudan's leadership led to a new civil war in the country. In addition to this, Sudan and South Sudan still have not finished the demarcation of their borders because of the oil-rich Abyei region claimed by both states.

Thus, Ethiopia responded to all four calamities mentioned above through AU and UN peacekeeping missions. Security threats, thanks to spillover effects, come from communities living on both sides of the borders, namely pastoral communities, human traffickers, and in the form of illegal movement of migrants, illicit trade, and organized crime, such as drug trafficking. They represent major security threats throughout the Ethiopian border region (Berhe, 2016). The 2002 Ethiopian Foreign Affairs and National Security Policy and Strategy document also clearly indicates the significance of neighboring countries toward the national interests and security, democratization and development goals (Ministry of Information Press & Audiovisual Department, 2002).

In addition, scholars found evidence that rebellions are contagious; in other words, a rebellion significantly increases the risk of internal upheaval in a neighboring country (Berhe, 2016). An ongoing conflict in neighboring states may decrease the price of arms and increase their availability, making it relatively accessible to rebel groups to mobilize insurgencies. This is most likely along the 'poorly defined borders of Ethiopia' (Berhe, 2016). Since 2017, there has been an attempt by armed groups to attack the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam – set to become the biggest hydropower dam in Africa – located only 15 km from the Sudanese border. The Sudanese government handed over some of the rebels who fled after the Ethiopian security forces killed 13 of them (Gaffey, 2017).

In the case of South Sudan's conflict, Ethiopia was mainly concerned about the dynamics around its western Gambella regional state. The sudden influx of Nuer refugees into Gambella changes the demographic balance

between the Anuak and the Nuer, creating tension between the two ethnic groups. Moreover, when more than 1,000 gunmen from South Sudan killed 28 people and kidnapped 43 children in the Gambella region of Ethiopia, bordering South Sudan at the beginning of March 2017, the South Sudanese government, which has been in civil war since 2013, was not in a position to do anything. For the second time, the occurrence of such incidents, where more than 200 people died and about 160 children were kidnapped (Aljazeera, 2016), demonstrates that violence in South Sudan could spill over into neighbors (Aljazeera, 2017).

With the availability of small arms, cattle raiding and child abductions have become more frequent and fatal. Over the years, insurgent groups among the Murle have killed more civilians, rustled more cattle, and abducted more children, primarily from communities that are not well protected, such as the Anyuaa and Jikany-Nuer of Ethiopia. These make sending peacekeeping troops to neighboring states to help create a strong and functioning government not a matter of altruism but national security.

### **3.3.2 Political Influence**

Ethiopia assumes a regional hegemony in the Horn of Africa (Le Gourielleck, 2018). Its foreign policy has been geared towards ensuring its regional hegemonic interests, particularly since the post-1991 years, with the backing of global powers and through international and regional institutions (Michael, 2018). Ethiopia's regional hegemonic position is founded in its power projection capability, which is rooted in its growing economy, strong military, large population and territory, geostrategic location, and history (Clapham, 2017). In addition, Ethiopia's army, one of the largest forces and has long experience in peacekeeping missions, especially in the continent, enables it to depict itself as a security provider in the Horn region, on which its development and security depend (Dias, 2013). Its relative political stability in the last two decades has enabled it to position itself as a regional power (Muligeta, 2014).

Ethiopia's foreign policy has been driven by its regional hegemonic politics by employing a foreign policy strategy of stabilizing the region by actively engaging in regional peacebuilding and security provision through peacekeeping missions. This resulted in political influence through image-building, national prestige, and diplomatic leverage. The current Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the following about Ethiopian international role and peacekeeping deployment:

The role it is playing for the peace and security of the Horn of Africa region and the African continent is a manifestation of Ethiopia's determination to this cause. The peacekeeping work we carried out in Somalia, Sudan, Rwanda, and Burundi is enormous. Our Defence

force is a highly disciplined army that efficiently discharges its peacekeeping missions. The role Ethiopia is playing in mediating countries is also considerable. Countries that are either pursuing their interests in the Horn of Africa or observing the ongoing political developments in the region can clearly witness the role Ethiopia is playing in the region. Thus, Ethiopia's outstanding role in keeping peace in the Horn of Africa is one of the reasons why Ethiopia is enjoying an ever-increasing influence in the region (Ali, 2019).

Bellamy and Williams, in their argument for the political rationale of states' involvement in UN peacekeeping, note states are mostly interested in 'contributing to certain easier, 'safer' UN missions (Bellamy, 2012). However, in the case of Ethiopia, though its participation highly contributed to regional order, almost all the missions ENDF has been undertaking are far from 'safe.'

### **3.3.3 Economic Gain**

There is a direct economic gain from UN and AU reimbursement for troop-contributing member states for providing equipment, personnel, and support services to military or police contingents (United Nations, 2019). In addition, peacekeeping deployment provides economic gains for the soldiers participating in missions. The indirect financial gain of these peacekeeping missions is forming a peaceful region that attracts foreign investment and harnesses regional trade and development.

One of the incentives the governments provide for foreign investment, besides low tariffs and cheap labor, is security (Davison, 2016). Negative spillover to neighboring nations is likely to occur from disruptions of trade, heightened risk perceptions by would-be investors in the region, severance of input supply lines, collateral damage from nearby battles, and resources spent to assist refugees (Sesay, 2004). The effects of civil wars are not only felt in the countries where they are fought but also in neighboring countries and beyond. Conflict in one country reduces the economic growth of its neighbors and significantly affects other growth-enhancing variables (Sesay, 2004). Unless Ethiopia tries to help neighboring countries to achieve peace, the spillover effects of conflict will hinder its ongoing economic growth.

### **3.3.4 Historical Legacy and Conviction to Collective Security**

Ethiopia deployed its troops to the US-led peacekeeping mission in Korea based on two main intentions. The first one is because of the historical legacy of the League of Nations' failure to defend Ethiopia from Italian aggression in 1936, though Article 10 of the Covenant of the League of Nations states, "The Members of the League undertake to respect and preserve as against external aggression the territorial integrity and existing political

independence of all Members of the League." Ethiopia demanded the League to punish Italy for invading its borders so that the punishment would halt Italy's conquest of the country. However, the League failed to do so. This historical incident is an important landmark in Ethiopian history and a significant motivation for the Ethiopian army's deployment in Korea and Congo at the time of the Emperor.

The Ethiopian peacekeeping operations can be considered an extension of credence in fighting for those who are beleaguered. Emperor Haile Selassie I affirmed that 'people who love freedom and who are trying to fight for their freedom should be respected and helped' (Techane, 2006). This statement remains a core value in all Ethiopian regimes' foreign policy and military conviction.

### **3.3.5 Prestige**

According to Firsing (2014). participating in peacekeeping helps countries such as Nigeria who seek to become a Permanent Member of the Security Council and for other African countries such as Rwanda to gain more leverage in UN bodies. During Emperor Haile Selassie's reign, Ethiopia's peacekeeping deployment in Korea, Congo, and Jammu and Kashmir missions significantly bolstered the emperor's and the nation's prestige on the global stage. The deployment of Ethiopian troops as the only independent African state at the time showcased Ethiopia's commitment to international peace and security, elevating its status as a key player in global affairs. This contributed to the nation's prestige by demonstrating its willingness to contribute to peace efforts beyond its borders, earning respect and admiration from the international community.

Additionally, after the fall of the Derg regime in 1991, Ethiopia continued its participation in UN and AU peacekeeping missions, further enhancing its reputation as a responsible and proactive member of the international community. Through its continued involvement in post-1991 peacekeeping efforts, Ethiopia solidified its position as a reliable partner in promoting stability and security in conflict-affected regions, thus contributing to its national prestige. Overall, Ethiopia's sustained commitment to peacekeeping operations both during Emperor Haile Selassie's era and in the post-1991 government has played a crucial role in enhancing its global standing and reputation as a peace-loving and responsible nation.

### **3.3.6 Military Capability**

Finally, the Ethiopian military's involvement in peacekeeping deployments with the UN and AU has greatly contributed to the enhancement of its capabilities. These missions provided the Ethiopian military with invaluable opportunities to gain practical experience in operating within

complex, multinational environments, thereby honing their skills in areas such as conflict resolution, peace enforcement, and humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, the exposure to diverse operational challenges in different conflict zones allowed the Ethiopian military to adapt to various scenarios, fostering a versatile and adaptable force.

Moreover, participation in peacekeeping missions facilitated the modernization and professionalization of the Ethiopian military through interactions with global partners, exposure to international best practices, and the adoption of new technologies and tactics. This exposure to modern military practices and equipment from other contributing nations helped to enhance the Ethiopian military's capabilities and readiness, ultimately contributing to its overall effectiveness in both domestic and international operations.

#### **4. Current Challenges of Ethiopian Peacekeeping Efforts**

Post-2018 witnessed unprecedented developments in the Ethiopian military diplomacy sphere regarding United Nations peacekeeping. First, due to a souring relationship between Sudan and Ethiopia over a border dispute, the Ethiopian peacekeeping force in Abyei was forced to withdraw from the area on Sudan's request (Addis Standard, 2022). Sudan wants Ethiopian forces replaced by peacekeepers from other countries. This was an unprecedented development in the history of Ethiopian peacekeeping missions. As peacekeeping contribution is considered to be an important tool for pursuing various foreign policy and national security objectives, the event unfolded in Sudan was not a welcome development for Ethiopia's military diplomacy (Sigatu, 2022).

Most importantly, political instability has soared in Ethiopia since 2020. The Tigray War in Ethiopia has impacted Ethiopia's participation in peacekeeping operations. The conflict, which began in November 2020 between the Ethiopian government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF), has diverted attention, resources, and personnel away from Ethiopia's involvement in international peacekeeping efforts. To deal with the Tigray crisis, Ethiopia has had to recall some of its troops from United Nations and Africa Union peacekeeping missions, including ethnic Tigrayan soldiers (Lynch & Gramer, 2020). Ethiopian soldiers who were previously deployed in countries like South Sudan, Sudan, and Somalia were needed for domestic operations, reducing Ethiopia's peacekeeping contributions.

Moreover, the Tigray conflict has attracted significant international attention and criticism due to reports of human rights abuses and allegations of atrocities (US Department of State, 2022). These incidents have raised concerns about Ethiopia's commitment to peace and security, which could affect its standing as a reliable contributor to peacekeeping missions (US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, 2021). In relation to this, Ethiopian

non-ATMIS troops in Somalia were accused of human rights violations, including meddling in internal politics (Garoweonline, 2023).

The Tigray conflict has impacted Ethiopia's involvement in peacekeeping missions and strained relationships with neighboring countries. The spillover effects of the conflict could worsen regional tensions and affect Ethiopia's ability to collaborate effectively with other countries on peacekeeping initiatives.

The consequences of the Tigray War, including the displacement of people, the destruction of infrastructure, and the humanitarian crisis, may require sustained efforts by the Ethiopian government to stabilize and rebuild the region. These domestic priorities could limit Ethiopia's capacity to contribute significantly to peacekeeping missions in the near future. It is important to note that the impact of the Tigray War on Ethiopia's peacekeeping participation is a dynamic situation that may evolve over time as the peace and reconciliation processes are undertaken.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, examining Ethiopian defence diplomacy focusing on peacekeeping contributions reveals a complex and multifaceted dynamic. Ethiopian involvement in peacekeeping operations has significantly projected its regional and global influence, promoted stability, and reinforced its commitment to international norms and values. The country's historical commitment to peacekeeping, demonstrated by its status as one of the top troop-contributing countries, underscores its dedication to conflict resolution and recognition of the importance of collective security efforts.

Ethiopia's most prominent and ongoing peacekeeping involvement in Somalia has been crucial in pursuing peace, stability, and regional security. Through its contributions to ATMIS and unilaterally, Ethiopia has exemplified its commitment to collective security efforts and its determination to address common challenges faced by countries in the region. By supporting Somalia's stabilization process, Ethiopia can help pave the way for a prosperous, secure, and self-reliant Somalia, contributing to regional peace and development.

However, it is crucial to recognize that the dynamics of Ethiopian defence diplomacy are not static. Factors such as domestic conflicts, like the Tigray War, impacted Ethiopia's peacekeeping participation by diverting resources and attention away from international commitments. International perceptions of Ethiopia concerning its handling of internal conflicts may also influence its standing and reputation as a contributor to peacekeeping missions.

It is essential for Ethiopia to navigate these dynamic dynamics effectively while maintaining its commitment to peacekeeping. Balancing domestic priorities with regional and international obligations will be crucial

to sustaining Ethiopia's role as a reliable and significant partner in promoting peace and security. Continually evaluating the effectiveness of defence diplomacy and peacekeeping strategies will aid in optimizing Ethiopia's contributions to international peacekeeping efforts.

Moreover, Ethiopia should actively seek avenues for collaboration and cooperation with regional and international partners to enhance its capacity in peacekeeping operations. Strengthening partnerships, sharing expertise, and leveraging support from the international community will contribute to Ethiopia's ability to address emerging security challenges and maximize its impact on conflict resolution.

In conclusion, understanding and unveiling the dynamics of Ethiopian defence diplomacy, particularly in the context of its peacekeeping contributions, provides essential insights into Ethiopia's role as a critical regional actor. By striking a balance between domestic imperatives and international obligations, Ethiopia can continue to contribute effectively to peacekeeping initiatives, bolster regional stability, and reinforce its commitment to peaceful resolutions of conflicts.

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## Exploring the Phenomenon of Timelessness in Morocco: Insights from Paul Bowles and Other Travel Writers

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### Abstract

This article aims to explore the phenomenon of timelessness in Morocco through the insights of renowned travel writers such as Paul Bowles. The semi-systematic method was used primarily due to the limited amount of research done on the topic of timelessness. It will analyze the representations of Morocco in Western discourse, particularly in the context of Western Orientalism. Thanks to decolonization, deconstructionism, and Edward Said's Orientalism, hitherto neglected travel writing has elicited academic responses from scholars who have recognized that travel writing is not simply an innocent and objective description of a traveler's encounters in a foreign land. Instead, it is a genre that is inherently political, intertwined with projects of orientalism, colonialism, imperialism, and post-colonialism, and characterized by a hegemonic gaze directed towards the other, often marginalizing the voices of peripheral people. This research references books, notable authors, and Western explorers who commonly mention the unchanging quality of time in the Orient, particularly in Morocco. Additionally, the study will draw on the insights of Edward Said to explain why this timelessness was prevalent in the 20th century.

**Keywords:** Orientalism, otherness, timelessness, postcolonial theory, Edward Said

## **Introduction**

The notion of timelessness is a recurring theme in various travel writing books, prompting an exploration into why writers frequently employ it in this genre. This paper aims to explore this recurring theme in travel books written about Morocco in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a particular focus on its significance in Western representations of Moroccan cities. Despite being briefly mentioned by Edward Said in his works on Orientalism, the implicit meaning of timelessness has yet to be fully examined, leading to its widespread but largely unconscious use. By investigating the concept of timelessness and its role in Western discourse, this paper seeks to shed light on the intricate dynamics and strategies at play in the representation of non-Western cultures. Specifically, this paper argues that timelessness is one of the many tactics employed in Western discourse to “Other” non-Western cultures. Its widespread use in travel writing reinforces existing power dynamics and dominant narratives about the East. By critically examining this theme, this paper hopes to contribute to a greater understanding of the complex ways in which Western representations of the “Other” are constructed and perpetuated.

## **Understanding timelessness through the lens of Edward Said**

Edward Said was a prominent Palestinian-American scholar and literary critic who is best known for his influential work “Orientalism.” In this book, Said examines how Western scholars, writers, and artists have historically constructed and represented the “Orient” (which includes the Islamic world) as a homogeneous, exotic, and inferior “Other.” Said’s work has had a significant impact on postcolonial studies and has challenged the dominant narratives and representations of non-Western cultures. He argues that Orientalism perpetuates stereotypes, reinforces power imbalances, and distorts our understanding of diverse cultures and societies. Said argues that Western representations of the Orient, including the perception of timelessness and lack of development, were not objective observations but rather products of a deeply entrenched Orientalist discourse. This discourse served the interests of Western colonial powers by justifying their domination and control over non-Western societies.

“Among the many illusions that persisted in modernization theory was one that seemed to have a special pertinence to the Islamic world: namely, that before the advent of the United States, Islam existed in a kind of timeless childhood, shielded from true development by an archaic set of superstitions, prevented by its strange priests and scribes from moving out of the Middle Ages into the modern world.” (Said, 2008, p. 30).



This passage from Said's book, *Covering Islam*, reflects a perspective that was prevalent in modernization theory, which was a theoretical framework developed in the 1950s and 1960s to explain the processes of social and economic development in non-Western societies. One of the central assumptions of modernization theory was that Western societies represented the pinnacle of development and progress, while non-Western societies were seen as lagging behind and in need of catching up. The passage focuses on the perception of Islam and the Islamic world within this framework. It suggests that Western observers held the view that Islam was stuck in a "timeless childhood" and was resistant to progress and modernization. The passage aligns with Said's critique of Orientalism in his book of the same name. It highlights the Western perception of the Islamic world as being trapped in a state of backwardness and resistance to progress. This perception is often rooted in the assumption of Western superiority and a desire to justify Western intervention or influence in these regions. In *Orientalism*, Said references T.E. Lawrence, also known as Lawrence of Arabia, who was a British archaeologist, military officer, and writer. Lawrence's experiences and writings about the Arab Revolt during World War I played a significant role in shaping Western perceptions of the Arab world.

"The great drama of Lawrence's work is that it symbolizes the struggle, first, to stimulate the Orient (lifeless, timeless, forceless) into movement; second, to impose upon that movement an essentially Western shape; third, to contain the new and aroused Orient in a personal vision, whose retrospective mode includes a powerful sense of failure and betrayal" (Said, 2014, p. 241).

Said suggests that Lawrence's work embodies the desire to awaken the Orient (referring to the Arab world) from its perceived lifelessness and timelessness. This reflects the Orientalist perspective of the Orient as stagnant and lacking agency or vitality. Lawrence's efforts to stimulate movement in the Orient are seen as an attempt to impose Western ideas and structures upon it, reflecting the underlying assumption of Western superiority and the desire to reshape the Orient according to Western norms. Furthermore, Said notes that Lawrence's vision, which includes a sense of failure and betrayal, seeks to contain the newly aroused Orient within a retrospective mode. This implies that even when attempts are made to bring about change or movement in the Orient, the outcome is often shaped by Western perspectives and ultimately falls short of the desired result.

### **Paul Bowles's Morocco: A journey through time**

Bowles "may have chosen Tangier because, when he arrived for the first time, it was a place almost wholly devoid of the concept of time, and of

the West's compulsion to be constantly on the go" (Choukri & Shukrī, 2008, p. 153).

According to Bowles in his interview with Abdelhak Elghandor, his primary focus in life lies on individuals and subjects that are distinctive to the norm in the West, including but not limited to myths, superstitions, folklore, and matters pertaining to prehistoric civilizations. By intentionally abstaining from possessing a mobile device or television, he deliberately engaged in self-imposed seclusion from external societal influences. He refrained from interacting with the Moroccan intellectuals and remained unresponsive to any form of critique. Bowles posited that the process of Westernization would result in the loss of Morocco's cultural identity (Elghandor, 1994). The notion that Morocco's past and present seemed to exist simultaneously and that individuals could lead their lives with minimal influence from temporal progression consumed him. He made a conscious decision to designate Tangier as his place of residence due to its timeless lifestyle, despite his reluctance to identify any particular location as his permanent home. Bowles perceived himself as a voyeuristic individual who was exiled and relegated to the role of a spectator or observer. His primary aim was to cultivate his imagination for his artistic pursuits. Rather than establishing permanent residency in Morocco, he regarded it as a customary ritual of personal growth and development. He expressed a disinclination to revisit his native city of New York.

"Bowles was born with a compulsive longing to escape" (Choukri & Shukrī, 2008, p. 157).

"He is at home everywhere and nowhere." (ibid., p. 151).

Bowles is famous for making the distinction between tourist and traveler in his book *The Sheltering Sky*, thereby clarifying the factors that render a successful journey precious to him.

"He did not think of himself as a tourist; he was a traveler. The difference is partly one of time, he would explain. Whereas the tourist generally hurries back home at the end of a few weeks or months, the traveler, belonging no more to one place than to the next, moves slowly, over periods of years, from one part of the earth to another" (Bowles, 1949, p. 14).

"Another important difference between tourist and traveler is that the former accepts his own civilization without question; not so the traveler, who compares it with the others, and rejects those elements he finds not to his liking" (ibid.).

Choukri contends that Bowles "hardly distinguishes between past and present. The future is nonexistent for him. In fact, what he wants is to live in

a world that is static and primitive—but civilized! How could a people be civilized and primitive at the same time? Bowles never enlightened us with an answer” (Choukri & Shukrī, 2008, p. 299). Bowles held an appreciation for primitiveness and backwardness, as it provided him with the impetus to exist in the present moment. He held the belief that, following Morocco’s attainment of independence, the city of Tangier underwent a significant transformation. The cultural phenomenon experienced a decline in its allure as it underwent a process of increasing Westernization. He held the view that the decline of traditional Moroccan culture and its loss of distinctiveness could be attributed to the process of Westernization. Bowles posited that the introduction of Western cultural values, consumerism, and industrialization had a detrimental effect on Morocco’s social structure and its relationship with the environment. Bowles expressed concern regarding the impact of industrialization and consumerism on the traditional customs and beliefs of Moroccan society, which has resulted in a decline in cultural identity. On the flip side, he expressed admiration for the norms and traditions of Moroccan society, deeming them essential to maintaining its unique character.

Bowles’ perspective on the universe was characterized by a significant degree of distortion, and as such, any analysis of his representations of Morocco and its people must take into account his unique worldview. His perception of Morocco was shaped particularly by his fascination with the perceived primitive way of life and the less developed populace of Tangier. This allure aligned with his personal preferences and may have contributed to his decision to remain in the city. Bowles’s distorted worldview can be seen as a reflection of his own experiences and desires rather than an accurate representation of Moroccan culture and society. Despite this distortion, Bowles was able to capture the enigmatic quality of Tangier in his writing. In his essay “The Worlds of Tangier,” he portrays the city as possessing a multifaceted nature that compels individuals to explore its historical background and cultural richness.

“I have not discovered very much, but at least I am now convinced that Tangier is a place where the past and the present exist simultaneously in proportionate degree, where a very much alive today is given an added depth of reality by the presence of an equally alive yesterday. In Europe, it seems to me, the past is largely fictitious; to be aware of it one must have previous knowledge of it. In Tangier, the past is a physical reality as perceptible as the sunlight” (Bowles, 1958).

This excerpt captures the essence of Tangier, highlighting how the past and present coexist in harmony. It suggests that in Tangier, the past is not merely a distant concept but a tangible presence that enriches the present. Bowles contrasts this with Europe, where the past may feel more distant and

disconnected. This evocative description emphasizes Tangier's unique ability to make the past come alive. In *The Sheltering Sky*, Port, the main character, inquires of Kit, "What's a week to them? Time doesn't exist for them (Bowles, 1949)." In his paper dubbed "Why Did I Defend Paul Bowles ?", Hisham Aidi describes Bowles's analysis of the representations of Morocco in his novels and stories. Aidi has gone through Bowles' works in detail and has identified various tropes or common themes that are often associated with Orientalism. These tropes include exoticism, a sense of timelessness, and a portrayal of the East as barbaric or uncivilized.

"In my paper, I had scoured his novels and stories parsing his representations of Morocco, and concluded that although all the tropes of the Orientalist tradition—exotica, timelessness, barbarism—were there, Bowles should be spared the charge" (Aidi, 2019, p. 6).

Despite the presence of these tropes in Bowles's work, the author of the paper has concluded that Bowles should not be accused of perpetuating Orientalism. He argues that Bowles should be spared the label "Orientalist" because he places an ironic twist on Orientalist themes, essentially demonstrating their absurdity. The author suggests that Bowles is interested in studying Moroccans as a people rather than as remnants of a primitive past. Additionally, the author highlights Bowles' genuine intellectual interest in Tangier's history and folk culture, which sets him apart from other expatriates in the city. However, upon closer examination of Bowles's portrayals of Morocco and its people in his novels, short stories, and interviews, one can observe a multitude of elements that align with the literary and post-colonial theories of scholars like Stuart Hall and Jenny Kidd. Upon reading Bowles's stories, it becomes evident that he falls into the category of Orientalist writers, sharing many similarities with other writers of the same tradition. His storytelling is marked by the inclusion of stereotypical representations of Morocco and its people, perpetuating Orientalist tropes and exoticizing the culture. Bowles demonstrates a fascination with the exotic, romanticizing the environment and portraying it as timeless and primitive. These elements align with the characteristics commonly associated with Orientalist literature. Contrary to Hisham Aidi's argument, it is clear that Bowles' works reflect an Orientalist perspective. His portrayals of Morocco are rooted in a Western gaze that often exoticizes and simplifies the culture, reinforcing existing power dynamics and the dominant narratives about the East. While it is important to acknowledge Bowles' contributions to Moroccan music and his interest in Tangier's history, it is equally important to critically examine his writings perpetuate Orientalist stereotypes. Bowles's works cannot be exempted from the Orientalist label. His depictions of Morocco align with the broader tradition of Orientalism in literature, emphasizing the need for a

critical analysis of his writings and a recognition of the power dynamics inherent in his representations of Moroccan culture and society.

### **Timelessness: a pervasive theme in Moroccan travel literature**

The idea of timelessness has been frequently applied to all things considered “different” in Morocco, including Tangier, the Moroccan souks, and the famous square in Marrakesh. For Western visitors, the sounds, sights, and smells of these places are a source of great fascination and allure. However, it is important to recognize that the discourse surrounding the “timelessness” theme can be equated with notions of “backwardness” or “primitive nature.” Travel writers often describe feeling transported through time and space when encountering “different” and “exotic” environments, perpetuating the idea that non-Western cultures are static and unchanging. This fascination with the “magical world of the Orient” is often built upon the books and media consumed by Westerners, which reinforce stereotypes and romanticize Oriental countries like Morocco. The most famous of these books include Paul Bowles’s *The Sheltering Sky*, Frances Macnab’s *A Ride in Morocco*, Alec John Dawson’s *Things Seen in Morocco*, Edith Wharton’s *In Morocco*, and the famous stories from *The One Thousand and One Nights*. Several Western travel writers, including Peter Mayne, Paul Bowles, Elias Canetti, John Davidson, and Josh Shoemake traveled to Morocco and observed the distinctive correlation between time and Moroccan cultural practices. These authors have depicted the experience of residing in Morocco as a phenomenon where the passage of time appears to decelerate or halt entirely, as though the nation occupies an alternative temporal realm in comparison to the rest of the globe. The following statement made by Nizami, a 48-year-old Azerbaijani man who emigrated to the U.S., regarding his experiences living and working in different countries provides insight into his perception of time and the varying levels of development and progress he observed in each place. Nizami uses the metaphor of a time machine to describe the stark contrasts between the countries he has experienced.

“It’s the same as travelling by means of a time machine. I have been to absolutely different worlds. It’s sometimes hard to believe that conditions people live in can be so different. Afghanistan compared to the States is like the sixteenth century. Nothing has changed ever since they got stuck in the past. However, Azerbaijan compared to Afghanistan is certainly a more advanced country. Azerbaijan compared to the USA, that’s the eighteenth or nineteenth century” (Rumyantsev, 2016, p. 7).

According to Nizami, Afghanistan represents a world stuck in the past, specifically comparing it to the sixteenth century. This suggests that he

perceives Afghanistan as a country that has not undergone significant societal or developmental changes over the centuries. He implies that the living conditions and overall state of development in Afghanistan are significantly behind those of more modern and advanced societies. Likewise, the Moroccan perception of time is frequently associated with the nation's abundant historical and cultural legacy. Scholars from the West have observed that Moroccans exhibit a distinct temporal orientation that diverges from that of Westerners, characterized by a heightened emphasis on present-focused living and the appreciation of the current moment. In its rural areas, Morocco has largely retained the same way of life it has had for centuries. Tourists have the opportunity to witness individuals adorned in customary attire, observe agricultural laborers utilizing manual implements to cultivate the land, and witness skilled craftsmen meticulously creating handmade goods. These visual stimuli have the potential to evoke a sense of temporal suspension, wherein the passage of time appears to decelerate and existence manifests at a more measured and intentional rhythm. The topography of Morocco is a contributing factor in engendering a perception of enduring temporal qualities. The country's natural splendor, ranging from the rugged Atlas Mountains to the vast Sahara Desert, can elicit a sense of timelessness and awe. The phenomenon of time seemingly coming to a halt in Morocco is frequently attributed by Western travel writers to their encounter with a culture that adheres to a distinct rhythm from that to which they are accustomed in their native land. In addition to Bowles, other writers make multiple references to the perpetual nature of existence in Morocco. Here are other cases where Western authors have employed the notion of timelessness to characterize Morocco. Peter Mayne, in *A Year in Marrakesh*, writes:

“Time is unimportant here” (Mayne, 2002, p. 58).

“For him, time does not exist and so cannot drag. I don't get bored either because my mind is busy all the while. It is mental fatigue or my dinner-time that stops the lessons, not boredom” (ibid, p. 62).

Here, Mayne is describing a sense of timelessness that he experiences in Marrakesh. He is suggesting that time is unimportant, even nonexistent, which allows him to focus on the present moment and stay mentally engaged. He contrasts this with other situations where time can feel like it is dragging or where he may become bored. By highlighting the lack of time pressure in this place, Mayne is emphasizing its unique qualities and suggesting that it offers a different kind of experience from what he is used to. Mayne posits the notion that Moroccans may not place a high value on time or possess a level of productivity and efficiency comparable to that of Westerners, thus portraying Morocco as an exotic travel destination for many travelers. Its cities, especially Marrakesh, Tangier, and Essaouira, are well-known for their

lively markets, commonly referred to as souks, where vendors offer a diverse range of goods and services. Their bustling atmospheres overwhelm visitors who are unaccustomed to similar environments. The sensory stimuli emanating from the crowded thoroughfares can lead to a state of sensory overload for pedestrians traversing these commercial hubs. As a result, this creates a perception of being situated in a distinct historical epoch and being isolated from the bustling external world, which is associated with the West. In the following excerpt from *Voices of Marrakesh*, Elias Canetti provides a vivid depiction of the enduring sentiment he experiences while being fully engaged in the Jamaa El Fna square:

“I had the feeling that I was really somewhere else now, that I had reached the goal of my journey. I did not want to leave; I had been hundreds of years ago but I had forgotten and now it was all coming back to me. I found exhibited the density and warmth of life as I feel in myself. I was the square as I stood in it. I believe I am it always” (Canetti & Underwood, 1981, p. 45).

The natural beauty of Morocco, with its vast deserts, rugged mountains, stunning coastlines, and bustling souks filled with the fragrant aroma of spices, creates a timeless feeling of being transported through time. For example, the presence of magnificent landscapes can evoke a sense of insignificance among individuals from other countries and engender a perception of inhabiting an alternate reality. Walter Weiss mentions in his literary work *Morocco: In the Labyrinth of Dreams and Bazaars* that:

“Time seems to have stopped in this mountain town that until 1920 no Christian was allowed to enter” (Weiss, 2016, p. 21).

“We feel suddenly transported to the seventies” (ibid.).

Weiss asserts that Morocco offers a unique experience to visitors, as they may perceive a blend of antiquity and contemporaneity, where the flow of time appears to be distinct and the historical and current aspects are closely interrelated. A comparable illustration can be found in *Tangier: From the Romans to the Rolling Stones* by Richard Hamilton:

“Tangier was Keith’s first experience of Africa and he fell in love with the city. He felt that he had been teleported back in time: ‘You either went “How weird”, or you went, “Wow! This is great” (Hamilton, 2020, p. 262).

The notion that time comes to a halt or decelerates in Oriental nations is a prevalent stereotype—a broad and all-encompassing one that has the potential to present difficulties and may not be entirely precise or equitable. There is diversity in the temporal orientations of Oriental or Eastern nations,

and individuals belonging to these cultures may exhibit distinct temporal attitudes. This particular stereotype constitutes a manifestation of Orientalism. The Western tendency to idealize and sensationalize Eastern cultures represents a distinct form of discourse. John Davidson refers to the enduring nature of Morocco, particularly in his depiction of the local people:

“But the fact is, time is no object to the people here; their care is merely how to waste it; as soon as one meal is finished, they want to sleep till the time for the next arrives” (Davidson, 1839, p. 202).

Davidson correlates the concept of timelessness with indolence, insinuating that Moroccans, in contrast to individuals from Western cultures, exhibit a lack of productivity and disregard for temporal awareness. The stereotype of “Oriental laziness” lacks empirical evidence and is considered derogatory. This notion is linked to the stereotype that individuals of foreign descent lack diligence and aspiration and are only preoccupied with the consumption of food and rest. Such a misconception posits that these individuals lack the motivation or ambition to evolve or innovate and are content with a static and perpetual existence. The statement suggests a dichotomy between the West, characterized by dynamism and progressiveness, and the East, characterized by rigidity and resistance to change. Travel writers reinforce the stereotype of the East as a region characterized by mysticism, spirituality, and timelessness, where individuals are perceived as idle and apathetic. The Western portrayal of Morocco has relied on the concept of Oriental timelessness to accentuate exoticism, orientalism, and mysticism. This representational technique depicts the country as a locale where time appears to be suspended owing to the perceived indolence of its inhabitants. The practice of assimilating diversity is a prevalent strategy utilized by travel writers, who frequently endeavor to comprehend the unfamiliar societies and individuals they come across while voyaging. This phenomenon pertains to the practice of viewing cultural distinctions as innate and unalterable.

## **Conclusion**

The construction of the Orientalist stereotype of timelessness in Morocco finds its roots in Western perceptions and biases about the Orient. Western writers often describe Morocco as a place devoid of time, and this portrayal emerges from a romanticized and exoticized view of its people, culture, and society. As Segalen stated in *Essay on Exoticism: An Aesthetics of Diversity*, “Exoticism does not only exist in space, but is equally dependent on time” (Segalen, 2002, p. 18). The origins of timelessness can be traced back to earlier Orientalist notions that were ingrained in Western minds from a young age. The construction of meaning surrounding the idea of the Orient as



timeless is influenced by the stereotypes, books, and media consumed by Westerners. These intentional constructions of meaning and representations serve to reinforce the belief in Western cultural superiority while belittling the “Other”. Western consumers have consistently been exposed to narratives that depict the Orient as primitive, timeless, backward, and inferior. These qualities are often considered synonymous in these portrayals. The depiction of the Orient plays a significant role in shaping the identities, cultures, and communities of Westerners. It is important to recognize that representations are not fixed or static; rather, they are in a constant state of construction and reconstruction. The perpetuation of the discourse of Orientalism aims to undermine various cultures, including Morocco. Representation is closely intertwined with the concept of difference, highlighting how individuals and groups are seen as distinct from one another. Timelessness is one of the techniques employed by Western writers, alongside infantilization, stereotyping, depictions of nature and the picturesque, witchcraft, superstitions, backwardness, laziness, despotism, barbarism, exploitation of women, brutality and numerous others that fall within the repertoire of Orientalism (Diane M. Huddleston, 2012). From these representations, one can deduce that Oriental places are regarded as stagnant, where progress is hindered. Western perceptions suggest that Moroccans, unlike people from the West, are unable to be productive and instead prefer to live a timeless life. All the writers that were mentioned in this article have included the ‘timeless’ aspect of Morocco. Josh Shoemake, whose book *Tangier: A Literary Guide for Travelers* was written in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, describes Tangier as a “timeless place” (Shoemake, 2013, p. 19). Claude McKay in *American Orientalism: Taking Casablanca* believed that in Fez he was “walking all the time on a magic carpet” (“American Orientalism: Taking Casablanca,” 2013). Edward Said describes Islam as a religion that “existed in a kind of timeless childhood” (Said, 2008, p. 30). Overall, the concept of timelessness is depicted as an inevitable, inherent characteristic of Oriental people. In summary, the perception of timelessness in Morocco and other Oriental contexts is a product of Orientalist discourse perpetuated by Western writers. Through intentional and strategic constructions of meaning and representations, the West has succeeded in portraying the Orient as inferior and resistant to progress.

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## L'Approche Rationnelle des Cultures Africaines au Regard des Défis de Développement

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### Résumé

Le combat pour la restauration culturelle, bien que noble au départ, est devenu maladroitement un prétexte à un retour aux sources sans restriction. La volonté farouche de restaurer les cultures africaines a inévitablement conduit les pionniers à privilégier la valorisation culturelle sans discerner les aspects obsolètes et les antivaleurs sociales. Il s'agit ici de souligner que la lutte pour la restauration culturelle n'est pas la meilleure voie vers le développement, mais plutôt vers la restructuration culturelle. Il faut donc éviter de présenter les traditions et les pratiques coutumières africaines comme les armes les plus efficaces pour le développement de l'Afrique, mais plutôt oser rationaliser ces pratiques. Pour mener à bien ce travail, la méthode de l'analyse critique et de la confrontation des recherches et des travaux a été privilégiée. Ce processus a permis d'examiner les théories développées par les tenants des traditions et celles de leurs détracteurs, et enfin d'en tirer une conclusion. Il résulte de cette dernière que, pour relever les défis du 21ème siècle en Afrique, la technologie doit primer sur la culture, les besoins matériels sur les besoins spirituels ou métaphysiques, de sorte que la priorité doit être donnée aux aspects technologiques et scientifiques de la culture. Les données morales et religieuses sont des aspects qui divergent d'un environnement à l'autre, d'une époque à l'autre. En revanche, les techniques de transformation de la nature et les modes de construction des habitations reposent sur des principes universels que chaque peuple a l'obligation de s'approprier.

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**Mots-clés:** Traditions, occultisme, métaphysique, connaissance, science, technologie

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## **The Rational Approach of African Cultures to Development Challenges**

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### **Abstract**

The struggle for cultural restoration, though noble from the outset, has clumsily become a substitute for an unrestricted return to one's roots. The fierce desire to restore African cultures inevitably led the pioneers to prioritize cultural valorization without discerning obsolete aspects and social anti-values. The aim here is to point out that the struggle for cultural restoration is not the best path to development, but rather to cultural restructuring. We must therefore avoid presenting African traditions and customary practices as the most effective weapons for African development, and instead dare to rationalize these practices. To carry out the work, the method of critical analysis and comparison of research and works was the path taken. This process made it possible to examine the theories developed by the proponents of the traditions and those of their critics, and finally to draw up a conclusion. The conclusion was that, in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century in Africa, technology should take precedence over culture, and material needs over spiritual or metaphysical ones, so that priority should be given to the technological and scientific aspects of culture. Moral and religious data are the aspects that diverge from one environment to another, from one era to another. On the other hand, the techniques for transforming nature and the ways in which homes are built are based on universal principles that every people has an obligation to appropriate by virtue of belonging to humanity.

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**Keywords:** Traditions, occultism, metaphysics, knowledge, science, technology

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### **Introduction**

Quand on aborde le sujet du développement de l'Afrique, les Africains focalisent souvent leurs attentions sur la nécessité de dynamisation culturelle,

de restitution du patrimoine culturel, mettant en vedette le concept du développement endogène.

Cette orientation ignore malheureusement la problématique du développement au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Il est une évidence qu'une nation, dans l'élaboration de son plan de développement intègre ou s'inspire de son cadre géographique, historique, politique et socio-culturel. Autant il est une exigence pour chaque peuple de faire un effort d'ouverture et d'adaptation en vue de s'approprier les moyens technologiques et scientifiques devenus des vecteurs de développement sur l'échiquier international. Certes, chaque peuple a sa culture, chaque communauté a ses coutumes dont la sauvegarde relève d'un devoir sacré et fondamental. Toutefois, vu les principes universels de bonne gouvernance économique qui ont fait leurs preuves au-delà des frontières nationales et qui demeurent identiques sans grandes variations dans l'espace et le temps, comment relever le défi du développement sans bousculer les fondamentaux des cultures contraires aux exigences du développement ? Les ambitions de l'originalité intégrale que prônent les Africains relèvent-elles du mythe ou de la réalité ? Ce travail constitue le deuxième essai en matière d'article de publication et s'inspire d'une revue de littérature dont principalement Et si l'Afrique refusait le développement de Axelle Kabou, La Rationalité, une ou plurielle de Paulin Hountondji, Race et histoire de Claude Lévi-Strauss.

## **Méthodes**

Pour réaliser le travail, la méthode d'analyse critique et de comparaison des recherches et des œuvres a été le chemin emprunté. Elle consiste dans un premier temps à étudier la revue littéraire tenant compte des centres d'intérêt en relation avec le sujet. En outre, les notes et les commentaires relevés lors des travaux de conférence-débat, des séminaires scientifiques et des émissions diverses font également objet d'analyse critique et comparative. Ce procédé a permis d'examiner les théories développées par les tenants des traditions et celles de leurs critiques pour enfin élaborer une conclusion.

## **Résultats**

Au regard des analyses critiques et comparatives, on s'attend que la réflexion des cadres et intellectuels africains ait subi un changement radical. Ainsi, les raisonnements et les modes de conception des Africains sont révisés et réorientés. De même, les inférences logiques entre les causes et les effets d'un phénomène sont reformulées de manière à éviter de confondre ces derniers, les uns avec les autres. En outre, les comportements quotidiens des personnes ordinaires et des populations en général ont connu une évolution en

termes de distinction entre les faits rationnels et les faits irrationnels en vue de la promotion de la rationalité.

### **Combat pour l'identité culturelle**

Les intellectuels africains, au lendemain des indépendances, ont entrepris un combat de revalorisation culturelle. Cette réaction consiste à répondre aux assauts dévastateurs des colonisateurs contre les pratiques traditionnelles africaines jugées comme dépourvues de sens, primitives ou « prélogiques ». Ce combat dont l'objectif visait à restituer aussi bien la dignité que l'honneur des peuples africains, donnait lieu à un espace de productions scientifiques, littéraires et artistiques.

Ayant pris une part active à ce combat malgré son origine qui trahit quelquefois les profondeurs culturelles dont il est nourri pour faire valoir ses convictions d'homme de science, Claude Lévi-Strauss s'est engagé dans la lutte. Dans son manteau d'ethnologue moderne, il a soutenu comme principe fondamental, l'idée qu'il est impossible d'attribuer des valeurs comparatives aux cultures, de les présenter dans un tableau hiérarchique d'infériorité ou de supériorité culturelles. Le relativisme culturel qui en ressort permet d'affirmer que tous les peuples ont une histoire y compris ceux qui n'ont pas connu l'écriture ni le progrès technique à la manière européenne. En effet, l'ethnologie entend donc bien penser la valeur des civilisations au pluriel et évite de conférer une portée universelle au critère de développement technique qui caractérise seulement l'histoire des sociétés occidentales. Justement, en dehors de l'aspect technique, il en existe une multitude d'autres que les peuples ou les communautés choisissent pour des raisons spécifiquement sociologiques. Il en résulte que chaque peuple se définit, se démarque par une sélection, un choix conscient ou non de développer tel ou tel aspect de la culture. Chaque peuple offre alors un modèle culturel particulier, un modèle spécifique inspiré de son histoire, ses traditions, sa situation géographique et qui ne saurait servir de modèle pour d'autres. Cette perception du relativisme culturel nous met au cœur des relations entre religions et morales qui définissent l'univers mental de l'individu qui se forme et se conforme aux pratiques coutumières de son cadre de vie. Il faut comprendre par cette idée que chaque culture est un système de comportements et de normes, que la définition du bien et du mal, du licite et de l'interdit, du normal et de l'anormal sont variables de l'une à l'autre. On comprend dès lors que les normes sont l'affaire du groupe social non d'une raison supérieure et désincarnée. Par exemple, l'état de possession ou de transe est un trait de la culture afro-américaine, une expression religieuse codifiée : on n'entre pas en transe n'importe comment ni à toute occasion. La frénésie et l'état d'absence du possédé n'apparaissent comme une aberration ou un trouble du comportement

que par rapport aux normes culturelles et religieuses de l'espace occidental ou étranger.

Par ailleurs, le relativisme culturel, dans ses ramifications et ses déploiements induit la question de l'universalité de la raison. Très tôt, le débat culturel s'est transposé sur le terrain de la raison longtemps considérée comme universelle. La légitimité de ce transfert prend ses sources des critiques qui font que les faits culturels africains, pris comme prélogiques sont dépourvus de la raison, de la logique. Il en résulte l'impérieux devoir des intellectuels africains de restaurer les fondements rationnels des comportements des peuples africains. La critique de l'universalité du savoir devient un moyen privilégié de cette lutte. Dans cette optique, Hebga (2002) parle de rationalité ouverte en affirmant que « la rationalité est nécessairement particulière, et partant plurielle » (p.37). Il fait ainsi observer que les pensées universelles des grands philosophes tels que Platon, Descartes, Kant et autres considérées comme telles ne sont que des pensées particulières portées à l'universel. Inversement, qualifier de singulières et irrationnelles les pensées des Africains, c'est verser dans un intellectualisme verbeux fondé sur le cercle vicieux de « Deux poids deux mesures flagrant » (p.36). La rationalité ouverte que prône Hebga se résume dans la formule suivante « la particularité de l'universel européen et l'universalité du particulier africain » (p.37) qui consacre une certaine unité des contraires, un monde empreint de la rationalité et l'irrationalité, de la science et des mythes, du naturel et de surnaturel. La rationalité ouverte rejette l'exclusion de certaines cultures inspirée d'un monde bipolaire et prône la reconnaissance de toutes les cultures tout en saisissant les qualités des unes et des autres pour en construire un monde nouveau et meilleur.

Au regard du fait que la rationalité cesse d'être la source universelle des civilisations et se ramifie sous le sceau du pluralisme culturel, elle déteint sur le savoir et la vérité qui eux aussi sont emportés par la diversité des connaissances. Il n'y a plus de vérité éternelle dans le ciel pur de l'esprit au-dessus des contingences humaines. Elle est plutôt engagée dans le monde avec ses vicissitudes et s'imbrique dans les croyances et les représentations existantes. Elle est donc aux prises avec des croyances, des dogmes et des préjugés. Par conséquent, elle n'est pas neutre, mais au cœur des lignes de force qui s'affrontent tant dans la vie matérielle, spirituelle que sociale. Dans cette perspective de rationalité plurielle, on ne peut s'empêcher de mettre en valeur les procédés d'élaboration de savoir considérés comme irrationnels dans l'intention de les valoriser et les insérer dans le champ de la rationalité dite ouverte.

Dans le Golfe de Guinée au Nigéria, au Togo, au Ghana et particulièrement dans la partie méridionale du Bénin, la divination est, parmi tant d'autres procédés, un art de révélation et de constitution de savoir

traditionnel. La géomancie ou l'art divinatoire appelée communément "fa" au Bénin est une pratique traditionnelle. Elle permet de révéler, par le jet des cauris ou des noyaux de pomme sauvage sur une tablette soigneusement confectionnée, le fonctionnement de l'univers et les manifestations des forces naturelles et surnaturelles. Il est aussi un moyen de communication infaillible entre les humains et les divinités ou les aïeux, le monde naturel et surnaturel. Selon le professeur CAKPO (2018), le fa est une science dont les lois et principes sont immuables ; il ne s'accommode pas avec le hasard et son mode de fonctionnement procède par les quatre éléments naturels que sont : l'air, le feu, la terre et l'eau. Ils symbolisent « les actants cosmiques » de l'univers. Symbole du grand maître de la connaissance, le "fa" est la source de la certitude de par ses fonctions prédictibles et prévisibles. La finitude de l'homme est marquée par l'ignorance et l'incertitude de l'avenir, des complexités de la vie et des échecs quotidiens. De ce fait, l'Africain recourt à la géomancie qui, dans maintes occasions apporte des solutions satisfaisantes sur des préoccupations devant lesquelles la science occidentale demeure muette et impuissante.

En outre, la pharmacopée en Afrique constitue une source primordiale de recherche en matière de guérison des pathologies diverses et variées. En tant que médecine douce, elle offre un exemple d'identité culturelle infaillible face à la médecine conventionnelle. Les limites de cette dernière suscitent de plus en plus des inquiétudes sans compter les effets secondaires auxquels s'exposent les patients. A cela s'ajoute l'incertitude des soins qu'elle prodigue par moments pour certaines maladies qui lui résistent malgré l'efficacité des technologies médicales modernes. Mais pour jouir ou profiter de toute l'efficacité de la pharmacopée, le chercheur ou le praticien se doit de se soumettre à certaines exigences ou observer certaines règles qui paraissent superstitieuses aux yeux de la médecine moderne. De ce point de vue, Sounaye (2002) fait observer que :

Par conséquent, le tradithérapeute est aussi en rapport avec le monde des esprits et est au courant des interrelations entre les forces de la nature. On peut facilement remarquer cela dans le fait que le tradithérapeute ne cueille jamais sa plante médicinale n'importe comment, n'importe quand et n'importe où. Bien souvent, la prise de la plante est précédée de prières et d'autres précautions en usage dans le milieu. Cueillir une herbe, une plante, déterrer une racine, est comme un rite auquel le tradithérapeute sacrifie nécessairement. Sinon, selon Alhadji Ado, tradithérapeute de Boukoki, on court le risque de manquer de respect aux maîtres de l'ordre végétal et ainsi, de perdre l'efficacité de la racine, de l'écorce ou de l'herbe cueillie. (p.429).



Ces précautions qui peuvent paraître curieuses se justifient en fonction de l'interprétation de la maladie qui désigne un déséquilibre, un dysfonctionnement entre l'âme et le corps. Ainsi pour rétablir l'harmonie, il convient de tenir compte de la dimension spirituelle de la maladie d'où la nécessité d'entrer en contact avec le monde des esprits dont les manifestations varient d'un moment à l'autre et d'un endroit à l'autre. Une fois les rites spirituels réalisés pour apaiser l'âme et que les vertus des plantes agissent sur le corps par les principes actifs, la guérison s'établit aisément.

Contrairement à la médecine moderne, la tradithérapie ne nécessite pas plusieurs années d'études, quelquefois, elle se transmet par héritage simplement. Elle n'est pas non plus cloisonnée comme au domaine conventionnel. Un tradithérapeute est compétent pour plusieurs maladies. On peut aisément remarquer dans les milieux ruraux, que les tradithérapeutes aussi bien que les sages du village possèdent un domaine de connaissances vastes telles que l'histoire, la linguistique, les cultures végétales, la météorologie, la climatologie, les sciences économiques, la politique, la zoologie, l'ingénierie, etc. Point n'est besoin de faire une comparaison avec les chercheurs scientifiques que l'on rencontre dans nos universités où chacun est spécialiste dans un domaine précis. On comprend très bien que plus on se spécialise dans un domaine, plus la connaissance est pointue et par conséquent plus efficace. Et comme les études en spécialité demande plus de temps, elles nécessitent plus d'investissements financiers. De même, les consultations médicales en spécialité ont un coût que les populations ne sont pas capables d'assurer puisqu'ils disposent d'un pouvoir d'achat très faible. Certes, en préférant souvent les soins des tradithérapeutes, ils sont conscients que l'efficacité recherchée ne garantit pas toutes les attentes. Toutefois, il est de cas fréquents où des patients après plusieurs mois voire années des soins sans satisfaction dans les hôpitaux se réfèrent aux praticiens traditionnels et obtiennent la guérison à moindre coût et à brève échéance. Cette médecine dite traditionnelle prospère et peut-être encore pour longtemps. Car, la pesanteur sociologique fait préférer ses pratiques à celles venues de l'étranger. Par ailleurs, les revenus mensuels des populations rurales et urbaines ne leur permettent pas de fréquenter les centres de santé occidentaux. Quant au poids de la culture sur la conscience collective, Hazoumè (1989), présente un esclave 'mahî' capturé lors d'une guerre dont le tour est venu pour être décapité. Or lors de sa consécration au 'fa', il lui avait été prescrit certaines interdictions qu'il est tenu de respecter scrupuleusement au risque de connaître une existence très malheureuse, une mort subite et prématurée, l'échec dans toutes ces activités, etc. Très sensible aux interdits de 'fa', il n'a jamais enfreint aucune des règles prescrites marquées par des contraintes difficiles que lui imposaient ces règles empreintes de privations et d'abstentions de tout genre. Malgré cette fidélité sans faille aux divinités, le-voilà capturé à fleur d'âge et

prêt à être sacrifié aux fétiches. Avant d'être immolé, il prononce une dernière phrase :

Le destin a manqué à sa promesse puisque, malgré ma fidélité, je me vois conduit aujourd'hui à une mort prématurée et violente. Mais cela ne m'autorise pas à m'affranchir de son interdiction. Si je puis le voir après ma mort, c'est lui plutôt qui aura honte, tandis que je lui parlerai la tête haute ! (p.161).

Il faut simplement en retenir que le poids des traditions et la croyance infaillible aux divinités prédisposent le tenant des valeurs endogènes à garder la foi intacte malgré les faits et événements contradictoires qui mettent à rude épreuve les révélations divines et soumettent à des échecs redoutables. Il en résulte que la lutte de restauration identitaire, malgré sa noblesse, sa dignité et sa justesse présente des composantes sensibles dont la manipulation requiert non seulement une certaine prudence mais aussi une forme d'audace sans lesquelles le risque de conduire tout un peuple à sa perte est grand.

### **Le risque d'un combat suicide**

Autant les intellectuels africains ont l'impérieux devoir d'engager la lutte de sauvegarde de leurs cultures, autant ils ont l'obligation sacrée d'identifier les composantes négatives de leurs pratiques pour assurer un meilleur avenir. Quand on affirme qu'aucune culture n'est négative, nous devons comprendre qu'aucune n'est non plus parfaite. Reconnaître que nos pratiques coutumières ne sont pas parfaites, c'est déjà accepter qu'elles soient susceptibles d'amélioration, qu'elles portent en leurs seins des germes nuisibles aux populations, à la jeunesse et au développement. Le refus de cette reconnaissance induit inmanquablement le risque d'un combat suicidaire.

Soyons très attentifs à la notion de relativisme culturel dont nous devons prendre garde pour la cerner dans tous ses paramètres. En voulant valoriser les cultures africaines au nom du relativisme, il y a d'une part, le risque de prendre nos cultures comme meilleures, comme le centre de toutes les cultures, d'autre part, celui de verser dans l'absolutisme culturel qui rejette toutes critiques et diabolise tout apport étranger. Le relativisme culturel est une arme dont la mauvaise manipulation conduit facilement à l'ethnocentrisme qui est son contraire, au renversement de la hiérarchie pour mieux la conserver ou l'exploiter autrement. La philosophie de l'authentique ne vaut pas toujours mieux que celle de l'artificiel, de l'emprunt. Ce qui nous interpelle davantage, les valeurs universelles passent aux profits et pertes d'un relativisme culturel excessif. Ce dernier conduit malheureusement à l'impossibilité de porter un jugement, d'apprécier un comportement moralement détestable. Il en résulte la négligence ou la tendance à minimiser les valeurs universelles, valables partout et toujours. Certes, il existe des

valeurs culturelles dont l'appréciation dépend de la conviction intime du sujet. La monogamie et la polygamie, la vie en couple et le célibat, les modes de salutation avec un signe de main ou s'abaisser légèrement sont des pratiques culturelles qui relèvent purement du relativisme et chacun peut se prévaloir de l'un ou de l'autre sans gêne ni appréhension. Il en est ainsi parce que l'exercice de ces pratiques n'a pas d'influence négative directe sur le voisinage ou la communauté où l'on vit, bien qu'elles puissent à moyen ou à long terme se révéler nuisibles non seulement à celui qui en fait usage mais aussi aux voisins.

Mais de l'autre côté, lorsque ces pratiques culturelles ou coutumières créent de conséquences directes et immédiatement nuisibles à la communauté, il y a lieu de s'interroger sur la nécessité ou non de les maintenir ou les abandonner. Le mariage précoce ou forcé, qu'on le veuille ou non, crée d'énormes impacts sur le foyer tôt ou tard. L'interdiction aux filles d'aller à l'école sous prétexte que leurs rôles sont aux foyers et consistent à faire des enfants, s'en occuper et assurer les exigences domestiques ne sont pas sans conséquence. La privation des enfants filles et de la veuve du droit à l'héritage est une pratique coutumière à multiples conséquences sur les victimes mais aussi sur leurs progénitures et toute la communauté pour plusieurs décennies voire des siècles. Or la morale, institution humaine depuis l'antiquité vise essentiellement à édicter des règles pour organiser la vie sociale, faire régner la paix, la quiétude et le bonheur collectif. A l'instar de la culture, les règles morales sont aussi relatives à chaque société et varient dans le temps et dans l'espace. Pourtant dès lors que les actes des uns paraissent gênants et peuvent nuire aux autres, il convient logiquement de les réglementer et mettre en place des dispositifs qui permettent d'accepter certains faits et d'en interdire ou refuser d'autres, il en résulte l'institution des règles sociales et plus tard les lois. Ces règles ayant une portée sociale, elles sont susceptibles d'évoluer pour tenir compte des nouvelles réalités. En conséquence, elles peuvent devenir obsolètes et disparaître naturellement. Mais malgré son caractère relatif, la morale, au regard des différentes théories philosophiques n'échappe pas à l'exigence universelle qui était à l'antipode du relativisme culturel.

C'est le philosophe Kant qui a fait de l'exigence universelle le fondement moral d'un acte. Selon ce penseur, l'acte moral repose sur deux exigences : l'impératif hypothétique et l'impératif catégorique. Le premier a rapport aux sentiments, aux intérêts égoïstes qui nous poussent à poser des actes conditionnels et donc dépourvus de valeur morale car un acte moralement fondé ne saurait varier d'un moment à l'autre, selon les intérêts du moment mais devrait viser la raison universelle, Kant (1946) : « Agis toujours d'après une maxime telle que tu puisses vouloir en même temps qu'elle devienne une loi universelle » (p.95). En effet, selon Kant, une action moralement fondée relève de l'impératif catégorique et ne devrait pas varier d'une circonstance à l'autre, d'un individu à l'autre, d'une société à l'autre.

Car lorsque chacun pose un acte, il doit s'assurer que ce dernier puisse servir de règle universelle, autrement dit, se poser la question suivante : Et si tout le monde agit comme je le fais, que deviendrait l'humanité, tous les hommes pourraient-ils y vivre paisiblement ? Si la réponse à cette question est négative, on conclut qu'un tel acte est moralement non fondé puisqu'il ne peut pas être posé partout et en tout lieu sans contradiction et sans conflit. En d'autres termes, toute personne qui veut mentir, lorsqu'elle se pose la question précédente et se rend compte qu'il n'est pas bon que le mensonge s'érige en règle universelle, elle doit s'en abstenir puisqu'elle ne répond pas au principe universel. L'autre versant de la pensée de Kant stipule que toute action moralement fondée ne devrait pas non plus viser un but car une fois le but atteint, la règle qui a servi de principe tombe et l'action devient donc dépourvue de valeur morale. Lorsqu'on respecte les prescriptions morales, les lois de la société de peur d'aller en prison, on le fait bien mais une telle action ne saurait servir d'exemple simplement parce qu'elle est posée dans l'intérêt de celui qui agit et non dans l'intérêt de la communauté. Dès qu'il s'offre à la personne de poser l'acte contraire en toute impunité, réussir à corrompre les juges, pratiquer le trafic d'influence par le pouvoir ou les moyens financiers, etc., le respect des règles n'aura plus d'importance et elles seront constamment violées, publiquement et sans crainte. Cette pensée nous rapproche de Platon (1993) à travers Gygès le Lydien, un personnage très honnête et sincère mais devenu subitement malfaiteur et assassin dès lors qu'il avait en sa possession, un pouvoir mystique qui pouvait le rendre invisible.

En effet, l'intérêt de cette référence à Kant s'inscrit dans le fait que si les règles de notre société, coutumières ou morales sont relatives, elles ont toutefois besoin des principes transcendants grâce auxquels on peut les apprécier de l'intérieur ou de l'extérieur. Les valeurs existent en termes d'échelle, il y en a de positives et de négatives. L'honnêteté, la justice, la vertu, la tolérance sont de l'échelle des valeurs positives tandis que le vol, la tricherie, l'assassinat, le mensonge, la violence, la corruption sont aussi des valeurs mais des valeurs négatives. Car, les partisans de ces dernières visent un certain bien, une satisfaction ou du moins un soulagement à tel point qu'ils les perçoivent comme des choses les plus importantes, les plus valeureuses par lesquelles ils peuvent atteindre leurs objectifs en un temps précis. Tout homme raisonnable peut comprendre aisément que ces valeurs sont manifestement négatives mais ceux qui les pratiquent ne se préoccupent pas de leur fondement négatif ou positif. Platon (1997) dira que nul n'est méchant volontairement pour signifier que le malfaiteur est un ignorant parce qu'il s'est trompé en faisant une confusion de l'échelle des valeurs. La preuve, il n'acceptera jamais qu'on pratique sur sa personne ce qu'il fait aux autres d'où il est en contradiction avec lui-même puisqu'il fait quelque chose en toute conscience et pourtant ne souhaiterait pas que d'autres le fassent sur sa

personne. En conséquence, on ne peut s'empêcher de reconnaître que toutes les valeurs ne sont pas au même niveau d'appréciation, les unes sont positives et les autres négatives. Les valeurs positives ont un caractère universel et peuvent servir de référence sans laquelle aucune règle morale n'aura de fondement. Il existe donc des valeurs au-delà de toute société simplement parce qu'elles sont fondées en raison, non qu'elles proviennent de tel milieu ni époque mais elles résident dans la conscience de tout homme saint de corps et d'esprit. Mais si par coïncidence historique, certaines sociétés les ont vite découvertes et adoptées et en font leurs références culturelles, cela ne fait pas d'eux les dépositaires exclusifs de ces valeurs et il n'y a aucune faiblesse ni honte à les intégrer à sa base culturelle en tant que référence universelle. Les commandements bibliques tels que ne pas tuer, ne pas commettre l'adultère, ne pas mentir, même s'ils s'adressent d'abord au peuple juif, ils présentent une résonance universelle. Ainsi tous les peuples du monde entier peuvent en toute légitimité s'en réclamer au même titre que les juifs puisque c'est un pur hasard que les juifs soient les premiers à les transcrire dans un document. Car s'ils ne le faisaient pas, il est très certain et évident que d'autres peuples l'auraient fait car tout homme sans distinction de race ni de culture pourrait lire ces prescriptions dans sa conscience en tant que principes naturels qui se manifestent spontanément en tout être humain.

Un problème saute à l'esprit : l'universalité que l'on colle au relativisme. Quand on affirme que le relativisme est une valeur universelle pour soutenir que toutes les cultures sont particulières et se valent les unes aussi bien que les autres, cela suscite une préoccupation qui réintroduit et met en valeur ce que l'on veut éviter à savoir l'universalité culturelle. Le relativisme semble incompatible avec l'idée qu'il existe des valeurs universelles. Il soutient qu'il n'existe que de simples normes sociales, ayant une portée limitée dans le temps et dans l'espace de sorte qu'il ne puisse y avoir des règles morales transcendantes, qui soient valables partout et toujours indépendamment de l'expérience que chacun fait de sa culture particulière. Lévi-Strauss (1985) dans cette perspective affirme : « Je maintiens que nous ne disposons d'aucun système de référence, légitimement applicable à des sociétés aux confins de notre univers sociologique et envisagées dans leur rapport réciproque » (p.78).

Là où l'analyse de Lévi-Strauss interpelle la conscience, c'est sa règle de prohibition de l'inceste qu'il considère comme règle universelle qui fait exception. Tout le reste relève du particularisme. En d'autres termes, tout ce qui échappe à la norme, à la règle, relève de l'ordre de la culture et donc du particulier. Inversement, tout ce qui est universel par exemple le biologique, les mimiques relèvent de l'ordre naturel.

Certes, le relativisme en tant qu'il est fondé sur l'idée que l'humanité forme un système de différences culturelles, il constitue une arme que l'on

peut brandir pour calmer les vellétés de toutes cultures d'inspiration hégémonique. Mais, c'est une arme à double tranchant, car si le sens de la relativité est un signe d'ouverture d'esprit, de partage mutuel et de considérations réciproques, quant au relativisme, il crée une impasse intellectuelle ou un cercle vicieux puisqu'il semble conclure du fait au droit. Le cercle se manifeste en ce sens que s'il n'existe pas de règles universelles dans la réalité ou en fait, on ne peut en conclure de ce fait qu'il ne puisse ou doive jamais y en avoir. Les valeurs sont du domaine du droit et non du fait, de ce qui est mais plutôt de ce qui doit être. La critique relativiste des valeurs universelles crée en son sein un piège et invite à la prudence. Vu sous cet angle, le relativisme paraît moins une réfutation argumentée de l'universalisme philosophique que son inverse. L'affirmation selon laquelle toute valeur est particulière à une culture peut non seulement être entendue comme un constat ethnologique mais aussi comme la valorisation du particulier qui à la longue peut prendre la forme d'une haine ouverte ou secrète de l'universel. L'humanité étant une, les peuples partagent qu'on le veuille ou non des valeurs communes qui font leur appartenance à une même famille dite humaine et on ne saurait rejeter si facilement l'universel justement dans le domaine culturel sans tomber dans une impasse.

Le sacrifice humain, pratiqué et soutenu dans l'ancien royaume d'Abomey au Bénin comme une institution ancestrale doit-il continuer au XXI<sup>e</sup> siècle au nom du relativisme culturel ? Selon Hazoumè (1989), le roi GUEZO (1818-1858, 9<sup>ème</sup> roi de la dynastie royale d'Abomey, Bénin), pourtant très attaché aux coutumes de ses ancêtres, ne s'est pas empêché d'exprimer sa réprobation d'une coutume qu'il pratique à contre cœur :

C'est, apprends-le, bien contraint que je commémore, tous les ans, le crucifiement institué par TEGBESSOU (1740-1774, 6<sup>ème</sup> roi de la dynastie royale d'Abomey, Bénin). Essayer de supprimer ces horreurs serait déchoir aussitôt dans l'estime du peuple puisque ce sadisme est entré dans les coutumes. Je crois que j'aurai assez fait en ne permettant pas que, sous mon règne, l'on ajoute d'autres horreurs à ces sacrifices ainsi que le voulait Migan. (p.218).

De même, l'excision est une pratique largement répandue en Afrique. En dehors des combats que livrent les défenseurs des droits de l'homme (que l'on fustige comme des appendices ou des bras opérationnels des colons) contre cette pratique, il s'avère nécessaire de la mettre sur la balance pour en apprécier ses tenants et aboutissants. Quand on y jette un regard critique, on se rend compte aisément qu'aucun facteur ne milite pour son maintien. La fille qui n'est pas excisée ne présente aucune tare, pas de pathologie afférente ni dysfonctionnement physiologique. Par contre, celle qui est excisée en porte les séquelles pour l'éternité, qui vont jusqu'à la stérilité, à la mort en cas

d'hémorragie grave. Quelle perte ou dommage sa suppression peut engendrer pour les sociétés qui l'abandonnent ? S'il faut continuer ces pratiques rétrogrades et inhumaines simplement par conformisme aux institutions ancestrales, la fin du tunnel n'est pas pour demain et l'heure du développement attendra encore longtemps.

En effet, la philosophie de l'authentique n'est pas toujours favorable aux exigences du développement, celles qui sont en phase avec la technologie nouvelle. Le relativisme en tant que valeur universelle est un instrument dont il faut user avec cohérence, lucidité et sans parti pris. Il convient d'y avoir recours avec esprit de tolérance qui prédispose les populations africaines à accepter le brassage des civilisations, leurs emprunts mutuels, les bienfaits de l'acculturation. S'il n'y a pas de civilisations supérieures, elles sont toutefois en permanente mutation. Etant en contact les unes par rapport aux autres, elles se fécondent mutuellement. Toutefois, les unes peuvent avoir quelque chose de plus que les autres, de supérieur aux autres. Cette avancée que l'on remarque chez certains réside justement dans leur capacité d'adaptation aux apports étrangers, l'aptitude à assimiler plus facilement les éléments positifs qui font la différence des autres et qui leur permettent de s'imposer comme maîtres du monde entier, de mieux transformer la nature, de la soumettre à leur volonté et réduire les souffrances humaines. On peut citer l'exemple de l'« américanisation » des modes de vie dans certains pays européens ou asiatiques. Reconnaissons-le, ce phénomène a pris dans l'histoire l'allure d'une standardisation des sociétés à l'échelle mondiale où la riche variété des civilisations risque de se perdre avec le phénomène de la déculturation qui s'en suit.

Nous l'avons dit supra que le refus de la hiérarchie des cultures prenait sa source dans la lutte contre le colonialisme, et cette lutte valait son pesant d'or. Mais nous devons y prendre garde. On se souvient encore des arguments faciles que certains tenants de cette hiérarchie avançaient tels que les dictatures dans les années 70 en Afrique et en Orient dont se servaient les pouvoirs autoritaires pour rejeter les critiques de l'Amnesty International, les fondements des droits de l'homme considérés comme des arguties inventées par l'Occident pour dominer les peuples colonisés. Certes, ces débats ne sont plus d'actualité, tout le monde consent de nos jours que la dictature est une pratique politique à combattre. S'il faut comprendre du point de vue ethnologique certaines traditions telles que le lévirat, le mariage forcé, l'excision, etc., cette compréhension empêche-t-elle que l'on y projette un regard critique ? L'homogénéité du groupe au nom de laquelle on défend les mœurs et pratiques coutumières ne demeure plus tellement étanche qu'on le croit. Les critiques des pratiques culturelles africaines ne proviennent pas seulement des Occidentaux, de l'étranger. On remarque de plus en plus des voies légitimes qui s'élèvent de l'intérieur pour dénoncer des pratiques

coutumières rétrogrades. Lorsque les attaques surgissent de l'intérieur du groupe culturel, les acteurs qui font preuve d'une telle autocritique ou qui expriment un point de vue contraire à celui du groupe traditionnel sont traités d'eurocentristes, de déculturés ou simplement des esclaves à la solde colonialiste. Si l'on défend les pratiques de groupe au nom du relativisme culturel, on doit permettre que chaque individu du groupe défende ses perceptions coutumières au nom du même droit au relativisme culturel.

On pourra certes, objecter le principe de la supériorité du groupe sur l'individu pour faire prévaloir les règles coutumières sur les prétentions individuelles. Mais le quiproquo persiste. Au nom de quoi croit-on imposer légitimement à l'individu les décisions du groupe surtout que ces décisions relèvent des traditions qui n'ont jamais fait l'objet d'une consultation populaire ? Il serait tout de même judicieux que ces pratiques coutumières longtemps exercées depuis de longues générations soient soumises à la génération actuelle pour l'obtention d'un consentement renouvelé. Ce qui gêne, c'est que le relativisme culturel au nom duquel on tend à préserver les coutumes du groupe contre l'ingérence culturelle semble perdre subitement de sa valeur à l'échelle individuelle. C'est toujours au nom du relativisme culturel que l'individu exprime ses préférences culturelles au sein de son groupe. Comme on peut s'en convaincre, le relativisme culturel n'a pas une valeur absolue. Certes, les prétentions individuelles peuvent être battues en brèche comme une révolte ou une contravention. Le cas de Antigone est un exemple illustratif. En outre, on peut s'interroger jusqu'à quel niveau la contestation sociale d'une pratique coutumière cesse d'être perçue comme un fait individuel isolé et rejeté par la collectivité s'il n'est pas permis que la volonté générale soit consultée. Car ce qu'on observe de nos jours, c'est que de plus en plus, des contestations s'élèvent et se généralisent davantage dans les communautés pour remettre en cause certaines pratiques culturelles qui pourtant sont maintenues bon gré mal gré contre une frange de la population de plus en plus majoritaire. Dans les villages au Sud du Bénin, les religions chrétiennes surgissent dans tous les coins de rue, les églises sont remplies non seulement les dimanches mais aussi les jours ouvrables. C'est aussi au nom du relativisme culturel que ces groupes revendiquent leurs droits à pratiquer la religion de leur choix. De nos jours, et cela fait déjà plusieurs décennies, les chefs féticheurs ont de difficultés à recruter des adeptes. Souvent, devant le refus des jeunes cibles pour l'internement fétichiste, ils procèdent par des envoûtements ou des menaces, qui malgré tout demeurent vains. On enregistre régulièrement des bagarres et des conflits entre partisans et opposants de l'internement fétichiste avec plusieurs cas de plaintes dans les unités de police ou dans les tribunaux contre des manœuvres d'internement fétichiste forcé où les chefs féticheurs enlèvent des jeunes contre leur gré ou l'avis de leurs parents.



Ceux qui défendent les traditions sont dans leurs droits et c'est même une mission honorable et un devoir impératif de veiller à la sauvegarde des acquis culturels, artistiques, philosophiques, historiques et littéraires d'un peuple. Autant, il faut aussi reconnaître le droit de ceux qui, au fil du temps font une option autre que celle des traditions au nom du même droit à la différence culturelle et au refus de ses coutumes et traditions. Ne pas tolérer ce droit à ceux qui s'en réclament, c'est verser dans les travers psychosociaux qui conduisent inéluctablement d'une part à l'ethnocentrisme, qui est malheureusement l'envers de la différence culturelle et de l'autre à des tensions sociales. N'oublions pas que l'homme est par nature un agent libre et à ce titre, il a la faculté de choisir ou de rejeter, d'affirmer ou nier, d'accepter ou refuser, non par instinct mais par un acte délibéré, c'est-à-dire prémédité, après analyse ou réflexion. Cette capacité de choisir lui confère la possibilité de s'écarter de la règle sociale qui lui est prescrite allant dans le sens des coutumes, fussent-elles incarnées depuis des siècles. Certes, selon Aristote (1970) « l'homme est par nature un animal politique » (p.38), ce qui signifie un être essentiellement social, et que la société en tant qu'institution humaine est régie par des règles et des lois. Mais ces dernières ne sont ni éternelles ni irréversibles à tel point qu'il lui est toujours loisible de reconstituer les fondements de la société. Que ce soit en matière de sexualité, de mode vestimentaire, alimentaire et plus généralement de mode de vie, la société ne fait pas office de normes universelles ni permanentes.

La liberté qui caractérise l'homme dont nous parlions tantôt nous rappelle Jean-Paul Sartre (1996) pour qui l'homme existe avant de se déterminer et se donner tel ou tel caractère, telles conduites ou telles règles sociales ou culturelles. Dans cette perspective sartrienne, exister, ce n'est pas naître, croître et mourir comme dans le règne animal ou végétal. La vie de l'homme n'est pas une vie simplement végétative mais plutôt une vie de rupture et de rejet de ce qui nous rattache définitivement à des dispositions d'ordre naturel ou social. Sartre (1996) affirme à ce sujet : « L'homme existe d'abord, c'est-à-dire que l'homme est d'abord ce qui se jette vers un avenir... L'homme est d'abord un projet... et ... sera d'abord ce qu'il sera projeté d'être » (p.16). En effet, « Ce qu'il aura projeté d'être », c'est justement la liberté de décider ou non de suivre les coutumes sociales, d'être ou ne pas être définitivement lié à des dispositions sociales qui influencent l'homme et le manipulent comme un objet sans qu'il soit capable de se déterminer. Il devient ainsi un sujet passif qui subit tout sans aucune possibilité d'expression volontaire.

L'autre travers qui guette les tenants passifs du relativisme culturel, c'est le risque de fixer l'Africain dans un schème culturel définitif qui le caractérisera éternellement. Ce faisant, l'Africain qui se réfugie dans les profondeurs de ces traditions prises comme authentiques, intactes et sans

impuretés donne ainsi raison à tous ceux qui le traitent de primitif c'est-à-dire celui dont la culture est restée intacte sans évolution depuis des siècles, voire des millénaires. Leiris (1978), poète et ethnologue français, mettait en garde certains ethnologues contre « la tendance à préférer, à la culture occidentale jugée artificielle, la culture intacte et authentique des tribus primitives » (p.45), car la philosophie de l'authentique ne vaut pas toujours mieux que celle du progrès. On retombe tristement dans la théorie des racistes selon laquelle les hommes auraient pour essence d'être blancs, noirs ou jaunes. Or classer les hommes en races, c'est les fixer définitivement dans un ensemble homogène d'où ils ne peuvent jamais sortir au risque d'être dénaturés. De cette perception, on traite de dénaturés ou déculturés ceux qui sortent quelque peu des cultures africaines. Car un Africain authentique aux yeux des africanistes ne doit exprimer aucun comportement qui frise un mélange culturel. Mais lorsque nous voyons à travers les cultures étrangères un monde animal hors de l'humanité, nous nous excluons ainsi nous-mêmes de l'humanité puisque nous acceptons et trouvons normal par le fait même que l'autre nous traite de la même manière. Même si nous avons été victimes de ce traitement par le passé, il nous revient de prouver que notre humanité ne souffre d'aucune faille en assumant le brassage culturel en toute conscience et en toute responsabilité comme l'exemple de tout être digne de l'humanité. En d'autres termes, l'humanité n'est pas donnée spontanément ni définitivement nulle part, elle s'accomplit et se conquiert au terme d'un effort sans cesse renouvelé et conjugué des contemporains, des ascendants et des métèques en termes de la Grèce antique. L'espèce humaine ne se réalise à travers chaque peuple qu'une fois dépouillée de son authenticité singulière ou son particularisme incendiaire.

Le relativisme culturel nous autorise-t-il à considérer la polygamie comme une valeur intrinsèquement africaine ? Si nos arrières grands-parents faisaient des enfants sans nombre, devons-nous continuer à faire comme eux sans tenir compte de nos moyens de subsistance, des contraintes de scolarisation, de soins de santé de plus en plus chers, du chômage qui devient une pandémie ? Ne pas tenir compte des réalités dans nos réflexions, dans nos pensées et vouloir suivre les coutumes juste pour leurs valeurs ancestrales, ce serait faire l'option de la politique de l'autruche qui manifestement est une politique de suicide collectif. Il convient de veiller à ce que la prise en compte des différences culturelles ne mène pas paradoxalement à une sorte de nihilisme, à ce que d'autres appellent une démission axiologique, c'est-à-dire le refus de juger ses propres pratiques culturelles en déphasage avec l'évolution du temps au risque de les rejeter. Or reconnaître ses propres insuffisances, c'est faire preuve d'un courage moral, être capable d'autocritique en vue de projeter les regards vers un meilleur avenir, gage

d'une jeunesse responsable prête à assumer la postérité à laquelle elle apporte sa contribution au lieu de la subir.

Comme nous l'avons affirmé plus haut, l'histoire des peuples varie d'un moment à l'autre et porte les griffes de ceux qui ont eu la lourde responsabilité de la construire. Empreinte de réalités divergentes, elle est, comme la culture, marquée de relativisme. Malgré cette divergence, on ne saurait manquer de remarquer une certaine constance à travers l'histoire de l'humanité au-delà des histoires des peuples comme nous l'avons mentionné supra. Dès lors, la réussite ou le progrès des uns peut servir de références ou d'exemples aux autres. C'est en cela que l'Occident, par-delà sa responsabilité historique dans la révolution industrielle doit offrir un exemple de construction sociale aux peuples africains. Il n'y a aucune honte à reconnaître le rôle de la révolution scientifique et industrielle dans l'émergence de l'Europe du XVIIIe siècle. Caractéristique des temps modernes, elle est essentielle pour comprendre ce qui fait la singularité spécifique de la civilisation occidentale. En rendant l'homme maître de son destin, en lui attribuant le pouvoir de comprendre et de maîtriser la nature, elle donne à l'Europe les moyens de distancer les autres systèmes culturels. Les cultures étrangères et surtout celles africaines, confrontées à l'efficacité des méthodes et de l'instrumentation issues de la révolution scientifique et de ses prolongements techniques, doivent intégrer ces acquis, ne serait-ce qu'au prix d'une remise en cause de leurs propres valeurs, au risque de se marginaliser, de rater le train de l'histoire. Ce dilemme est loin d'être résolu de nos jours et seuls les pays de tradition occidentale ne connaissent de hiatus culturel qu'implique, pour d'autres civilisations, l'entrée dans le mode de pensée inhérent à toute rationalisation scientifique. C'est justement à cette évidence que les peuples africains sont invités à se rendre. On peut mieux comprendre cette remarque à travers la réaction ci-après de Coquery-Vidrovitché (2002) :

Les sociétés ou les groupes sociaux les plus malmenés, dans les pays du Sud comme dans nos banlieues, réagissent par des contractions identitaires, qui sont autant de réflexes de défense face à des contradictions difficiles, voire impossibles à résoudre dans le court terme. Mais la communauté scientifique doit se garder de complaisance à cet égard. On me pardonnera de terminer par une espèce de profession de foi : se vouloir et se reconnaître comme multiculturel dans la société d'aujourd'hui paraît infiniment plus porteur que les revendications et les enquêtes identitaires dont nous sommes abreuvés de façon souvent ni lucide ni, peut-être, honnête. (P.126).

## **L'ouverture culturelle, une exigence de développement**

Les dirigeants politiques, les acteurs économiques et surtout les intellectuels africains sont invités à la prudence dans la lutte pour un meilleur avenir de l'Afrique. Au lendemain des indépendances, tous les regards étaient focalisés sur la lutte pour la reconnaissance de l'Afrique comme un continent plein de valeurs culturelles et qui n'a rien à envier aux Occidentaux. La plupart des acteurs africains se sont engagés dans cette lutte. On note également certaines voix occidentales pour soutenir cette perception qui présente l'Afrique comme l'égal de tous les continents à tout point de vue. Justement il y a un piège à éviter, celui de faire croire que le patrimoine culturel africain est la seule source de richesse que l'Afrique peut faire prévaloir dans le concert des nations. Lévi-Strauss (1995) a développé deux positions que nous voulons soumettre à l'analyse :

La civilisation occidentale s'est entièrement tournée, depuis deux ou trois siècles, vers la mise à la disposition de l'homme de moyens mécaniques de plus en plus puissants. Si l'on adopte ce critère, on fera de la quantité d'énergie disponible par tête d'habitant l'expression du plus ou moins haut degré de développement des sociétés humaines. (P. 73).

Dans cette pensée, il prend clairement position contre ces concitoyens européens dont il critique la perception industrielle comme critère de développement qu'il considère comme une erreur d'appréciation. Ainsi il récuse le critère d'énergie, de technologie et autres ressources matérielles considérés comme fondement de développement des pays sans tenir compte des aspects culturels qui pourtant caractérisent essentiellement certains pays :

L'Inde a su, mieux qu'aucune autre civilisation, élaborer un système philosophico-religieux, ... il y a déjà treize siècles. L'islam a formulé une théorie de la solidarité de toutes les formes de la vie humaine : technique, économique, sociale, spirituelle, que l'Occident ne devait retrouver que tout récemment... Pour tout ce qui touche à l'organisation de la famille et à l'harmonisation des rapports entre groupe familial et groupe social, les Australiens, arriérés sur le plan économique, occupent une place si avancée par rapport au reste de l'humanité qu'il est nécessaire, pour comprendre les systèmes de règles élaborés par eux de façon consciente et réfléchie, de faire appel aux formes les plus raffinées des mathématiques modernes. (p.74)

Quand on analyse bien ces deux textes de Lévi-Strauss, on peut retenir qu'il expose deux aspects de la culture tels que nous les avons abordés précédemment. Le premier texte évoque l'aspect matériel de la culture à savoir la technologie, la science, l'industrie, l'économie, etc. tandis que le second en

aborde la vie spirituelle et religieuse, le mode de vie social relatif aux formes de célébration du mariage, des obsèques, des naissances, l'art culinaire et vestimentaire, etc. Ses analyses inspirent également la dissociation définitive de la valeur d'une culture de son développement technologique c'est-à-dire qu'on ne saurait apprécier la valeur d'une culture en fonction de son développement technologique. Puisque la culture présente plusieurs aspects, et que la technologie est loin d'en être le seul et d'ailleurs elle ne représente qu'une possibilité parmi tant d'autres, chaque peuple est libre de choisir l'aspect qui lui paraît le mieux convenable. L'ethnologue américaine Benedict (1972) a fait de la notion de choix culturel une notion capitale en ethnologie. Elle considère que toute culture se définit par une certaine sélection, un choix conscient ou non de développer tel ou tel aspect de la culture : « Toute société humaine, en quelque région que ce soit, a pratiqué une telle sélection dans ses institutions culturelles... Dans telle société la technique est méprisée de façon incroyable... ; dans telle autre, ... les réalisations techniques sont complexes » (p.51).

En réalité, personne ne peut, au risque de se ridiculiser, méconnaître l'existence de plusieurs aspects de la culture. Que les uns choisissent tel aspect et les autres tel autre, c'est un fait. Mais tous les choix n'ont pas la même pertinence, mieux la même importance. Le terme « incroyable » que Benedict utilise dans sa pensée semble trahir sa conviction profonde, qu'elle se veut pourtant cachée. Si elle trouve incroyable que certains choisissent délibérément d'abandonner la technique, cela exprime une certaine curiosité ou inquiétude de telle sorte que d'autres diront que c'est inconcevable, voire inimaginable que l'on tourne dos à l'aspect vital de la culture. Dans cette même perspective, Lévi-Strauss (1985) qui défend les cultures africaines dont l'oralité, n'a pas hésité à montrer à quel point l'invention de l'écriture avait été décisive pour réaliser des prouesses exceptionnelles dans les sociétés qui l'ont adoptée alors que tous les panafricanistes soutiennent la thèse contraire. L'écriture est selon lui, à l'origine de l'acquisition essentielle de la culture que certains peuples sans écriture n'ont jamais faite comme les populations polynésiennes. Exprès, il a évité d'évoquer les populations africaines au risque de décevoir ses partenaires africains. Voulant se rattraper, il relativise l'importance de l'écriture en notant que les progrès les plus essentiels que l'humanité avait accomplis, tels l'agriculture, la domestication des animaux, le tissage, la poterie, l'avaient été au néolithique, avant l'apparition de l'écriture. Manifestement, il se contredit ouvertement soit de bonne foi, soit pour plaire aux Africains. Il faut comprendre simplement que ces Occidentaux qui semblent défendre les cultures africaines comme un choix légitime parmi tant d'autres, ne paraissent pas sincères dans leur position. Même si c'est le cas, les Africains se doivent d'être très prudents et s'interroger si ce choix est réellement le meilleur, s'il leur est plus profitable ou plus nuisible.

Reconnaissons que la technique en elle-même a, semble-t-il, une valeur particulière par rapport aux autres aspects de la culture, elle est même déterminante dans l'évolution de l'humanité. Les grandes périodes de l'histoire de l'humanité sont caractérisées par l'évolution de la technique de telle sorte que l'on parle des âges de la pierre, de fer, de bronze. Chacune correspond à certaine manière de travailler la matière, à des techniques de travail par lesquelles les hommes ont peu à peu maîtrisé la nature. De même, les civilisations humaines ont été profondément transformées par les techniques de l'élevage, de l'agriculture, et plus tard de l'écriture. La technique joue ainsi qu'on le veuille ou non, un rôle majeur dans l'évolution des peuples. Il ne faut pas seulement entendre par technique, les différents processus de transformation de la nature mais aussi et surtout l'ensemble des moyens mécaniques et artificiels de la production dont l'homme se sert dans son travail. Ainsi, de la charrue à l'ordinateur, du moulin à vent à la centrale électrique, ces moyens donnent une certaine forme aux relations humaines à travers les technologies de communication et de l'information. Le développement et la maîtrise de la matière ne sont pas concevables sans la technique, même la pensée, les valeurs spirituelles, morales et religieuses ne se perfectionnent que grâce à elle. En conséquence, les techniques ne sont donc pas seulement causes du mieux-être matériel, la culture elle-même et la pensée sont tributaires de développement de la technique. C'est la culture elle-même qui se voit modifiée par la technique. Dans les pays occidentaux, il est aisé de constater que les nouvelles techniques audiovisuelles et surtout informatiques ont rompu avec l'ère de l'imprimerie inaugurée par Gutenberg et ont ouvert une nouvelle forme culturelle inédite. Déjà, l'invention de l'écriture avait ouvert la civilisation du livre. N'oublions pas que l'influence des trois grandes religions monothéistes dans le monde entier est essentiellement due au fait qu'elles sont chacune transcrites dans un livre. C'est désormais une vérité incontestable que les techniques déterminent globalement nos manières de penser, nos manières d'être ensemble, notre intelligence du monde et nos manières d'y vivre. Aucune personne, quelle que soit sa culture africaine, européenne ou asiatique ne peut affirmer en toute objectivité que la technique exerce ses effets sur un seul secteur de l'activité humaine et non sur d'autres. Les plus hautes réalisations de la culture en dépendent même les sciences sociales qui par essence s'opposent aux sciences de la nature aussi bien du point de vue de leurs objets que de leurs méthodes doivent leur développement aux technologies nouvelles.

Par ailleurs, le monde technique ne doit pas être seulement perçu sous la forme d'objets étrangers qui viennent s'insérer superficiellement dans nos sociétés africaines. Il les recompose artificiellement et les transforme de fond en comble. Le monde technique transforme la nature ancienne en l'adaptant aux nouveaux besoins de l'humanité. Comme l'animal est dépendant de son

milieu de vie pour y trouver sa subsistance, l'homme aussi est dépendant de la technique, comme un monde en soi. Certes l'homme ne sort pas indemne de ce mariage avec la technique, il y paie un lourd tribut, de sa liberté à son univers mental, de ses relations sociales à son existence spirituelle, de ses rapports avec la nature à la survie de son espèce. Il en subit une aliénation et une déshumanisation de sorte que son milieu de vie connaît une dégradation et une déformation qui mettent en péril l'essence-même de l'espèce. Là où le bât blesse, c'est quand on porte un regard critique sur la balance entre le coût et les avantages, les risques et les profits d'un pays à un autre, d'un continent à l'autre. On constate malheureusement un grand déséquilibre au grand dam des Africains, qui curieusement contribuent très peu à la dégradation de l'environnement. Car, les Africains, dans leur lutte pour la philosophie de l'authenticité, le retour à la vie naturelle, se livrent à la critique des sociétés industrielles considérées comme sources des problèmes environnementaux à travers la pollution atmosphérique. Ayant fait le choix culturel des techniques artisanales, du mode de vie naturel fondé sur les perceptions morales ancestrales, les sociétés africaines sont très peu industrialisées au point que leur part dans l'émission des gaz à effet de serre se chiffre à moins de 5% au plan mondial. Mais à leur corps défendant, ils subissent les conséquences des problèmes environnementaux au même titre que les pays émetteurs de grandes quantités des gaz à effet de serre et responsables des nuisances écologiques et parfois ils en subissent plus que certains pays fortement industrialisés. Les énormes conséquences sanitaires, écologiques et économiques de la catastrophe nucléaire de Tchernobyl depuis 1986 sont encore vivaces dans tous les esprits.

Dès lors, on est en droit de se demander à quoi bon de prioriser les techniques artisanales au détriment de l'industrialisation, des sciences et de la technologie et en fin de compte en subir plus les affres que ceux qui en sont les plus grands acteurs. Le monde étant devenu un village planétaire, aucun continent ne peut rester en marge des événements malheureux survenus dans un coin du monde. Au lieu de demeurer les éternelles victimes innocentes, il convient que les Africains s'approprient eux aussi les moyens technologiques du monde contemporain pour partager avec les autres nations les mêmes avantages et les mêmes inconvénients de manière à établir la parité avantages et risques. Il est grand temps qu'ils comprennent qu'ils ne sont victimes que du choix culturel qu'ils ont fait depuis les indépendances. Comme nous l'avons évoqué supra, les sciences et la technologie régissent tous les domaines de la vie contemporaine et exercent une telle influence sur la culture en général que les pays industrialisés par la même technologie, trouvent d'une certaine manière, les moyens pour atténuer les effets nuisibles de l'industrialisation au profit de leurs populations. Les peuples africains qui se sont rendus inaptes à se procurer les voies et moyens pour parer à toutes

éventualités d'où qu'elles viennent, sont ainsi condamnés à faire les frais des dégâts occasionnés par les autres. La Chine est l'un des pays les plus pollués du monde entier mais plusieurs villes africaines sont plus polluées que Pékin, A.A (n.d.). « Les habitants de Paris, Londres, Los Angeles ou Hong Kong respirent un air plus pur qu'il y a un an (2022), tandis que ceux de N'Djamena, Bagdad ou New Delhi souffrent de niveaux de pollution plus élevés ». Nous pensons objectivement que ce n'est pas en se retirant de l'histoire pour s'enfermer dans une tradition intemporelle, ni en tournant le dos en bloc à une modernité (caractérisée par la technologie de l'information, la médecine au laser, l'aéronautique, les Trains à Grande Vitesse, etc..., laquelle modernité est assimilée à ce que l'Occident a de pire, mais aussi de meilleur), que ce déséquilibre cessera, que la balance cessera d'être déficitaire à notre rencontre.

Les limites de nos cultures se sont manifestées depuis les temps de nos ancêtres. Si les Européens explorateurs, missionnaires ou commerçants avaient pu voyager sur terre et sur les océans pour atteindre les côtes africaines au XVIe siècle, c'est déjà un signe de supériorité car nos ancêtres ne disposaient pas de ces moyens de déplacement en ces moments, encore moins leur postérité plusieurs siècles après. En outre, qu'ils en arrivent à s'imposer à nos aïeux, les soumettre aux ordres par des affrontements armés et enfin les diriger (coloniser) sur leurs propres territoires pendant plusieurs siècles malgré les résistances, la faiblesse des moyens de nos ancêtres par rapport aux leurs ne fait plus l'objet d'aucun doute. Ne pas reconnaître cette différence de rapport de forces, c'est faire preuve d'une grave erreur d'appréciation monumentale. Car si nous devons continuer à faire comme nos aïeux au XXIe siècle, logiquement nous ne pouvons que subir le même sort qu'eux, connaître l'échec dans tous les domaines du monde contemporain.

En effet, Hazoumè (1989) nous rappelle l'incertitude des révélations oraculaires prédites par la géomancie appelée "fa" dans le Golfe de Guinée. Or la géomancie est pourtant considérée même jusqu'à nos jours comme source infaillible de connaissance que l'on consulte au quotidien et à toutes occasions pour sonder des préoccupations d'ordre social, moral, politique, etc. Pour demander la main d'une fille, entreprendre une activité commerciale, agricole ou artisanale, et surtout pour faire une déclaration de guerre, le "fa" en tant que moyen certain de révélation du savoir est mis à contribution. Pourtant, les prédictions de l'oracle "fa" ne sont pas souvent au rendez-vous, elles sont la plupart du temps en contradiction avec la réalité et se révèlent manifestement fausses et trompeuses au point que le roi Guézo ne cacha pas ses réserves au sujet de l'incertitude du "fa". Dans cette perspective, Hazoumè (1989) écrit : « Le Destin m'a prédit la longévité, il est vrai. Mais ses prédictions sont si souvent démenties par les événements, que je finis par perdre confiance en lui » (p.214). Depuis le XIXe siècle, les révélations



divines ou ancestrales suscitaient tant d'inquiétudes et de déceptions non seulement au sein des populations mais aussi aux yeux des rois. Vu que ces derniers incarnent l'autorité suprême du rayonnement des temples, il y a lieu de constater les limites de ces sources de connaissances traditionnelles. L'absence de ce discernement crée une confiance aveugle, totalement illusoire et un état d'existence obscurantiste semblable au mythe de la caverne par lequel Platon (1993) présente des prisonniers qui confondent la vérité à l'illusion. Le roi Guézo ne s'est pas seulement limité à dénoncer les insuffisances des révélations de l'oracle, il attire également l'attention du fils héritier sur la nécessité de s'en méfier et l'invite à prioriser les connaissances d'ordre naturel. Hazoumè (1989) avertit ainsi le fils héritier : « Donc la connaissance de la nature humaine te guidera plus sûrement que l'oracle dans le gouvernement de ce pays », (p.214). Si déjà il y a plus de deux siècles que le roi Guézo était persuadé que la connaissance naturelle, celle fondée sur les aptitudes humaines sont plus fiables et susceptibles de nous éclairer dans l'investigation de la nature, on peut s'indigner que l'on continue de se fier aux révélations surnaturelles. Car les consultations des oracles qui sont du domaine métaphysique et par conséquent au-delà de nos capacités d'investigation, échappent aux pouvoirs de la raison et de l'intelligence humaine. Quand on sait scientifiquement que la foudre est un phénomène naturel de décharge électrostatique qui se produit dans l'atmosphère, entre des régions chargées électriquement, et peut se produire à l'intérieur d'un nuage ou entre plusieurs nuages, on ne peut plus continuer à dire comme en pays 'fon' au Sud du Bénin qu'elle est l'expression de la colère de dieu 'xèviosso', dieu du ciel et du tonnerre chargé de la justice immanente selon la culture 'fon'. Certes, comme dans tous les pays du monde, chaque société a sa mythologie qui expose l'histoire des mythes qui constituent le ciment culturel, le référentiel en matière des us et coutumes de la société. Ainsi, conservés dans des documents et sous forme d'image sur des disques, ces mythes constituent la mémoire culturelle de la communauté pour la postérité. Mais point n'est besoin de croire en une liaison réelle entre la foudre et une divinité qui serait dotée d'une volonté d'action et qui peut agir dans la vie sociale et influencer le quotidien des humains.

C'est justement à ce niveau que se situe la différence fondamentale entre les Occidentaux et les Africains. Les premiers ont très tôt compris que le monde surnaturel et métaphysique est inaccessible par les moyens humains d'investigation que sont la raison, l'intelligence, la mémoire, etc., c'est-à-dire les facultés humaines. Le monde surnaturel plein de ténèbres, d'obscurité et des forces occultes, il ne saurait servir de sources de lumière et de clarté dont l'homme a besoin pour étudier la matière et pénétrer les phénomènes naturels. Ainsi, ils ont abandonné les méthodes traditionnelles telles que les révélations oraculaires, les consultations des ancêtres et se sont tournés vers les moyens

naturels d'investigation. En réalité, quand nous parlions tantôt du choix culturel, les Occidentaux avaient fait eux aussi, comme toutes les communautés humaines dans l'antiquité, le même choix fondé sur les traditions mais qu'ils ont abandonné dès le XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle. Le Moyen-Age européen qui a précédé cette période en offre des témoignages édifiants. A leurs suites, les peuples asiatiques se sont engagés eux aussi sur la voie rationnelle qui conduit vers les sciences. Tschibangu (2002) a affirmé au sujet des sciences et de la technologie :

Elles ont ainsi été bien assimilées et appliquées par les nations d'Asie, notamment le Japon, les pays du Sud-Est asiatique, la Chine, l'Inde, au cours du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, où le monde entier a pu saluer leur émergence remarquable du point de vue du développement (p.239).

Au regard de tout ce qui précède, il s'avère indispensable que les Africains s'imbriquent dans la nécessité rationnelle qu'il faut percevoir comme un devoir historique en vue d'occuper finalement leur place sur l'échiquier international en s'appropriant les méthodes scientifiques et technologiques. Tschibangu (2002) nous dit à cet effet que :

Afin de pouvoir entrer une fois pour toutes, sans retour, sur les chemins de la créativité et l'efficacité continues du développement par la science systématique et la technologie, les sociétés africaines sont sommées d'opter résolument, tout en gardant les principes essentiels dans ce qu'ils ont d'objectivement valide et réellement positif de leur tradition de pensée, d'entrer dans la voie de la rationalité moderne techno-scientifique. Cela, toutes les sociétés humaines ont dû le faire chacune à son tour pour parvenir à réaliser des avancées toujours notablement progressives sur la voie du développement intégral, (p.239).

## **Discussion**

La révision ou la réorientation du raisonnement et du mode de pensée des Africains n'est pas encore à l'ordre du jour aux yeux de ceux qui se réclament du panafricanisme. La littérature disponible offre plusieurs positions ou thèses qui soutiennent des théories contraires faisant observer que les traditions africaines offrent les meilleurs moyens de lutte contre la dégradation de l'environnement. La chaleur humaine qui caractérise les relations sociales et individuelles en Afrique constitue des sources d'inspiration pour l'instauration de la paix dans le monde. La lutte pour l'authenticité est si enracinée dans les esprits que tout le monde est persuadé que l'avenir de l'Afrique est intrinsèquement lié au développement de ses traditions.

Certes les voies qui conduisent aux résultats sont si jonchées d'embûches qu'il ne sera pas aisé de les atteindre. Le contexte d'une haine viscérale contre la politique française en Afrique francophone ne facilite pas non plus le combat. De même, le changement de mentalité qui se manifeste par la promotion de la rationalité avec l'abandon des traditions rétrogrades peine à décoller vu que les valeurs ancestrales exercent une certaine pesanteur au point d'obscurcir toutes les pistes. A ces obstacles s'ajoutent les soutiens occidentaux à travers certains penseurs tels que Lévi-Strauss (1985) au plan littéraire qui confortent les Africains dans leur position. Citons également Rousseau (1985) dans sa critique des sciences et de la technologie où il prône la vie naturelle au détriment de la société moderne dans son ouvrage. De même certains députés ou hommes politiques européens condamnent et dénoncent les politiques des gouvernements et institutions européennes qu'ils jugent nuisibles et très défavorables à l'Afrique, ce qui reconforte les Africains dans leurs positions africanistes et traduit les contraintes des recherches.

Néanmoins l'espoir n'est pas totalement ruiné étant donné que des voix s'élèvent de plus en plus pour souligner les responsabilités des Africains dans leurs retards et évoquent la nécessité de s'engager dans une option de rationalité scientifique en vue d'assurer l'indépendance dans la production industrielle.

## **Conclusion**

La vie religieuse et les différents rites sociaux constituent un aspect de la culture qui peuvent durer des siècles sans évolution de sorte que les fidèles et les peuples ne s'en émeuvent guère. Les formes de salutations, l'art culinaire et vestimentaire, la célébration des obsèques, des naissances et des mariages peuvent résister aux temps sans induire des nuisances considérables.

Dès lors que l'on aborde les questions morales et éthiques comme d'autres aspects de la culture, bien qu'elles paraissent aussi rigides que les précédentes, elles résistent moins aux assauts du devenir. Le lévirat, l'excision, le mariage forcé ou prématuré, l'exclusion de la femme de l'héritage, le rejet des jumeaux de la société ou des enfants nés avec certaines malformations congénitales, etc. sont susceptibles d'évolution ou de changement vu qu'ils sont sources de souffrance, d'atteinte à l'intégrité de l'homme et de nuisance morale et matérielle.

La troisième catégorie contrairement aux autres est primordiale et hautement fluctuante et se prête à toutes les possibilités d'ouverture. La lutte contre les aléas climatiques, les moyens de déplacement et de transformation de la nature, les techniques d'information et de soins de santé, le mode de construction de l'habitat, de l'urbanisme et des routes exigent un changement profond et radical de notre mode de pensée et une réadaptation permanente au rythme des avancées de l'humanité. Ainsi, la question du développement est

beaucoup plus liée à cette catégorie qu'aux autres et nécessite l'engagement sur la voie de la rationalité moderne qui n'est pas un débat entre continents, encore moins entre Blancs et Noirs car la raison et l'intelligence n'ont pas de couleurs ni lieu de naissance.

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## Revisiting the Formation and Radicalisation of Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) through Social Movement Theory

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### Abstract

This paper uses social movement theory to examine the rise and development of Boko Haram and AQIM into radical groups. Boko Haram and AQIM were initially established as moderate and conservative Islamist groups in Nigeria and Algeria respectively. AQIM was originally a political party – the FIS but changed names to the GIA, the GSPC, and AQIM each with a different modus operandi. Boko Haram was a local organization that has been espousing an anti-system frame alongside violent tactics since 2009. Relying on secondary data, this paper found that the emergence and eventual transformation of Boko Haram and AQIM into radical movements signify the existence of social movement factors of political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, and framing processes in Nigeria and Algeria. Results from content analysis of the data show that while the two movements emerged in two distinct socio-economic and political environments, they were rational actors who continued to utilize the available political structures opportunity, mobilizing structures and framing processes to mobilize and sustain collective actions. It is evident that government repression only made the two groups change tactics and strategies when what they regarded as free spaces diminished at times they gathered material and non-material resources. That

coincided with the radical views of some of the groups' members, the presence of mobilizing structures, and a frame resonance that ensured recruitment into the two movements.

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**Keywords:** Social movement theory factors, Boko Haram, AQIM, Nigeria, Algeria

## Introduction

Collective actions that raise the banner of "Islam" to challenge the status quo or the West have become omnipresent in many societies. In Western societies, however, movements under liberal democracy are also prevalent. Collective actions are all over places and are basic components of contemporary societies (Giugni et al., 1999, p. xv). One can hardly read a newspaper, log in to a social media account, or turn on a radio or TV station without encountering news on acts of organized movement somewhere in the world.

In both religious and secular collective actions, factors accounting for why people resort to both violent and non-violent activism vary from one country to another. Some factors are however similar across countries. Although various Islamist groups may have different motives, methods, goals, and strategies, they all believe in one core assumption about factors responsible for the problems facing Muslims that require collective actions. They also have an assumption that the problems facing Muslims can be resolved through a return to "pure Islam" which is defined according to different convictions and schools of thought. Thus, they are united on the conviction that "*Al-Islam huwa al-hall* – Islam is the solution" (Wickham, 2002, pp. 1-2).

In a quest to solve the perceived and/or actual problems, some Islamists organize collective actions to change the status quo and create what they believe is an ideal 'Islamic' society. Some Islamists prefer to change their society through formal political participation. They formed political parties, which did not necessarily include their will to establish Islamic societies in the manifestos. Others may restrict their activism to preaching and proselytization. More often than not, the latter complements the former's political activism. And more importantly, both can espouse violent tactics.

Although some Islamist movements may espouse violence at the embryonic stage, it is often when changes in political structures occur that some of them become radicals and militants. Radical/militant Islamists openly indict government policies in their countries, some attack government agencies, the West directly, or whatever they label Western "proxies". This may be an attempt by some Islamist groups to resist and to balance against the West. Accordingly, international institutions, media outlets, the marketplace,

and secular modernization projects are all framed and targeted as vehicles for the strategic infusion of alien value systems created to undermine the strength of Islam. They think that their targets whether near or far enemies have been conspiring and fraternizing with the West to undermine, weaken, and eventually dominate the Muslims. Jean Rosenfeld (2011) thus argued that targets and victims of militant groups are often associated with modern states. Today, both peaceful and violent Islamist movements exist and the use of violence by Islamist groups has been receiving more attention, especially after 9/11, (Perry & Negrin, 2008). Scholars, pundits, policymakers, and the general public have been struggling to fathom the rationale and motivation for the use of violence by some Islamists. These have led to different interpretations since many believe that such occurrences tend to affirm the worst stereotype about Islamic contention and Islam in general.

Interestingly, a cross-national study in West and North Africa shows that there is a tendency for Islamists to change their strategy especially when political structures that allowed their emergence changed. This paper argues that Boko Haram and Al-Qaeda in the Lands of the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) emergence and transformation were influenced by social movement factors of political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, and framing process.

### **Method and Materials**

The research method used in this paper is qualitative research based on data initially collected for the Master's Thesis (Danguguwa, 2014). Thus, the data used for this paper are the results of the content analysis used in the thesis. The thesis gathered and analyzed available literature on the formation and eventual radicalization of Boko Haram and AQIM which resulted in a novel comparative analysis of the two movements. The analysis was based on the data obtained from the secondary sources to describe, explain, and analyze whether the tripartite social movement factors of political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, and framing process have influenced the formation and eventual radicalization of Boko Haram and AQIM in Nigeria and Algeria, respectively. Although the choice of secondary data might have some limitations such as lack of first-hand information, members of Boko Haram and AQIM could not be reached to gather first-hand information about their formation and eventual radicalization as both movements became radicals and clandestine. In this situation, qualitative analysis of secondary data would be the best method to explain the phenomenon. The results of the thesis and this paper are limited to how the tripartite social movement factors influenced the formation and radicalization of Boko Haram and AQIM. These factors might however not necessarily be seen by members and leaders of the two movements as the reasons for their activism. Thus, the major limitation

of this paper is relying on secondary data which cannot explain the opinions of the radical members in the two movements.

### **Islamist Groups and Organized Violence: A Social Movement Theory Approach**

Islamist groups are often labeled as mainly terrorists, extremists, and/or Islamic fundamentalists who emerge under the banner of Islam to challenge modernization and the West. These are sources written by "Self-proclaimed experts on Islamic terrorism" (Wiktorowicz, 2004, p. 20) that rely on misleading sources to address specific audiences. They draw causal relations between Islam and terrorism. The militant Islamists are viewed as "irrational" actors who engaged in a holy war with the ultimate aim of the destruction of Western civilization, the reestablishment of Muslim power, and the imposing of religious law, wherever Muslims hold sway. Perry and Negrin (2008), argued that some Islamists engage in selective reading of Islamic texts to justify their actions of "Islamofascism" (pp. 2-4).

Similarly, others relate the emergence of radical Islamists with either economic grievances or religious extremism. This is true with many studies that assume a causal linkage between grievances or frustration to collective actions (McCarthy & Zald, 1977; Wiktorowicz, 2004; Baylouny, 2004; Dede, 2008; Adenrele, 2012). The proponents of these socio-psychological understandings emphasize what the Islamists themselves often present as the cause of their collective actions – alleviating psychological, economic, and political discomforts occasioned by structures. The advocates of the above maxims trivialize and/or ignore the fact that grievances and what causes them are themselves subject to interpretation. Those interpretations explain why grievances are ubiquitous and movements are rare. This means although "there is always enough discontent in any society to supply the grass-roots support for movements" (McCarthy & Zald, 1977, p. 1215) and the populations that have these grievances are very large, a very small number of them organize collective action.

Gurr (1970) and Borum (2003), have an assumption that the gap between an individual's expected and achieved welfare results in collective discontent which eventually leads to collective actions. More generally, explanations based on the socio-psychological model underestimate the role of human agency. Contextual factors matter. They may create grievances and opportunities for violence; but the grievances and opportunities in question may not lead to violence in the absence of political entrepreneurs, ideologues, and/or organizations that can frame and channel the relevant grievances in a particular direction.

Social movement theorists and scholars underscore the roles of three sets of factors in analyzing the emergence, development, and even decline of



social movements/collective actions. These triads of factors are referred to as, in conventional shorthand, political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, and framing processes. The structure of political opportunities and constraints confronting the movement; the availability of organizational structure (both formal and informal) through which people mobilize collective actions; and collective processes of interpretation, attribution, and social construction that mediate between opportunity and actions are inseparable for activism because the presence of only two might not account for a viable collective action” (MacAdam et al., 1996). Though dominated by the study of movements in America and Europe (MacAdam et al., 1996; Wiktorowicz, 2004), studying non-Western movements from social movement perspectives has been growing in social sciences. Today, social movement theory is extended to include non-Western movements such as Islamists and the theory has been yielding fruitful results in providing unified frameworks for studying Islamist groups.

### **Political Opportunity Structures**

This factor suggests that mobilization can take place under favorable political conditions and it focuses on the relationship between social movement, political institutions, and movement mobilization. MacAdam et.al (1996), argued that the movement's actors have at the onset of their collective actions some grievances and optimism that they can sooner or later address the problem collectively.

In social movement theory, Islamists (irrespective of their types, goals, and tactics), act rationally by engaging in cost/benefit analysis to bypass and escape obstacles to mobilization occasioned by structure. Various studies (Hafez, 2004; Hafez & Wiktorowicz, 2004; Lawson, 2004; Robinson, 2004) concurred that even radical Islamists respond rationally and strategically to opportunities they find in the political structures. Thus, Islamist groups, Beck (2008) argued, are not accidental or unplanned. They operate in an environment with a political structure that empowers and often limits collective actions.

Vital variables in political opportunity structures vis-à-vis Islamist actions are the nature of state repression; the state institutional capacity; the level of formal and informal access to political institutions; and the level of state receptivity to movements (MacAdam et al., 1996; Wiktorowicz, 2004; Olesen, 2001; Munson, 2009). All these factors will affect Islamist collective actions in particular and social movements in general. Thus, the processes some Islamists follow to embrace violence are not only peculiar to Islamic actors. The dynamics of other movements are relevant for understanding their actions. It is maintained that radical militancy can be one of the outcomes of contention (Della Porta, 1995). For instance, while state repression – which

signifies the closeness of the system – can suppress mobilization, it can also make militancy more likely. A study of leftwing radicals in Germany and Italy inferred that state repressions suppress moderate alternatives, radicalize remaining supporters, and increase radical actions (Della Porta, 1995, pp. 139, 143).

Violent collective actions in general, depend on the external environment in which the group operates rather than exclusively internal dimension. For instance, in an insecure environment without an effective central authority, militants can seek a given place, attract recruits, get resources, and carry out attacks. Al-Qaeda fighters in Iraq and other militant organizations emerged not just from grievances or the mobilization of resources but because the American invasion demolished centralized authority, creating the opportunity for new mobilization and a threat to established power arrangements (Beck, 2008). It is therefore likely that political violence can be dependent on specific event-based opportunities.

### **Mobilizing Structures**

The mobilizing structures perspectives in social movement theory have also dismissed the causal importance of grievances in explaining the emergence of political contention. For a successful movement, there is a need for intermediary variables that “translate individualized discontent into organized contention” (Wiktorowicz, 2004, p. 10). McCarthy and Zald (1977), submitted that grievances alone are not enough to explain contention as most individuals at most times and in most places have complaints. Grievances are thus necessary but insufficient to explain why some events become organized into sustained contentions and movements and others do not. For sustained collective action, movements depend on material resources and a base of supporters. Therefore, major factors for collective action are the resources available for mobilization and the methods by which they are organized (Beck, 2008). There is a need for resources for the establishment of an organizational capacity that can rally supporters, seek material contributions, and formalize collective action into a movement. These processes make us see actors not as irrational outbursts intended to alleviate psychological distress, but rather as organized contention structured through mechanisms of mobilization that provide strategic resources for sustained collective action. These types of mobilization take place whenever movement is formal.

In the case of formal Islamist groups that are akin to social movement organizations, formal mobilizing structures are used (Wiktorowicz, 2004). Legal Islamists frequently make use of existing mosques, and missionary and study centers to mobilize followers. Political parties and Islamic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) like clinics, hospitals, schools charity societies, and cultural centers offer some basic incentives in the form of goods

and services. They, therefore, exploit their donations to promote Islamic messages without confrontations.

Mobilizing structures also known as 'recruitment magnets' for radical religious activists, on the other hand, include prisons and religious institutions such as churches and mosques. These are informal mobilizing structures that are commonly used by radical activists. In the case of Islamists, they often concentrate their mobilizing activities in mosques, preaching, and study circles, which serve as an alternative to other formal mobilizing structures (Wiktorowicz, 2004; Rogers & Neumann, 2007). Interestingly, mobilizing recruits through religious institutions is not only peculiar to Islamists or radical Islamists in particular. MacAdam's study of Afro-American Civil Rights Movements examines how activists in the movements were often recruited through black churches (McAdam, 1999).

Scholars of social movements have it that networks of friends, family, and colleagues assist mobilizations in high-risk activism (Della Porta, 1995; McAdam, 1999; Rogers & Neumann, 2007; Wiktorowicz, 2004; Olesen, 2009). As the name indicates, high-risk activism may result in risking freedom, health, and life. Della Porta (1995) found similar trends in non-Islamic high-risk activism in Germany and Italy. In his study of terrorist recruitment and radicalization in Saudi Arabia, Hegghammer (2006) made a similar inference. While many Jihadists in Saudi Arabia were motivated by religious duty, "some referred to the fact that they had sworn an oath [of allegiance] together with their friends...to liberate the Arabian Peninsula" (Hegghammer, 2006, p. 52). They opted to keep the promise they made to their friends by participating in radical activism.

### **Framing Processes**

In social movement theory, the term framing is used to describe the process of meaning construction that resonates with potential participants and the general public (Benford & Snow, 2000; Wiktorowicz, 2004). Thus, analyzing how individual participants ideate themselves as a collectivity; how potential participants and bystander publics are convinced to partake in movements; and how meaning is produced, articulated, and disseminated by movement actors through interactive processes is done through the study of the framing process. Strategic calculations by social movement actors to link their interests and interpretive frames with those of prospective constituents and actual or prospective resource providers are conceptualized as "frame alignment processes" (Snow et al., 1986, p. 464; Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 624).

Snow and Byrd (2007) identify three core framing tasks for social movements. These framing tasks are imperative in studying Islamist groups. *Diagnostic framing* involves diagnosing some events and aspects of social

structure and system of government and society as problematic and requiring redress. Attribution of blame and responsibilities also occur in the process thereby asking basic questions of "what is wrong or went wrong" and "who or what to blame". Accordingly, actors view some features of political and social life that might be previously viewed as misfortunes now as an injustice perpetrated by someone or something. *Prognostic framing* offers solutions to the problem including pinpointing tactics and strategies, designated to serve as antidotes. Prognostic framing therefore addresses the question of "what to be done". Those subscribed to diagnostic and prognostic framing might remain in the "balcony" of activism without motivational framing. *Motivational framing* entails elaborating rationale and constructing vocabularies of motive, providing stimuli to action, and overcoming fear and risk that are often associated with collective actions (Snow & Byrd, 2007).

Fundamentally, the essential feature of framing processes for movements' mobilization is frame resonance (Snow et al., 1986; Snow & Byrd, 2007). The key determinant of the differential success of framing efforts is variation in the degree of frame resonance, such that the higher the degree of frame resonance, the greater the probability that the framing efforts will be relatively successful. The credibility and relative salience determine the success of framings. Islamists frame "sacred values" which "surpass economic thinking or considerations of *realpolitik* (Altran & Axelrod, 2008, p. 226). A similar process is conceptualized as "transvaluation of values" (Wiktorowicz, 2004, p. 25). For example, in a social milieu in which people desire to have a secular university degree as both a status symbol and an instrument of career advancement, the Islamists may diminish the relative value attached to secular knowledge gained through formal education. Instead, greater priority and status may be given to religious knowledge gained informally through self-study and group lessons at mosques and other study centers. In their deliberate rejection of values widely held within their communities, young Islamists frequently confronted intense opposition from authority (Wickham, 2002). This reordering or "transvaluation" of values indicates that Islamic movements lessen graduate frustration not by providing the means to satisfy their aspirations for middle-class status, jobs, and lifestyles but by promoting goals more readily fulfilled within existing resource constraints.

The success of framing processes increases when its articulators can use publicly recognized symbols and languages that connect social and cultural experiences with collective memories. The mindset of the recruits is reconstructed by a new set of beliefs created by frame articulators. In Islamist groups, participation is framed as a religious duty that is absolute and all-embracing (Rogers & Neumann, 2007). This kind of moral obligation frame encourages participants to embrace an ideology that mandates participation as a moral duty, demands self-sacrifice, and encourages fearless commitment.

However, Islamists are always bedeviled with both intra and inter-movement framing disputes. While all Islamists may unanimously and mutually agree about responsibility for a problem, there is less or no cohesion over strategies and tactics (Benford & Snow, 2000). Wiktorowicz (2014), thus, argued that prognostic framing puts Islamist activists into different categories.

### **Emergence, Transformation, and Radicalization of Boko Haram and AQIM**

Based on the tripartite social movement theory factors, AQIM and Boko Haram followed a similar path to radicalization. Although emerged in two distinct social and political milieus, both AQIM and Boko Haram went through some processes, that hypothetically turned similar movements from moderate to more radical outlook. The AQIM dates from the 1990s and grew out of an insurrection mounted by an Islamist resistance movement protesting the Algerian regime's decision to end parliamentary elections in 1992, which would have resulted in the Islamic Salvation Front (French: *Front Islamique du Salut*, FIS) gaining a majority (Bowser & Sanders, 2002). Subsequently, the military seized power, outlawed the FIS, and imprisoned its leaders alongside thousands of Islamic activists. These developments began to turn some members of FIS into militants. Coincidentally, by the early 1990s, hundreds of Algerian militants who were trained and, in some cases, fought in Afghanistan began returning to Algeria. Some of these Algerian-Afghans, *Les Afghanis* as they were called joined the militant faction of the FIS which led to the eventual establishment of the Islamic Armed Group (French: *Groupe Islamique Armé*, GIA). The GIA believed in total war by labeling both Algerian regimes, its supporters, and even other FIS members who formed another moderate group called Islamic Salvation Army (French: *Armée Islamique du Salut*, AIS) as infidels. The GIA adopted indiscriminate killing measures, which resulted in massacring civilians. Eventually, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (French: *Groupe Salafiste pour la Prédication et le Combat*, GSPC) emerged, growing out of some members of the GIA leadership. These dissidents rejected the GIA's policy of attacking civilians by focusing only on security personnel. The GSPC refused an amnesty in 2000 and decided to continue the struggles against the Algerian state. In September 2002 the government ordered a crackdown on the GSPC, "Algeria's largest anti-Islamist operation in five years" (Harmon, 2010, p. 15). The Group responded with stepped-up raids, including attacks on military bases. While some leaders within the GSPC began to favor global violence, it was the US-led invasion of Iraq that became a major recruiting tool for some global Islamists. Indeed, the war in Iraq brought the GSPC and other groups closer to the Al-Qaeda. Subsequently, in January 2007 the GSPC was formally integrated into Al-Qaeda, adopting the new name Al-Qaeda in the Islamic

Maghreb (AQIM) operating in various countries, especially in the Sahel region (Harmon, 2010; Pham, 2011; Danguguwa, 2014).

Boko Haram is an Islamist movement based primarily in the north-eastern region of Nigeria. The group was primarily in its early years based in the states of Borno and Yobe but has since expanded to virtually all northern and some central states of Nigeria and neighboring countries. The Boko Haram movement is believed to have been founded in 1995 by Abubakar Lawan under the original name *Ahlulsunna Wal'jama'ah Hijra* in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital. Lawan's mission was to organize an Islamic movement that addresses economic hardship and poor living standards for Nigerian Muslims in Maiduguri and to produce personnel who can eventually help create an Islamic government. The movement began to gain popularity in 2003 under the leadership of Mohammed Yusuf. In 2003, some of its members migrated from Maiduguri to a village called Kanama, Yobe state, near the Nigerian border with Niger Republic, to set up a separatist community run on "Islamic" principles. They espoused anti-state framings and called on other Muslims to join the group and return to life under "true" Islamic law, to make a more perfect society away from the "corrupt" establishments (Connell, 2012; Onuoha, 2012).

Members of the group gathered in the mosque under Yusuf and have since then adopted several names from *Muhajirun* (migrants), *Yusufiyyah* (adherents of Yusuf Teaching), *Nigerian Taliban*, *Jama'atu Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad* (people committed to the teachings [of the Prophet], preaching, and holy war) to *Boko Haram* (Western education is forbidden). While the group prefers to be called *Jama'atu Ahlissunnah Lidda'awati Wal Jihad*, Boko Haram has become popular.

The clashes between Boko Haram and Nigeria's security started in 2003 and reached its climax in 2009. In the summer of 2009, the clashes between Boko Haram and security intensified and that event made the former popular. The confrontation began on June 11, 2009, in Maiduguri when security personnel killed members of Boko Haram. "Yusuf demanded justice, but the authorities neither seemed to investigate the alleged use of force nor apologized for the shootings" (Human Rights Watch 2012, p. 33).

As tensions escalated, the police on July 21, 2009, raided houses of suspected Boko Haram members in Biu, southern Maiduguri. Subsequently, in the early morning hours of July 26, 2009, Boko Haram members burned down a police station in Dutsen Tanshi, on the outskirts of Bauchi, the Bauchi State capital. A few Boko Haram members died and several police officers were injured. The military and police responded by raiding a mosque and homes in Bauchi where the Boko Haram members had regrouped, killing dozens of the group's members. Yusuf vowed revenge, saying he was ready to avenge the killing of his followers (Human Rights Watch, 2012; Walker,

2012). On July 28 and 29, the army shelled Yusuf's compound, killing and/or flushing out his followers. In Postiskum, security forces also raided the group's hideout on the outskirts of the town, killing many of Yusuf's disciples. Later that day, the military captured Yusuf who was said to be hiding in his father-in-law's house. Mohammed Yusuf was arrested by the army. The Nigerian army handed him over to the police for interrogation. The police later killed him. Police officials denied that he had been executed, saying that he was shot while trying to escape (Onuoha, 2012; Walker, 2012). Video clips from the interrogation showed him with a bandage on his left arm (Aljazeera, 2010). An eyewitness account, however, disclosed that:

On Thursday [July 30], about 6:30 p.m., I heard that they [the police] had brought in Mohammed Yusuf.... We went inside the compound of the police headquarters. There were many people watching. I saw him sitting on the ground. He was handcuffed with a bandage on his arm. He was saying they should pray for him. The MOPOL [anti-riot Police Mobile Force] were enraged. They said he killed their leader—who is a 2IC [second-in-command of the Police Mobile Force]. The MOPOL said we must kill him. But the commissioner of police [Christopher Dega] said they should leave him alive. Then three of the MOPOLs started shooting him. They first shot him in the chest and stomach and another came and shot him in the back of his head. I was afraid and started running. When I came back he was dead. There were a lot of people taking pictures [of his body] (Human Rights Watch, 2012, p. 35).

The clashes in 2009 have had many casualties from both sides. The Nigerian police killed Mohammed Yusuf, a hundred of his followers and associates including his father-in-law. Since 2009 Boko Haram has been more militant and has been popularizing the repression of their members 2009 as an excuse to avenge. Meanwhile, Nigeria's security continued to crack down on them, and Boko Haram became an encapsulated movement that continues to recruit and radicalize members. It is argued that when the state crackdown intensified, Boko Haram adopted more violence which they had eschewed in the past (Bello, 2021). Thus, the death of the group's leader many of his disciples and few associates did not end the saga. In less than a year after the first encounter, Abubakar Shekau who was Yusuf's deputy announced that he had taken over leadership of the movement and threatened fresh attacks to avenge the deaths of his colleagues. Boko Haram continues to be a violent Islamist group that recruits and radicalizes its members. The group continues to have implications on Nigeria especially on security (Bello, 2021), trans-border crimes (Fagge et al, 2021), religious divisions (Kabara & Dangugua), and other socio-economic and political sectors (Ibrahim & Hotoro, 2019).

## **The Influences of Political Opportunity Structures, Mobilizing Structures, and Framing Processes in the Radicalization of Boko Haram and AQIM**

There is much evidence to suggest that all the tripartite social movement theory factors – political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, and framing process or cultural framing – exist in both Algeria and Nigeria. Without those variables, organizing collective action like that of AQIM and Boko Haram at the initial stage could be just a mere protest for a few days or weeks. Out of the three social movements theory factors, the framing process and political opportunities/constraints play major roles in maintaining the collective action by the two movements. Rather than ending their struggles when environments seemed constrained, AQIM and Boko Haram exemplified movements that believe in the power of anti-system framing and exclusive/ clandestine approaches to transform individuals' perceptions about their society and prime them into violent activism. It is important to note that when someone's life revolves around a small group of like-minded individuals who, collectively, are cut off or cut off from mainstream society, that person's judgment and behavior become, to a large extent, a function of group dynamics. As the GIA/GSPC and Boko Haram drifted ever further away from mainstream society as a result of their violent activities, the propensity of their members to adopt radical views increased as well. The worldviews of both groups and their members frequently become more and more divorced from reality. In effect, the groups created not only their specific micro-culture, with a distinct set of moral and behavioral standards, but they also built and lived in a universe of their own, delimited by their radical leaders.

Political opportunity structures, mobilizing structures, and framing processes still linger in both Nigeria and Algeria as they do in almost every other country. Other groups may exploit them to present collective demands or organize collective actions. For example, in the oil-producing Niger Delta region of Nigeria, insurgent groups utilized similar factors to metamorphose from pre-insurgent stage through incipient stage to full violence using ethnic grievances (Danguguwa, 2018). Therefore, Islam does not bring about violent action, nor does any other religion but usually political and economic grievances are primary causes or catalysts, and religion becomes a means to legitimate and mobilize (Juergensmeyer, 2005). Thus, groups like the GIA/GSPC/AQIM and Boko Haram's decision to turn to violence is usually situational and is not endemic to Islam. Appeals to Islam were only one of the ways of framing or representing a struggle in terms that a potential constituency would understand rather than the determinants of a strategic choice. Groups espousing similar goals often choose different methods, disagreeing over the means more than the ends. This explains why other social



movements continue to exploit the available opportunities and organizing structures to frame specific events as collective responsibilities to ameliorate. Thus, many ethnic and political movements blossom in Nigeria and Algeria respectively. Boko Haram and AQIM continue to support other movements with similar motives in their respective countries and in the Sahel which is described as "a safe haven for violent Islamists" (Danguguwa, 2014, p. 57). It is inferred that nationals from countries in the Sahel have been linked with religious uprisings in Nigeria which adds another dimension to the challenge of insecurity in the country. Boko Haram sect and other jihadist groups in the Sahel and North Africa are being trained in the Sahel (Fagge et al., 2021).

### **Conclusion**

Despite their differences, both AQIM and Boko Haram claim to offer solutions to some specific problems that bedevil their societies through the slogan of 'Islam' is the solution. Other Muslims and some Islamist groups in both Nigeria and Algeria may still consider the establishment of Islamic society as a panacea to their problems. However, not all Islamists champion violence. While all Islamists (not necessarily all Muslims) give credence to a society that is governed by the *Shari'a* (Islamic Law), there is no cohesion on how to establish it. Islamists are succinctly categorized based on their tactics as *conservatives, moderates, and militants* (Dede, 2008). Conservatives believe in propagation and missionary activities (*da'wa*), which are intended to transform individual beliefs. Those individuals will eventually transform the entire society, hence implementing Islamic laws. Moderates are noticeable in the political scenes. They form political parties and advocate formal political participation. They often engage in *da'awa*, however. The militants embrace violent measures and attract more attention than the formers (Hafez, 2000; Wiktorowicz, 2004; Perry & Negrin, 2008). Instead of uniting Muslims, intra and inter-movement framing disputes often lead to the creation and widening of religious cleavages among Muslims (Kabara & Danguguwa, 2018).

Even though both AQIM and Boko Haram metamorphosed from moderate and conservative to violent movements respectively, the trajectories followed proved that political constraints affected how their framing and mobilization tactics worked. The way members of those movements consider themselves is more or less parallel to a situation of 'we against them and/or vice versa' which Haberfeld and Hassel (2009) described as anti-system movements. This confirms the notion that all Islamists – conservatives, moderates, and militants – agree over the end than the means. Another similarity between AQIM and Boko Haram is the aligning frames with the issues that resonated with their targeted participants. Due to the nature of the societies in which AQIM and Boko Haram emerged, the social movement

theory concept of frame alignment has been significant in mobilizing participants. In other words, aligning the struggles with cultural and religious duties means that only movements with such qualities have the highest tendency to organize collective actions for those participants in both Algeria and northern Nigeria, perhaps at that time when AQIM and Boko Haram emerged.

Similarly, the victims of the GIA the GSP, and Boko Haram were initially, in one way or the other, associated with states of Algeria and Nigeria. The degree to which their targets are associated with nation-states is however strictly based on their interpretations. According to them any non-targeted individual who loses his/her life as a result of their actions is considered a martyr. Nevertheless, the most affected victims by the GIA, the GSPC/AQIM, and Boko Haram attacks have been Muslims because their strongholds are predominantly Muslims.

Finally, this paper inferred that, until new studies suggest otherwise, movements in Nigeria and Algeria will continue to utilize the tripartite social movement factors to present collective demands and/or organize collective actions. It is recommended thus, that handling such movements before they gather resources should be the priorities of the policy makers. This paper shows that both Boko Haram and AQIM freely gathered resources before governments in Nigeria and Algeria decided to control their activities.

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## **Designing Gender-Specific Toilet and Urinal Needs Calculation Templates for Rural and Urban Schools: Lessons from the Republic of Benin**

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## **Abstract**

Gender equity, quality education, and sanitation in rural and urban areas are widely considered development imperatives. Therefore, many developed countries have scientifically and technically developed norms for the calculation and the design of toilet and urinal needs of their students, which is not yet the case in most developing countries, including the Republic of Benin, that lack socio-culturally adapted gender-specific toilets and urinal needs calculation and design norms. This paper fills this scientific and gender-specific norms gap, by discussing the process and the results of the design of school toilet and urinal needs calculation templates and norms in the Republic of Benin. The study that led to this design took place between June 2013 and October 2015 and consisted mainly of observing and recording defecation and urination needs satisfaction in toilets and open spaces by 8,160 female and 13,263 male students of 13 schools purposively selected in four agroecological and sociocultural areas of Benin. The main data recorded related, among other data, to the start and end times of the use of the toilets and open spaces; the needs satisfied; the peak times and durations of breaks and of toilet needs satisfaction; the numbers of female and male students and non-students who use and who can potentially use the toilets and urinals. These raw data were processed to infer and calculate eight parameters used in each template. This process led to the design of eight area-, gender-, and disability-specific templates and norms in use since 2016, in the target areas. Further studies will assess and report on the performance of these templates and norms.

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**Keywords:** Agroecology; Culture; Gender equity; Secondary schools; Toilet and urinal needs' calculation templates; West Africa

## **Introduction**

This paper addresses the gendering of public school toilets and urinals in the Republic of Benin, West Africa. Toilet and urinal needs are among the basic needs that women and men, with and without disabilities cannot sustainably and safely prevent themselves from satisfying (Drewko, 2007; Health and Safety Executive, 2011; Human\_Rights\_Council, 2011; Plante and Soulie, 2006; Serment and Guys, 2005). Therefore, many public health, hygiene, and sanitation decision-makers from around the world have constantly kept taking relevant decisions for the effective and sustainable

satisfaction of toilet and urinal needs of their citizens, however, with various levels of consideration for gender equity (Bichard and Knight, 2011; Department for Education and Skills, 2007; Eau-Hygiène-Assainissement de l'UNICEF-Mali, 2012; Kyanssem, 2010; Ministère des Enseignements Primaire, Secondaire et de l'Alphabétisation, 2009; Restroom Association, 2013; Sheikh, 2008; State of Florida Seal, 2012; US Department of Justice, 2009; Vinel, 2008; Water Aid Bangladesh, 2006; Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council, 2013). About this subject matter, the Republic of Benin has also gone through its gender equity consideration in the construction of public and institutional toilets as reported in the following sections (Clegbaza, 2010; COWI-Afric Performances, 2008; Direction de l'Hygiène et de l'Assainissement de Base, 2006 and 2010; Sossou and Agossou, 2005; Tonouhewa and Fourn, 2009). This design paper discusses the process and the results of the design of region- and gender-specific templates for the calculation of toilet and urinal needs of women, men, and people with disabilities (PWD) in secondary schools, in Benin. It fills a knowledge gap in this field in the sense that the existing literature is abundant on gender-specific toilet design norms of developed countries but very poor on developing countries including Benin. This paper aims also to inspire readers from developing countries about the scientific approach used for the design of the target templates. The collaborative action research that led to this paper took place from 2013 to 2015, within the framework of phase 2 of the Pluriannual Water and Sanitation Programme (*Programme Pluriannuel d'appui au secteur de l'Eau et de l'Assainissement*) (*PPEA 2*) funded by the Dutch Royal Embassy in Benin. This program aimed, among other things, to reduce inequity, discrimination, and shortcomings of previous public infrastructure construction approaches, through the provision of more and better quality toilet facilities to female and male students and PWD, in the target schools (Ambassade des Pays-Bas, 2012). The following sections respectively address the research methodology, results, discussion, and conclusion.

## **Methodology**

This section discusses strategies used to select the study areas and schools and to analyse and discuss the data collected.

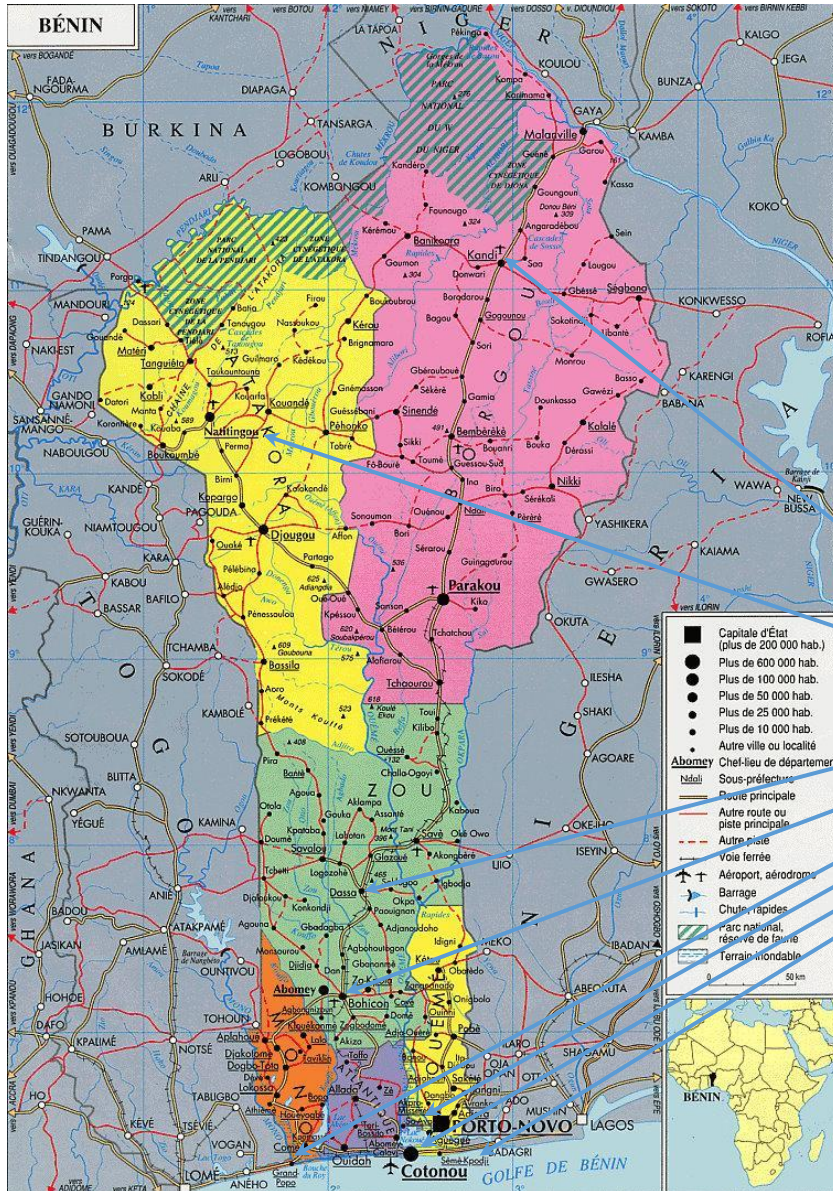
### ***Study period and areas***

This study is part of a series of studies that started in June 2013 and ended in October 2015. These studies were carried out in four agroecological, sociocultural, and economic areas selected with the help of schools and hygiene and sanitation administration authorities. These areas composed of Northern Sahelian, Central Sudanian, Coastal, and Lake zones, were considered representatives of the whole of Benin country from agroecological,



sociocultural (ethnic, cultural group, and religions), and economic points of view.

- The Northern Sahelian area was represented by the municipalities of Natitingou and Kandi where one can meet many ethnic groups (including in the majority the Bariba and Dendi), religions (Endogenous, Muslim, and Evangelist), and large and less populated spaces (see map in figure 1 below);
- the Central Sudanian area was represented by the municipalities of Dassa-Zoumè and Bohicon where there are fewer ethnic groups (Idaatcha, Nagot, Mahi, and Fon), many religions (Endogenous, Evangelist, and Muslim), and moderately large and populated spaces;
- The coastal zone represented by the municipalities of Grand-Popo, Cotonou, and Sèmè-Kpodji where there are many ethnic groups (Xwula or Popo, Xwela or Pedah, Fon, Goun, Nagot, etc.), many religions (Endogenous, Evangelist, and Muslim), sea areas, few wetlands and moderately few but very populated lands; and,
- the lake areas represented by the municipalities of Grand-Popo and Sô-Ava, where one can meet fewer ethnic groups (Xwula/Popo, Xwela, Fon, Goun, Nagot, etc.), many religions (Endogenous, Evangelist, and Muslim), lakes, lagoons, few wetlands, and moderately few and populated spaces (see figure 1 showing Benin Map including the target areas).



Study areas

Source: [https://www.formad-environnement.org/img/carte\\_benin2.jpg](https://www.formad-environnement.org/img/carte_benin2.jpg), retrieved and adapted on January 2, 2024

The choice of these areas was suggested by the Coordinators of the regional Basic Hygiene and Sanitation Centres (CDC-HAB), and the Directors and technical authorities of the regional secondary education (DDES) directorates.

It is however worth noting that, this paper is essentially based on data collected between November 2014 to October 2015.

### Sampling

In total 13 public secondary schools were purposively selected for the study. They were suggested by the literature, the coordinators of the regional basic hygiene and sanitation centers (CDC-HAB), hygiene and sanitation agents (AHA), Directors and Technical authorities of regional secondary education directorates (DDES), and Directors of rural and urban secondary schools, per target area. Table 1 below gives details on the schools sampled. Key criteria used to select these schools were: the existence of toilets, the number of users, and representativeness. Thus, these schools were those with higher numbers of potential toilet users.

**Table 1.** Public secondary schools (CEG) studied

N°	Area	School and location	Number of ladies observed	Number of men observed	Number of classrooms	Number of pedagogic groups	Observation time
1	Rural Coastal Lake area	CEG <i>Gbéhoue</i> (Grand-Popo)	257 (76.49%)	432 (70.13%)	14	18	7:00 am to 7:00 pm
2	Rural Sudanian area	CEG Sodohome (Bohicon)	234 (50%)	463 (50.05%)	16	32	7:00am to 19:00pm
3	Rural Sudanian area	CEG Kere (Dassa)	192 (94.12%)	726 (89.63%)	23	20	7:00am to 19:00pm
4	Rural Sahelian area	CEG Perma (Natitingou)	251 (87.46%)	634 (87.45%)	21	24	7:00 am to 7:00 pm
5		CEG Sonsoro (Kandi)	145 (72.86%)	267 (72.75%)	8	11	7:00am to 19:00pm
6	Suburban Lake area	CEG So-Ava	192 (56.47%)	639 (56.65%)	20	32	7:00 am to 7:00 pm
7	Urban Sudanian area	CEG1 Bohicon	1359 (68.02%)	1749 (63.76%)	50	71	7:00am to 19:00pm
8		CEG 2 Dassa	501 (87.13%)	893 (87.12%)	27	31	7:00am to 19:00pm
9	Urban Sahelian area	CEG1 Natitingou	1249 (67.40%)	2163 (66.01%)	48	70	7:00 am to 7:00 pm
10		CEG1 Kandi	886 (95.78%)	1405 (95.77%)	45	47	7:00am to 19:00pm
11	Urban Coastal Lake area	CEG Grand-Popo	481 (97.37%)	702 (86.99%)	54	97	7:00 am to 7:00 pm
12	Urban Coastal area	CEG Zogbo (Cotonou)	780 (63.31%)	1279 (63.35%)	38	60	7:00am to 18:00pm
13		CEG Suru-Lere (Cotonou)	1633 (58.51%)	1911 (63.57%)	56	94	7:00am to 19:00pm
<b>Totals</b>			<b>8160 (71.03%)</b>	<b>13263 (72.96%)</b>			

Source: Field data and estimations (2014-2015)

### ***Data collection***

Data collected for the design of the templates, related mainly to the gender and visible disabilities of users, the times and durations of use, and the reasons (defecation, urination, menstruation management, etc.) for the use of the toilets. Data collection methods consisted of discreet observations, recording of start and end of use times, and short interviews with purposively selected users. Reasons for the choice of these methods were to influence as little as possible the toilet use behaviors of the users, and to collect as natural and valid data as possible, on real-time use of the toilets by the people observed. As shown in Table 1 above, data collection took place continuously on days and times when the schools were open to students. While the opening days were the same from school to school, the opening times varied from 7 am to 6 pm and from 7 am to 7 pm. The same data were collected on the students who used the toilets, as well as on those who, for one reason or the other, used open spaces or bushes to satisfy their toilet needs. The main reason for gathering data on students who did not use the toilets but satisfied their toilet needs in nature was to integrate them into the calculation of the real toilet needs of all the students because they were all supposed to use the toilets and urinals.

Data related to the numbers and genders of students, teachers, food sellers, Watchers, classrooms, and pedagogic groups were also collected per school. In total, 6 schools in rural areas, 7 schools in urban areas, and 8,160 female and 13,263 male students who represented 72% of the total numbers of the selected schools were observed. Variations among the percentages of the students observed, account for the quality (attractiveness) of the existing toilets, and the extent to which students socio-culturally like using or not the public toilets, from one area to the other.

In all, these data recorded helped to identify and calculate parameters needed for the toilet and urinal needs calculation templates. These templates were validated by representatives of all stakeholders in November 2015.

### ***Data analysis and discussion***

After collecting the above data, the research team transcribed them into Excel sheets and proceeded with the calculation per school and study area, of the total number of toilet users per gender and ten-minute intervals corresponding to the minimum duration of breaks and toilet use peaks in the schools. The maximum duration of defecation and urination per gender were also estimated based on data recorded on toilet and urinal uses. These data in addition to the number of students recorded during the observations led to the determination of the key parameters considered in the design of the templates for the calculation of the number of toilets and urinals needed by the students in each area. These parameters are:

- Minimum time available for breaks and corresponding to peaks of toilet and urinal use needs;
- Maximum time used for urination, for the calculation of the number of urination needs that can be satisfied within the break and peak times;
- Maximum time used for defecation, for the calculation of the number of defecation needs that can be satisfied within the break and peak times;
- Maximum time used to urinate per gender and area (because this influences peaks);
- Maximum time used to defecate per gender and area (because this influences peaks);
- Percentage of students per gender urinating during peak times: calculated based on real-time use observations; and,
- Percentage of students per gender defecating during peak times: calculated based on real-time use observations.

Due to sociotechnical exclusion reasons and the absence of many people with disabilities (PWD) in most of the schools during the data collection period, by realism and positive discrimination or equity concern, the study systematically booked a minimum of 1 toilet per gender for these people, as one can see it in the templates. The templates obtained are user-friendly so that users only need to estimate and insert the maximum number reached by the students on the highest peak day and time.

Data discussion consists of highlighting important results, comparing them to existing experiences and knowledge, and emphasizing their policy implications.

### ***Ethical clearance and study limits***

Ethical principles were respected throughout the study, and the Ministry of Public Health which is the institutional body in charge of ethical clearance in medical research in Benin was also part of the research process. With more financial resources and time, the study would cover more areas and schools, such as to generate more robust templates. However, the templates obtained are expected to be continuously refined and adapted per school where necessary.

### **Results**

This section presents the characteristics of the toilets and urinals in use in the field during the study period, templates, and norms for the calculation of toilet and urinal cabin needs, and shows examples of the use of the templates.

### ***Characteristics of the schools' toilets and urinals during the study period***

The toilets of the schools studied were in general made of four (04) to ten (10) cabins. Most of them were of Ventilated Improved Pit (VIP) type (figure 1), and few were of Ecosan<sup>1</sup> type (figure 2).



**Figure 1.** A VIP latrine of 4 cabins equally distributed per gender, in a school of Hilla-Condji, Grand-Popo, July 2013



**Figure 2.** An Ecosan latrine in a school of Hilla-Condji, Grand-Popo, July 2013

VIP toilets are infrastructure that collect and pre-treat fecal materials, urines, and other liquid wastes. They are mostly composed of one or more pits and ventilated with the help of ventilation pipes.

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<sup>1</sup> Ecological Sanitation

ECOSAN toilets exist in definite or wood materials, and are made of:

- a half-buried or a surface pit that collects feces and wood ashes or any other desiccant and cleaning stuff. An orifice is opened on the pit such as to allow the evacuation of fecal plus ash or desiccant materials for compost or other needs;
- a ventilation pipe inserted in the pit;
- a can for the storage of urines (often used as urea in agriculture); and,
- stairs to access the toilet cabin.

In some places, one-half of the total number of toilet cabins was attributed to female students, and the second half to male students. In other places, there was no distribution of the number of cabins among female and male students. In all, the schools' managers used to keep at least one cabin for themselves and teachers, and no specific attention was paid to people with disabilities.

Apart from the toilet cabins of managers and teachers which were relatively kept clean (often cleaned by some students as punishment), those of the students were hardly cleaned and attractive. Therefore, due to dirtiness and unattractive smells, 37% of surveyed female students declared that they prefer satisfying their latrine and urine needs in open but hidden spaces where they can be able to slightly hide their nakedness, or in the toilets of neighbouring houses. The remaining 63% of interviewed students mentioned that they sometimes use school toilets, especially to satisfy at least two pressing needs, which are feces, and urine, and rarely for changes of menstrual diapers.

### ***Parameters recorded and calculated***

The following Table 2 presents parameters recorded and collected near the schools and the students observed.

**Tableau 2.** Parameters recorded and calculated about the use and needs of toilets and urinals of secondary schools (CEG) per study area

Area	School name and location	Peak times	Maximum duration of urination (ladies) (in min)	Maximum duration of urination (men) (in min)	Maximum duration of defecation (ladies) (in min)	Maximum duration of defecation (men) (in min)	Percentage of ladies urinating at peak times	Percentage of men urinating at peak times	Percentage of ladies defecating at peak times	Percentage of men defecating at peak times
Rural coastal Lake area	CEG Gbéhoué	10:01- 10:11 am; and 10:02-10:12 am	2	2	7	3	1.95%	1.16%	0.78%	0.46%
Suburban lake area	CEG So-Ava	7:49 – 7:59 am; and 8:30-8:40am	1	1	7	11	1.04%	0.63%	2.08%	2.19%
Urban Coastal Lake area	CEG Grand-Popo	4:55 – 5:05 pm; 16:57 – 17:07	2	2	8	12	1.25%	0.85%	1.66%	0.57%
Urban coastal area	CEG Zogbo	9:56 – 10:06am; 15:59 – 16:09pm	2	1	3	5	2.82%	1.80%	0.51%	0.08%
	CEG Suru-Lere	13:04 -13:14pm; 14:42 -14:52pm	1	2	3	3	0.98%	0.73%	0.06%	0.06%
Rural Soudanian area	CEG Sodohome	10:08 – 10:18 am; and 10:10-10:20 am	1	2	4	3	1.71%	2.16%	1.71%	0.43%
	CEG Kere	9:42 – 9:52 am; and 17:02-17:12 pm	2	1	5	7	2.60%	1.38%	0.52%	0.28%
Urban Soudanian area	CEG1 Bohicon	16:49-16:59pm; 16:58–17:08 pm ; and 17:03 – 17:13 pm	2	2	3	3	1.32%	1.32%	0.15%	0.06%
	CEG Dassa	8:39 – 8:49 am ; 9:46-9:56 am; 10:10 – 10:20am; and 17:03 – 17:13pm	1	2	7	7	0.60%	2.69%	0.20%	0.11%



<b>Rural Sahelian area</b>	CEG Perma (Natitingou)	7:56- 8:06am; 9:47 - 9:57am; 14:58-15:58pm; 16:49-16:59pm; 16:51 - 17:01pm, 16:56 - 17:06pm	1	2	4	4	0.40%	0.16%	2.39%	0.47%
	CEG Sonsoro	9:47 - 9:57am; and 16:50 - 17:00pm	1	2	3	5	0.69%	0.37%	2.76%	1.12%
<b>Urban Sahelian area</b>	CEG1 Natitingou	10:01 - 10:11am; 16:56 - 17:06 pm	2	1	4	5	0.08%	0.05%	0.24%	0.32%
	CEG1 Kandi	10:10 - 10:30am; 15:02- 15:12pm; 15:47 - 15:57pm; 16:20-16:30pm, 16:54 - 17:04pm;	2	1	3	7	0.45%	0.07%	0.23%	0.36%
<b>General trends and averages</b>		7:45 - 8:50am; 9:45-10:30am; 15:45 -16:30pm; 16:45 - 17:15pm	1.54	1.62	4.69	5.77	1.22%	1.03%	1.02%	0.50%

Source: Field data and calculations, 2014-2015

According to Table 2, the secondary school students intensively use the toilets and urinals:

- Between 7:45 and 8:50 am mainly in suburban and less developed areas where most houses lack latrines and urinals. Students from those areas keep their morning toilet needs until they satisfy them at school. This was the case in the CEGs of Perma and Sô-Ava.
- Between 9:45 and 10:30 am; and 3:45 and 5:15 pm in all the studied schools. These times were situated around the break times (which are 9:55 – 10:10 am; 4:00-4:10 pm; or 4:55 –5:05 pm) of the schools.

### ***Toilet and urinal cabin numbers calculation templates***

In total, eight (8) templates were designed for the secondary schools, considering the parameters presented in Table 2 above. The following Table 3 shows all 8 templates related to the study areas. Each of the templates contains:

- empty fields (line A) to be filled with the maximum number reached by the students at peak time;
- three parameters (lines B to D) recorded and fixed per area;
- two parameters (lines E and F) calculated and fixed per area;
- three empty fields (line G to I) that generate automatically the numbers of toilet cabins and urinals needed per school, after the maximum number of students at peak time is inserted; and,
- three other fields (lines J to L), summarising the total numbers of toilets and urinals needed per gender and disability.

Thus, each of these templates contains standardised parameters, and the only gaps to fill in to get the number of toilet cabins required per gender, are the maximum numbers of males and females reached at a peak time (in line A). As earlier mentioned, the number of cabins for PWDs is fixed for now at 1 PWD toilet cabin per gender, although, there are very few PWDs attending the schools.

**Tableau 3.** Synthesis of the templates for the calculation of gender and disability specific latrines and urinals

	Parameters	Rural coastal lake area		Urban coastal lake area		Suburban lake area		Urban coastal areas		Rural Sudanian area		Urban Sudanian area		Urban Sahelian area		Rural Sahelian area		Observations
		Ladies (L)	Men (M)	L	M	L	M	L	M	L	M	L	M	L	M	L	M	
A	Maximum Number reached on a peak day	(to be filled) (TBF)	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	TBF	Include teachers, administration staff, and other users in the school
B	Minimum time availed for breaks on a school day	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	This time corresponds to the smallest duration of breaks, running from 4:00-4:10 pm or 4:55-5:05 pm.
C	Maximum time used to urinate (recorded after observations)	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	This time in minutes corresponds to the highest duration for urination recorded near the students.

D	Maximum time used to defecate (recorded after observations)	7	3	8	12	7	11	3	5	5	7	7	7	4	7	4	5	This time in minutes corresponds to the highest duration for defecation recorded near the students.
E	Percentage of students who urinate at peak times (estimated after observations)	1.95%	1.16%	1.25%	0.85%	1.04%	0.63%	2.82%	1.80%	2.60%	2.16%	1.32%	2.69%	0.45%	0.07%	0.69%	0.37%	These rates were obtained after dividing the highest number of students urinating within the 10 min breaks by the total number of students in the schools per gender, and multiplying the results by 100.

F	Percentage of students who defecate at peak times (estimated after observations)	0.78%	0.46%	1.66%	0.57%	2.08%	2.19%	0.51%	0.08%	1.71%	0.43%	0.20%	0.11%	0.24%	0.36%	2.76%	1.12%	These rates were obtained after dividing the highest number of students defecating within the 10 min breaks by the total number of students in the schools per gender, and multiplying the results by 100.
G	Number of urinals needed (NU)= $A * E / (B / C)$	Automatically generated after inserting a number in the A cell above (AG)	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	Results here were obtained with the formula $(A * E / (B / C))$ . Females' urinals are converted into latrines.
H	Number of WC cabins needed (NWC)= $A * F / (B / D) - I$	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	Results here are obtained with the formula $(A * F / (B / D) - I)$ .

I	Number of cabins needed for PWD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	These are fixed numbers. They should be constructed and equipped such as to welcome PWDs of all genders.
J	TOTAL NUMBERS OF WC FOR PWDs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	Summary of number of cabins to construct. They are Automatically generated after inserting a number in the A cell above.
K	TOTAL NUMBERS OF WC FOR NON-PWDs	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG		
L	TOTAL NUMBERS OF URINALS	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG	AG		

**Remark:** Relevant conditions may be created in the cabins to allow ladies and PWDs to manage all their toilet needs. Especially accessibility, cleanliness, water and soap, materials for easy management of menstruations, and relevant and discrete dust bins are key for PWDs and female students.

**Source:** Field data and calculations, 2013-2015.

**Legend:** AG= Automatically Generated or calculated by the templates after filling cells in line A with required data.

TBF= To be filled

The templates are designed such that fixed parameters cannot be changed.

Table 3 shows that the recorded and calculated parameters vary among genders and from area to area. However, the most important differences are observed at the level of percentages of students who use the toilets at peak times. Thus, the percentages of female students who use the toilets or open spaces to urinate vary between 0.08% and 2.82%, while those of male students vary from 0.05% to 2.69%. The lowest percentages were observed in most populated schools of the Sahelian areas where there were wide open spaces used by the students for their toilet needs. The highest percentages of toilet use for urination were recorded in Lake, Coastal, and Sudanian areas, where there were very few open spaces for toilet needs satisfaction by the students.

With regards to defecation, percentages of toilet users recorded varied from 0.06% to 2.76% for ladies and 0.06% to 2.19% for men. Here, the highest percentages were recorded in rural Sahelian areas, while the lowest were observed in Coastal, Lake, and Sudanian areas, which confirmed the hypothesis according to which, school toilets are most used for defecation than for urination in rural Sahelian and Lake areas where very few students have toilets in their houses. These trends also confirmed the hypothesis according to which, toilets in most populated urban schools are mostly used for pressing defecation needs because of their generally poor attractiveness due to poor cleaning habits.

The templates have been used according to the area of location of the target secondary schools. Their use consists of simply estimating the highest number of female and male students reached in the schools on the busiest day and time of the week, and inserting such numbers in the appropriate template, in the cells of the top and the first line labeled A. Once the numbers are inserted, the template automatically generates the numbers of toilet cabins and urinals needed per gender and disability as shown in the following section.

### **Results of the test of the templates**

The following Table 4 presents the results of the test of the templates. The test consisted of estimating and inserting the required data in the cells of line A. These data were calculated with the help of school databases.

**Tableau 4:** Results of the tests of the templates

Paramètres	CEG Gbehoue		CEG Grand-Popo		CEG So-Ava		CEG Suru-Lere		CEG Kere de Dassa		CEG 1 Bohicon		CEG 1 Natitingou		CEG Sonsoro	
	F	G	F	G	F	G	F	G	F	G	F	G	F	G	F	G
<b>A</b> Maximum Number reached on a peak day	336	616	494	807	340	1128	2791	3006	204	810	1998	2743	1853	3277	199	367
<b>B</b> Minimum time availed for breaks on a school day	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
<b>C</b> Maximum time used to urinate (recorded after observations)	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2
<b>D</b> Maximum time used to defecate (recorded after observations)	7	3	8	12	7	11	3	5	5	7	7	7	4	7	4	5
<b>E</b> Percentage of students who urinate at peak times (estimated after observations)	1.95%	1.16%	1.25%	0.85%	1.04%	0.63%	2.82%	1.80%	2.60%	2.16%	1.32%	2.69%	0.45%	0.07%	0.69%	0.37%
<b>F</b> Percentage of students who defecate at peak times (estimated after observations)	0.78%	0.46%	1.66%	0.57%	2.08%	2.19%	0.51%	0.08%	1.71%	0.43%	0.20%	0.11%	0.24%	0.36%	2.76%	1.12%
<b>G</b> Number of urinals needed (NU)= A*E/(B/C)	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	11	0	4	0	15	0	1	0	1



<b>H</b>	Number of WC cabins needed (NWC)= $A * F / (B / D) - I$	4	1	8	6	6	28	21	2	3	3	9	3	4	9	3	3
<b>I</b>	Number of cabins needed for PWD	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>J</b>	TOTAL NUMBERS OF WC FOR PWDs	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>K</b>	TOTAL NUMBERS OF WC FOR NON-PWDs	4	1	8	6	6	28	21	2	3	3	9	3	4	9	3	3
<b>L</b>	TOTAL NUMBER OF URINALS	0	2	0	2	0	1	0	11	0	4	0	15	0	1	0	1

Table 4 confirms that needs vary from area to area, from school to school, and among gender and PWD. Therefore, systematically constructing the same numbers of toilet and urinal cabins for all genders and PWD may discriminate against people less represented and with specific needs, as this used to happen before.

***School toilet cabins and urinals need calculation norms for the study areas***

Table 5 provides norms for the calculation of the number of toilet cabins and urinals in the study areas. These norms were derived from the templates used to estimate the number of female, male, and PWD students required per toilet cabin and urinal.

**Table 5.** Toilet and urinals’ needs calculation norms for secondary schools

Nº	Areas	Number of female students per WC cabin	Number of WC cabins for female PWDs	Number of male students per WC cabin	Number of male students per urinal	Number of WC cabins for male PWDs
1	Rural lake areas	107	1	720	432	1
2	Rural Sudanian areas	73	1	331	232	1
3	Rural Sahelian areas	85	1	178	1335	1
4	Suburban lake areas	64	1	41	1598	1
5	Urban Sudanian areas	247	1	1276	186	1
6	Urban Sahelian areas	537	1	401	1405	1
7	Urban coastal-lake areas	63	1	146	585	1
8	Urban coastal areas	139	1	2558	278	1

**Source:** Field data and estimations, 2013-2015

Analysis of table 5 indicates that norms vary per area and gender, in the secondary schools. These variations may be due to differences in demographic, sociocultural, and availability of open spaces, between areas and between urban, suburban, and rural areas. Norms are higher in areas where

more open spaces are available and used by the students for most of their toilet and urination needs, than in space-less areas.

## **Discussion**

This paper shows, in general, that toilet and urinal needs vary from area to area and among genders and people with disabilities. The study findings revealed that these need variations are mainly due to variations of demographics, cultures or habits, disabilities, and physiological specificities of ladies, men, PWDs, schools, and areas. The findings logically highlighted that schools, areas, and people with high toilet and urinal needs, require high numbers of toilet and urinal cabins technically adapted to the biophysical and biophysiological abilities and disabilities of potential users. However, the toilet and urinal needs of students are not just matters of quantity, they are also matters of quality. This means that people in charge of hygiene and sanitation in the target schools are required to make sure that the toilets and urinals meet the quality conditions desired by the students and other users. If such quality conditions are not satisfied, toilets and urinals can fail to be used, and hygiene and sanitation issues in schools will remain (Kouévi & Okry, 2015; Kpangon *et al.*, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

This paper discusses a process towards the design of templates and norms for the calculation of toilet and urinal cabins needs of secondary school students of rural, suburban, urban, Sahelian, Sudanian, Lake, and Coastal areas of the Republic of Benin. The study from which it was derived took place from 2013 to 2015, and in four steps, across the study areas. This article reported on the third step built on the results from the first and the second steps of the study to design the templates presented in this paper, which may allow sanitation and school decision-makers to easily and quickly calculate the numbers of toilet cabins and urinals required for the target schools, per gender and disability, no matter their toilet needs calculation skills. To obtain the templates, the study observed real-time toilet and urination needs satisfaction by more than 20,000 female and male students through 13 secondary schools distributed in four agroecological areas of the Republic of Benin. The data recorded from the observations were processed in Excel sheets to derive and calculate about five parameters used for the calculation of the toilet and urinal needs of the target students. In total 8 templates have been generated and into use since 2016 in secondary schools in Benin, and they have easily helped to calculate many gender-specific toilet needs, contributing then to the achievement of sustainable development goals (SDG) number 6, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, and 16. The study and the templates revealed differences in the use and the needs of toilets and urinals among areas, genders, and people with disabilities.

Therefore, relevant templates may be used for the toilet and urinal needs calculation in secondary schools, and required effort may be deployed for the quality design and maintenance of these toilets and urinals for their effective and sustainable use by students. Humans' needs and contexts are dynamic, further effort may be developed to monitor the use and update the templates, where needed. A further paper will report on the performance of these templates.

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**Data Availability:** All of the data are included in the content of the paper.

**Involvement of humans:** This research has followed Helsinki and Benin Ethical Principles For Medical Research Involving Human Subjects. The research was approved by the relevant institutional body.

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# A Critical Study of Matthew 18:15-18 in New Testament Greek and Selected Akan Mother-Tongue Translations: Implication for Peace-Making in Ghana

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## Abstract

Recent global research reveals a world characterised by increasing fragmentation, diminished peace, and mounting risks for future generations. Diverse conflicts, ranging from familial to national issues, persist, even among individuals sharing the same faith. In Africa, nations like Cote d'Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, the Central African Republic, and Sierra Leone grapple with severe consequences of conflicts. In Ghana, pockets of ethnic discord impact education, healthcare, and social services, prompting the emigration of skilled professionals. Despite ongoing peace efforts in Ghana, effective approaches are crucial. With over 70% of Ghanaians identifying as Christians, contextualising peace-making within sacred texts becomes imperative. In this exploration, the study delves into a biblical approach, specifically scrutinising Matthew 18:15–18 through exegetical analysis in Greek language and mother-tongue hermeneutics. These approaches reveal a convergence between the biblical author's original meaning conveyed in the Greek language and its interpretation in the mother tongue. The paper advocates private conflict resolution to avoid gossip, involving witnesses if needed and church leaders if the issue persists. Disciplinary measures may be necessary, emphasising personal dignity and adherence to God's will. The paper significantly contributes to conflict



resolution knowledge, providing valuable insights for fostering peace in Ghana and beyond.

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**Keywords:** Bible translation, conflict, peace-making, Book of Matthew, mother-tongue, exegesis, New Testament

## **Introduction**

Nelson and Quick (1977) define conflict as any situation in which incompatible goals, attitudes, emotions, or behaviours lead to disagreement or opposition between two or more parties as a fact of life and are, therefore, inevitable. It happens in any human gathering or association, leading to strained relations or antagonistic interactions.

According to the Global Network of Religions for Children (2018), the world today is gradually becoming highly fragmented, less peaceful, and unsafe for both present and future generations because of conflict. It is immersed in an environment of tension, vehemence, falling values, injustices, and reduced tolerance, threatening the present and posterity, who deserve a peaceful and better quality of life.

Conflict can also emerge when individuals possess divergent values, opinions, needs, and interests and cannot reach a mutually acceptable resolution. This happens anywhere: in families, marriages, communities, and nations. Conflict even happens among people of the same faith, such as Muslims and Christians. One would expect that conflict should be uncommon among Christians; Jesus Christ, the founder of Christianity, teaches his followers to live in peace. He was very emphatic in his teachings that not living at peace with others is inconsistent with the Christian faith (*cf.* Mark 9:50). It is an undeniable fact that conflict hinders peace between families, communities, nations, and religions, as well as among believers.

The core issue driving these conflicts is a misunderstanding between the parties involved in these acts. These misunderstandings, according to Mustajoki (2014), often lead to complications or troubles and conflicts such as furious arguments, litigation, assault, anxiety, broken relationships, destruction of assets, loss of production, war, and deaths and injuries in our everyday lives, which makes it difficult for people to co-exist in a peaceful atmosphere.

In Africa, countries like Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda, Central African Republic, and Sierra Leone have all experienced conflicts with damning consequences. Some countries experienced human rights abuses and humanitarian crises resulting in the death toll of citizens, while others faced health and medical crises, leading to epidemics such as measles, yellow fever, and cholera, and serious effects on household food security, causing food hunger. Economic and financial

systems also slowed down to a point in some nations where certain sectors, such as cocoa and coffee exports, became paralysed, leading to massive layoffs (Obeng, n/d). In Sierra Leone, for instance, authorities created an amputee camp to house about 20,000 amputees.

Ghana has witnessed violent conflicts on a small scale or within a geographical space at places such as Dagbon, Bawku, and between Nanumba and Konkomba, as well as between the people of Nkonya and Alavanyo, unlike the African nations mentioned above where conflicts have been witnessed on a national scale. Notwithstanding, “Ghana’s current image of peace and stability is worthy of attention” (Tsikata and Seini, 2004). The Global Peace Index (2022) places Ghana in the fortieth position in the world and first in Africa. This means that Ghana is going through a period of relative stability compared with its neighbouring countries. Thus, the country has the fewest conflicts and misunderstandings among other African countries. It does not mean there is no conflict, but it is comparatively low.

The aforementioned conflicts have resulted in various impacts on the populace. Tsikata and Seini (2004) provide an account of the toll that conflicts have taken on human life and property in Ghana. During periods of conflict, peaceful economic activities become unfeasible. Looting and arson have been prevalent themes in the majority of the country’s conflicts. The emigration of personnel, including educators and healthcare professionals, from conflict-affected regions has a negative impact on the provision of education, healthcare, and additional social services. In certain instances of conflict, there has been the destruction of physical infrastructure, including educational and healthcare facilities, resulting in the loss of valuable teaching materials and the burning or looting of health resources. In addition to the human and property toll, the expenses associated with upholding law and order have consistently been excessive and inadequately accounted for, resulting in a strain on the country’s financial resources. Violent conflicts have a significant impact on national security, casting doubt on the purported cohesiveness and unity of Ghanaian society.

An appropriate approach or method should be employed to handle conflicts in homes, families, marriages, and among people and religious groups, such as Christians, for peaceful coexistence in Ghana (and the world at large). This could be achieved when offending parties engage in peace-making as a fundamental component of community development, personal growth, and the survival of our planet. The Global Network of Religions for Children (2018) asserts that “[p]eace underlies our quality of life and the fabric of our communities, and as our weaponry becomes ever more powerful, our very survival as people on this planet depends on it.” At the heart of every faith community and culture lies a need to advance peaceful coexistence to enhance productive, meaningful lives and sustainable societies. That is why

Christians are commanded to live at peace with everyone (Mk. 9:50; Rom. 12:18; 14:19; Heb. 12:14), as it repairs broken relationships between people affected by a destructive misunderstanding and reforms institutions.

How then should Ghanaians handle conflict to enable them to live at peace with their neighbours and loved ones in order to live as one family and repair broken relationships? This paper seeks to put forward a biblical approach towards making peace among individuals to enable Africa in general and Ghanaians in particular to enjoy stability and peaceful coexistence.

### **Methodology**

This work employs exegetical approaches in both the Greek language and mother-tongue hermeneutics models. According to Fee (1993), the exegetical method strives to discover the biblical author's original intended meaning in the text. It talks about undergoing a careful exercise to historically investigate the Bible with the objective of coming up with an exact and useful interpretation. Mother-tongue hermeneutics determines the translation of the text into indigenous Ghanaian languages and its significance to the readers. It tries to interpret the Scriptures by employing the home language—the generally accepted language the benefactors of the translated work have known and are familiar with from their infancy—to make it meaningful and culturally relevant.

Extensive data are obtained from lexicons, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, books, journal articles, and any other relevant materials that were useful in the research.

### **The new testament on peace – making**

The theme of peace-making holds a prominent place in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament (Paffenroth 2016). The teachings and principles of the Word of God strongly encourage believers to actively seek peace, reconciliation, and harmonious relationships with others. Ezeogamba (2019) underscores the importance of understanding and practicing reconciliation and peace, asserting that these steps are crucial for valid and conscious efforts capable of making significant sacrifices.

While Nipkow (2003) suggests that the impact of the Bible, especially the New Testament, on global and local peace challenges is subjective and influenced by individual beliefs and interpretations, Villiers (2006) argues that, for many, the Bible, particularly the New Testament, provides profound spiritual and moral guidance, highlighting principles such as love, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Adam & Kyeremeh (2022) propose that embracing the church's foundation on biblical tenets, especially those related to peace, can contribute to fostering societal harmony. Individuals and communities adhering to the

teachings of the Bible, specifically the New Testament, often find strength and inspiration to actively participate in the pursuit of peace (Paffenroth 2016; Ezeogamba 2019; Nipkow 2003; Villiers 2006; Adam & Kyeremeh 2022). By actively pursuing this approach, the potential arises to cultivate stability and harmonious coexistence in Ghana and throughout Africa, thereby mitigating localised conflicts.

### **Peace-making efforts in Ghana**

As stated earlier, Ghana has a relatively low conflict index. The country is often considered peaceful and stable and has not witnessed a nationwide conflict. However, this does not mean there are no pockets of conflict that require peace-making efforts. According to Inssiful (2017), Ghana has witnessed pockets of conflict in areas such as chieftaincy, farmer-herdsmen, and politics. Paolo (2020) argues that the farmer-herdsmen conflict in the Agogo of the Ashanti Region is the most complex one. It has been observed that many of the conflicts in Ghana are ethnic in nature and, as a result, have traditional factors underpinning them. The Akans, being the largest ethnic group in Ghana and widely spread across the country, have the potential to influence peace-making efforts in the nation and beyond. As a result, they could influence peace-making efforts in the nation and beyond.

In Ghana, different levels of society employ several approaches to handle various forms of conflict. In some instances, the Government will constitute a committee or commission of inquiry to investigate the causes and effects of the conflict and initiate peace-building efforts. Inssiful & Bukari (2022) observed that in the Dagbon conflict, for example, the government established the Mate Kole Committee of 1968 and the Ollenu Committee of 1972 to handle the issue. Another approach is the use of police and the military to bring calm and peace in some instances. Authorities usually employ this approach to halt open confrontation among parties and facilitate the establishment of peaceful dialogues through the formation of agreements (Inssiful & Bukari 2013). For example, in the farmers-herdsmen conflict in Agogo in the Ashanti Region of Ghana, this was one of the approaches used in the peace-making efforts. Furthermore, parties in other conflicts also seek adjudication through the law court. For example, in the Dagbon case, the Supreme Court adjudicated the matter (Inssiful & Bukari 2022). However, it is observed that peace-making efforts through the court system have not been effective and, in some cases, have resulted in several tensions between the parties after the court decision. Another approach is conflict resolution led by civil society groups or organisations. Non-Governmental Organisations and Faith Communities, such as churches and mosques, have been involved in some peace building efforts. It is observed that peace building efforts by civil society organisations are more effective than Government-led approaches

since, in most cases, civil society maintains neutral positions on the matter (Inssiful 2017).

Bukari (2013) records that a number of conflict situations in Ghana have been protracted because of a lack of indigenous approaches to peace-making. This implies that there is a need to identify peace-making approaches that are contextual and relevant to Ghanaian culture. Some instances of conflict have witnessed unsuccessful results due to the dynamics of the peace-making approaches and efforts. Bukari therefore advocates for indigenous peace-making and suggests that this approach should incorporate all spheres of society, such as economic, social, political, cultural, and religio-spiritual dimensions (2013). It implies that indigenous approaches should be grounded in the beliefs and worldviews of the people. For this approach to be effective, the chiefs, elders, and religious leaders should lead it. These leaders already command respect in Ghanaian society. Religious leaders have become frontline personnel and are often called upon in times of crisis, as observed by Osafo (2015). The significance of religious leaders in upholding social stability and promoting peace-making endeavors in Ghana cannot be overstated. The incident involving Oyerepa FM and Manhyia<sup>1</sup>, wherein a politician allegedly made derogatory remarks against traditional authority in Asanteman through the radio station's platform, resulted in the management of the radio station seeking the intervention of traditional rulers and officials from the Methodist Church of Ghana. The traditional rulers and officials from the Methodist Church of Ghana interceded on behalf of the radio station, resulting in the granting of clemency.

Given that more than 70 percent of Ghanaians profess to be Christians, conflict resolution and peace-making efforts and approaches should be grounded in the Christian faith. This is because the Bible is the chief authority in decision-making on matters of the Christian faith. This implies that peace-making efforts that find their approaches and expressions in the Christian faith and are informed by scripture are more likely to contribute significantly to peace building in Ghana.

The religious texts contain numerous messages promoting peace, yet one particular message stands out prominently. Jesus Christ, the central figure of the Christian faith, is attributed with this statement. The instructor imparts knowledge on the pursuit of personal peace as a means to achieve collective well-being. The reference in question is located within the biblical book of Matthew 18, specifically in verses 15 through 18. What, then, is the approach used by Jesus in promoting reconciliation among disputing parties?

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<sup>1</sup> The aforementioned location serves as the official seat and residence of the Asantehene, who holds the position of Monarch within the Ashanti Kingdom. It is situated in Kumasi, the administrative centre of the Ashanti Region.

## **Exegesis of Matthew 18:15-18**

### **Background to the Text**

According to tradition, Matthew the Levi, who was a tax collector or publican and was called by Jesus to be a disciple, authored the initial Gospel (Mark 3:18; Matthew 9:9; 10:3; Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13). Early church writers affirm the authorship of Matthew, in agreement with Tenney (2003). According to Vanlaningham (2014), the prevailing scholarly consensus is that the composition of this gospel took place in Antioch during the 80s A.D., subsequent to the Roman destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 AD. Additional internal evidence corroborates a date preceding 70 A.D. The estimated time frame for the occurrence in question is believed to be within the years 50 to 90 A.D. (NIV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, 2016).

The writer, a learned Jewish Christian of the early period, possessed a considerable degree of erudition. The author produced a literary work that features a Jewish theme. The text appears to have been intended for Jewish followers who held differing views on the interpretation of the Law. The author Vanlaningham (2014) posits that Jesus of Nazareth held the titles of Messiah, Son of David, King of the Jews, Immanuel, and King of the world. As per Ladd's (1994) analysis, the book delineates the introduction of Jesus as the Messiah (1:1-4:16), presents a vivid account of his public ministry in Galilee (4:17-16:20), unveils the actual objective of his messianic mission in the form of rejection and death through the confidential instructions imparted to his disciples (16:21-18:35), portrays the Messiah's encounter with the official leadership of Israel (19:1-25:46), and culminates with his agony, demise, and resurrection (26:1-28:20). The author of this discourse has structured the book into five distinct "discourses" that comprise Jesus' teachings on discipleship (chapters 5-7), mission (chapter 10), parables (chapter 13), relationships (chapter 18), and the future (chapters 24-25) (Ladd, 1994). This categorization is a meticulous compilation of Jesus' utterances. Asamoah (2022) suggests that Matthew included the five discourses in the book to give the impression that he fashioned his work after the Pentateuch or the novel Torah. As per his account, Matthew has classified the discourses into five distinct lessons pertaining to the Kingdom of Heaven. These include the Sermon on the Mount (The Ethics of the Kingdom), comprising chapters 5-7; The Commissioning of the Twelve (The Mission of the Kingdom), featured in chapter 10; The Parables (The Nature of the Kingdom), discussed in chapter 13; Community Instructions (The Governance of the Kingdom), expounded upon in chapter 18; and The Olivet Discourse (The Future of the Kingdom), spanning chapters 23-25. After the ascension of Jesus into heaven, a speech is delivered to culminate each of these lessons. Tenney (2003) categorises the discourses of Jesus in the book into six distinct sections. These include John's proclamation (3:1-12), the Sermon on the Mount (5:1-7:29), the Commission

(10:1-42), the meaning of forgiveness (18:1-35), denunciation and prediction (23:1-25:46), and the Great Commission (26:1-28:20), each of which is presented in various parts of the book.

### **The text under study in Greek**

*Ἐὰν δὲ ἀμαρτήσῃ ἑἰς σὲ ὁ ἀδελφός σου, ὕπαγε ἔλεγξον αὐτὸν μεταξὺ σοῦ καὶ αὐτοῦ μόνου. εἰάν σου ἀκούσῃ, ἐκέρδησας τὸν ἀδελφόν σου· εἰάν δὲ μὴ ἀκούσῃ, παράλαβε μετὰ σοῦ ἔτι ἓνα ἢ δύο, ἵνα ἐπὶ στόματος δύο μαρτύρων ἢ τριῶν σταθῇ πᾶν ῥῆμα· εἰάν δὲ παρακούσῃ αὐτῶν, εἰπὸν τῇ ἐκκλησίᾳ· εἰάν δὲ καὶ τῆς ἐκκλησίας παρακούσῃ, ἔστω σοι ὡσπερ ὁ ἐθνικός καὶ ὁ τελώνης. ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ὅσα ἔάν δήσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται δεδεμένα ἔν οὐρανῷ καὶ ὅσα εἰάν λύσητε ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς ἔσται λελυμένα ἔν οὐρανῷ.*

### **Transliteration**

*Ean de hamartēsē eis se o adelphos sou, hypage elegxōn auton metaxu sou kai autou monou. ean sou akousē ekerdēsas ton adelphon sou. ean de mē akousē, paralabe meta sou eti hena ē duo, hina epi stomatos duo marturon ē trion stathē pan rhēma. ean de parakousē autōn, eipon tē ekklēsia. ean de kai tēs ekklēsias parakousē, estō soi hōsper ho ethnikos kai ho telōnēs. Amēn legō hymin, hosa ean dēsētē epi tēs gēs estai dedemena en ouranō kai hosa ean lusētē epi tēs gēs estai lelumena en ouranō.*

### **Delimitation of the text**

In the remotest context, the text under study is about Jesus' rebuke of His disciples for their pride and desire for worldly grandeur when they asked who was the foremost in God's kingdom (18:1). The disciples were frequently preoccupied with the issue of greatness. They appear to ask this question as if Jesus has previously selected someone among them as the greatest, whom he will appoint for the most prominent leadership position within the administration he will soon establish, or as if they want Jesus to choose amongst them the prominent one to occupy the top position in the soon-to-be-established government. Jesus rebukes His disciples for their arrogance and desire for earthly grandeur, which prompts Him to teach them the qualities and attitudes of citizens of the kingdom: humility—having the heart of a child and caring for God's children (18:1–14), honesty—dealing with sin or correcting another believer (18:15–20), and forgiveness—"letting go" of one's offences unlimited times (18:21–35). In the immediate context, the text falls under how a believer should handle another when one sins against the other. The text describes how the Lord Jesus Christ instructed Christians to get along with such individuals.

## Structure of the text

The text is made up of five verses (18:15–18), with each being dependent on itself, though each derives full meaning from the other. The text consists of four main parts—18:15; 18:16; 18:17; and 18:18—but is further divided into seven sub-headings.

## Jesus' Method of Peace-Making

### *Part One*

#### *Ean de hamartēsē eis se o adelphos sou, (Matt 18:15a)*

The sentence begins with the conjunction *Ean* (*Εάν*), which is a conditional particle making reference to time and experience, introducing something future but not determining before the event whether it is certainly to take place. This is followed by *de* (*δέ*), which gives the certainty and exact period for the occurrence of an action. What, then, is this action? *hamartēsē eis se o adelphos sou* (*ἁμαρτήσῃ εἰς σὲ ὁ ἀδελφός σου*). Thus, when a brother sins against you now or at that moment. According to Thayer (1999), the noun *adelphos*, the subject of the sentence, means a brother from the same parents or only one parent, as in Matt 1:2; 4:18; one connected by tie of the Christian religion, as in 1 Cor. 7:15; having the same national ancestor, belonging to the same people, countryman, as in Acts 13:26; or a fellow believer, united to another by the bond of affection, as in Matt 23:8. This could also mean any fellow man. All these hold in this context in the sense that some of the disciples shared common parentage, were all of one faith or religion, and were all Galileans or Jews. In effect, Jesus was telling them that they could hurt themselves individually or someone outside their camp could hurt them. The subject offends the object. By parsing, the object *σὲ* is a second-person singular, meaning that Jesus in addressing the group, spoke to one person, possibly Peter, as he was their leader. In other words, he was telling each one of them that a brother can sin against them individually. Jesus' use of *adelphos* was possibly the result of the male dominance of his disciples. This does not exclude women.

*hypage elegxōn auton metaxu sou kai autou monou. (Matt 18:15b)*

What should the disciple who receives the effect of the action of a brother do? He must *ὑπάγε* (*hypage*) the brother. The verb is in the imperative mood, which commands the disciple to make a move to meet the brother, and *ἐλεγξον* (*elegxn*), thus confute or admonish. He must not wait for the brother to come to him, but must go to him and convict, refute, or confute what he did to him (Thayer 1999). On why the disciple should not wait for the brother, Wiersbe (2007) gives the reason that the brother may not even realise what he has done. Or, even if he did it deliberately, the disciple's attitude of humility, submission, and love will help the brother repent and apologise. This releases the disciple from the feelings of sadness, insomnia, trouble with memory, and



clinginess that come as a result of depression and worry. The disciple must keep the engagement with the brother between themselves. The disciple must keep the engagement with the brother private. The disciple is not to tell others what the brother did but must go to him directly. Informing others makes them (third parties) lack consideration for the brother, which tarnishes his image. It even becomes worrying when the brother does it unknowingly.

*ean sou akousē ekerdēsas ton adelphon sou* (Matt 18:15c)

The essence of the disciple having a private conversation with the brother is for him to (*akousē*) hear or listen to the case of the disciple in order to (*ekerdēsas*) win him as a brother, not to win arguments. On why going with the intention of winning the brother is better than not winning the argument, Wiersbe (2007) believes that there is the possibility for the disciple to lose the brother when he tows that line, for it can create a stressful atmosphere, hostility, and anger. The disciple must approach the brother's actions with humility and avoid introducing unrelated issues in order to win him over. On the other hand, the brother must give ear to the disciple's submission by way of comprehending and understanding complaints and not assume a deaf role. He should take time to hear what the disciple is talking about. He should avoid any distractions that may hinder his listening; the disciple must perceive him as actively listening.

### **Part Two**

***ean de mē akousē. paralabe meta sou eti hena ē duo, hina epi stomatos duo marturon ē trion stathē pan rhēma.* (Matt 18:16)**

The next verse begins with a conjunction, connecting the previous sentence to bring out its meaning. In the event that the brother is not saved from the sin he commits against the disciple by way of the private engagement, Jesus provides the alternative. Jesus tells the disciples to *ean de mē akousē. paralabe meta sou eti hena ē duo, hina epi stomatos duo marturon ē trion stathē pan rhēma*. Thus, the disciple should take with him one or two more witnesses, so that upon the testimony of one or two witnesses, every word may be strengthened. Jesus tells the disciple that he should invite one or two more people to affirm what they will see, hear, or experience what will transpire, when the brother persists in not accepting his faults (Thayer 1999). These persons may be adults or elders and not children. They become witnesses in both a legal and historical sense. In a legal sense, they have first-hand knowledge of the incident and can give testimony at the public court, gathering of believers, or wherever so that their testimony can be admitted to the condemnation of an accused brother (*cf.* Deut. 19:15). And in a historical sense, they have become spectators to the incident and are in the best position to recall it. The witness or witnesses take records of the conversation between the disciple and the brother (the offender).

### **Part Three**

#### ***ean de parakousē autōn, eipon tē ekklēsia. (Matt 18:17a)***

The next verse starts with the conjunction *ean* which connects the previous text. When the brother *parakousē*, disobeys or fails to hear or accept his fault in the presence of one or two more witnesses, the disciple must take the matter to the church—the assembly of Christians gathered for worship, as in 1 Corinthians 14:19, 35. They are people hoping for eternal salvation through Jesus Christ who observe their own religious rites, hold their own religious meetings, and manage their own affairs according to regulations prescribed for the body’s sake (Thayer 1999). They are also united into one body, as in Acts 5:11; 11:22. The disciple, together with the witness or witnesses, must bring the behaviour of the brother to the attention of the group united into one body, of which he (the brother) is part, for redress. At this point, the matter that started between two people privately is now out in the open for the whole church, manned by religious leaders, to see with the intention of winning the brother.

*ean de kai tēs ekklēsias parakousē, estō soi hōsper ho ethnikos kai ho telōnēs. (Matt 18:17b)*

If the brother *parakousē*, fails to listen to the body of believers to whom the matter has become open, *estō soi hōsper ho ethnikos kai ho telōnēs*; meaning, the disciple should see the brother as a pagan or tax collector. Thus, the brother should be considered someone who is alien to the worship of the true God or considered a sinner by the disciple. The disciple, not the witnesses or the church should see the brother as such. The possessive pronoun *soi* is in the dative second person singular, meaning Jesus was referring to the individual disciples but not the collective. Thus, the individual disciple who is not listened to by the brother should recognise the brother as an unbeliever, not the whole church. The essence here is that the disciple cannot treat the brother as a spiritual person, for he has forfeited that position as a believer. The disciple should treat him as one outside the church (the pagan or Gentile, as in Gal 2:14), not hated but not held in close fellowship. In this case, the disciple will now follow the brother towards winning him for Christ as an unbeliever, for Christ came to seek, find, and save the lost. At this point, the disciple would marshal the appropriate ways of winning unbelievers over to the brother in order to save him.

### **Part four**

#### ***Amēn legō hymin, hosa ean dēsētē epi tēs gēs estai dedemena en ouranō kai hosa ean lusēte epi tēs gēs estai lelumena en ouranō. (Matt 18:18)***

In addition to the disciple recognising the brother as an unbeliever, the church should also discipline him. Jesus begins his statement with *Amēn* “truly” to support the decision of the church that *hosa ean dēsētē epi tēs gēs*

*estai dedemena en ouranō* anything the called-out people, disciples, or church shall bind on earth no matter the number of times shall have been bound in heaven, and *hosa ean lusēte epi tēs gēs estai lelumena en ouranō* anything they loose on earth no matter the number of times will be loosed in heaven. Thus, whatever determinations they make in conformity with the directions for their conduct towards the offending brother will be accounted just and ratified by the Lord. In explaining further, Barnes (2005) opines that whatever you [the church] shall do in the discipline of the church shall be approved by God, or bound in heaven. According to Wiersbe (2007), when a church disciplines a member, it examines and disciplines itself; the church cannot discipline others if it is not disciplined.

### **Summary of Text**

In the event that a brother who is also a member of the faith or church community transgresses against a fellow disciple, it is imperative that the latter does not adopt a passive stance and await the former's initiative to make amends. The disciple who has been wronged must promptly approach the offending brother and confront him, presenting evidence to refute or challenge the wrongdoing. It is advisable to maintain confidentiality between the parties involved, with the objective of persuading the brother to reconcile rather than prevail in a dispute. Upon conducting a confidential dialogue with the individual, the adherent ought to extend an invitation to one or two individuals to act as observers during the disciple's subsequent attempt to reconcile. In the event of a failed attempt, the disciple ought not to terminate their efforts but rather proceed to bring the matter to the church, which refers to the congregation of believers who have assembled for the purpose of worship. Religious leaders head the church. If the brother exhibits disobedience or non-compliance towards the church, the disciple should regard him as an individual who lacks faith, as he has relinquished his status as a believer. It is imperative for the church to administer disciplinary action against the offending brother. Any decision made in accordance with the guidelines for their behaviour towards the transgressor will be deemed righteous and validated by divine authority. The disciple ought not to dismiss the non-believer but rather accompany them in their journey towards accepting Jesus Christ.

### **The Akan people of Ghana**

The nation Ghana, located in West Africa and falling within the sub-Saharan region, is distinguished by the presence of numerous autochthonous languages, among which is the Akan language. The Akan ethnic group, also known as Akans, use the Akan language. The Ghana Statistical Service (2012) asserts that the Akans constitute a significant proportion of the Ghanaian populace, accounting for approximately 47.5% of the total population. The

southern region of Ghana is the primary location of the Akans. The favourable geographic positioning of the community enables the Akans to engage in farming, fishing, and hunting as viable livelihood options. Ghana is characterised by a multitude of linguistic divisions, with Akan being the predominant language spoken in nine out of the sixteen regions of the country. These regions include Ashanti, Eastern, Bono, Ahafo, Bono East, Oti, Western, and Central Regions (Ekem 2009; Agyekum 2006). The Akan language comprises a variety of dialects, namely Asante-Twi, Akuapem-Twi, Agona, Akyem, Mfantse, Kwahu, Wasa, Assin, Denkyira, Buem, and Bron. The aforementioned dialects exhibit mutual comprehensibility as they share a significant amount of vocabulary. In addition to their native languages, the Anyi (Aowin), Sefwi, Nzema, Ahanta, Efutu/Awutu, and Anum-Kyerepong-Larteh communities are also proficient in the Akan language (Ekem 2009).

### **Akan societies' religio-cultural beliefs, values, and etiquettes**

Akan societies exhibit a shared set of religio-cultural beliefs, values, and etiquettes, which are manifested through their linguistic expressions, cultural practises, and overall perspective on the world. These, according to Asamoah (2020b), are realised in the Akan language, culture, and worldview. They are the religious beliefs, values, and etiquette that the Akan people have upheld since their earliest beginnings and for the vast majority of their history. Among these are respect for religious leaders and elders, and avoiding gossip and disgrace.

#### ***Respect for Elders and Religious Leaders***

According to van der Geest's (1998) definition, an elder (*ɔpanyin*) is selected for the position of ancestor (nana). The individual proceeds to elaborate on his gentlemanly demeanour, characterised by traits such as civility, kindness, patience, and composure, which could be described as exhibiting a sense of coolness. The entirety of his virtues and qualities can be succinctly encapsulated by the term "honour." Adding on, Danquah (1944) characterises an "elder" as an individual who has conducted himself honourably in various aspects of life. These include engaging in marriage and being given marriage with honour, participating in open or private market transactions with honour, being a member of the *Asafo*, or company of fighting men, dining and drinking with honourable men, engaging in agricultural activities with honour, and experiencing both scarcity and abundance with honour. Others are raising children with honour, worshipping at shrines [or churches] with honour, enduring bereavement with honour, and most importantly, collaborating with others or acting independently to resolve family and other disputes, thereby promoting peace and prosperity within the family with honour. These characteristics of an elder (*ɔpanyin*) put them on a

pedestal and hold them in high regard by the community due to the wisdom they possess. Kariuki (2015) states that elders, who possess extensive experience and wisdom and enjoy a high degree of societal reverence, are often entrusted with the resolution of disputes. When they join the church, these elders are selected by the body of Christ to become religious leaders and lead the church of God.

### ***Gossip and disgrace***

Gossip, as defined by Ben-Nun (2021), is the private information about others shared in conversation or in print with others. Thus, it reveals some personal information about a person to others. Aside from the advantages gossip is likely to have, Ben-Nun, quoting Peter Vadja, remarks that gossip serves as a form of attack on another person to disempower them from being active and functioning. Therefore, many quarters and institutions ban gossip due to the potential damaging consequences it can bring. The Akans see themselves as one and find it difficult to attack themselves. One of their proverbs, “*Etire ne tire nka a, yenkase abontenefo nbefa nkodi,*” reflects this mindset, as it emphasizes that individuals tend to refrain from disclosing their personal attributes for the purpose of others deriving advantages from them. This clearly shows that Akans do not entertain anything that would deprive them of their advantages; gossip is one such thing. They do not entertain people who gossip about others because “*animguase mfata Okanni ba*” (disgrace does not befit an Akan).

Also, the preservation of honour is deemed a crucial virtue within Akan culture, warranting the utmost attention and effort. It is advisable to stay clear of any actions or behaviours that may result in *animguase* (a state of shame or disgrace) as opposed to *animuonyam* (a state of glory or honour). No wonder they have the proverb, namely *feree ne animguasee dee fanyinam owuo*, which posits that experiencing death is preferable to enduring shame and dishonour. This does not mean they prioritise personal dignity over obeying the will of *Onyankopɔn* (God). They prioritize openness and transparency consistently to avoid humiliation. This dedication ensures that their actions align with the acknowledged standards within their religio-cultural framework, thereby upholding a sense of respect.

### **Matthew 18:15-18 in selected Akan mother-tounge bible translations Asante Twi Twere Kronkron (The Asante-Twi Full Bible, BSG/UBS, 2012)/Asante Twi Twere Kronkron (The Asante-Twi Full Bible, BSG/UBS, 2020)/ Asante Twi Twere Kronkron (The Asante-Twi Full Bible, BSG/UBS, 2021)**

Na se wo nua fom wo a, ko n koyi no aten, wo ne no nko ara ntam. Se otie wo a, woanya wo nua. Na se wantie a, fa onipa baako anaa baanu ka wo

ho, na asem no nyinaa nnyina adansefoɔ mmienu anaa mmiensa anomu. Na se wantie wɔn nso a, kɔka kyere asafo no. Na se wantie asafo no nso a, ennee bu no se ɔbosonsonni ne togyeni. Nokore mese mo se, biribiara a mobɛkyekyere no asase soɔ no, wɔbɛkyekyere no soro; na biribiara a mobesane noo asase soɔ no, wɔbesane no soro. (If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him. If he listens to you, you have gained a brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. And if he refuses to listen, even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven).

### **The Holy Bible Twere Kronkron: New Testament English-Twi Version (2012)**

Se wo nua bi ye mfomsoɔ a, firi adi kɔ na wo ne no nko ara nsiesie mo mmienu ntam. Se ɔtie wo a, woanya no aka w oho se wo nua bio. Na se wantie wo a, fa onipa baako anaase afoforɔ mmienu ka wo ho; adansefoɔ mmienu anaa mmiensa adansedie tumi ma kwaadubɔ biara nya nnyinasoɔ. Nanso se ɔpo se ɔbetie oyinom a, fa to asɔre no anim; na se ɔpo se ɔbjtie asɔre no nso a ennee fa no se ɔye anhununyameni anaase togyeni bi. Mepae mu ka kyere mo pen se, biribiara a mobɛkyekyere no wɔ asaase no wɔbɛbu no se wɔakyekyere no wɔ soro; biribiara a mobesane mu wɔ asaase so no wɔbɛhu no se wɔasane mu wɔ soro. (If your brother does something wrong, go and have it out with him alone, between your two selves. If he listens to you, you have won back your brother. If he does not listen, take one or two others along with you. Whatever the misdemeanour, the evidence of two or three witnesses is required to sustain the charge. But if he refuses to listen to these, report it to the community, and if he refuses to listen to the community, treat him like a gentile or a tax collector. In truth, I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven; whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven).

### **Nwoma Krɔnkrɔn (The Fante Full Bible, BSG/UBS, 2019)**

Na se wo nua fom wo a, kɔ na keyi no atsen wɔ won ye no nko ntamu: se otsie wo a, enya wo nua. Na se oenntsie wo a, fa kor anaa ebien ka woho, ma asem biara ngyina adasefo beenu anaa baasa anomu. Na ɔpow de obetsie hcn a, kɛka kyere asɔr, na se ɔpow de obetsie asɔr so a, bu no de amanamamfo mu baako nye towgyenyi. Nokwar mese hom de, Biribiara a hom bɛkyekyer wɔ asaase do no, wɔbɛkyekyer no wɔ sor; na biribiara a hom besan wɔ asaase do no, wɔbesan no wɔ sor. (If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him. If he listens to you, you have gained a brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every

charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. And if he refuses to listen, even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven).

### **Ahyerɛ Krongron (The Esahie Full Bible, BSG/BFBS, 2019)**

Sɛ eliema yɛ wɔ tɛɛ a, kɔha ye mvomsoɛ kyire ye wɔ mmerɛ bɔ ɛne ye be munyɔ pɛ yɛɛ bɛwɔ berɛ ɔ. Sɛ otie wɔ a, anya eliema. Nakoso sɛ wandie a, fa sona ko anaa nyɔ boka wɔ nwo so, kyɛbɔ ɔkɔyɛ bc mmenia nyɔ anaa nza kɔyɛ edwire ne nwo adanzefoɛ ɔ. Na sɛ wandie asɔre ne koso a, ye de bu ye kyɛ bosoensolenie ne ɛtoɔdidelenie. Nahore nu, meka mekyire ɛmɔ kyɛ, nikyee biala bɔ ɛmɔkɔsangye nu wɔ aseɛ ye aso nen, bekɔkyekye ye nyamejso; yɛɛ nikyee biala bɔ ɛmɔkɔsangye nu wɔ aseɛ ye aso nen, bekɔsangye nu nyameeso. (If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him. If he listens to you, you have gained a brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, so that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell the church. And if he refuses to listen, even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven).

### **Analysis and Interpretations of the texts in the selected Akan mother-tongue Bibles**

All the works employed the home language—the generally accepted language the benefactors of the translated work have known and are familiar with from their infancy—to make the translations meaningful and culturally relevant. Again, there is cultural relevance, authenticity, and appreciation of the translated text for the target audience or beneficiaries. This enables the Akans (or Ghanaians) to access the word of God in their local language or mother-tongue with the same impact as the original text.

However, the Holy Bible, *Twere Kronkron*: New Testament English-Twi Version (2012), translates *asɔre* as “community” other than church. This is not out of place; the usage of the word “community” refers to the body of believers living in a particular place—thus, the church community.

All translations also advise the need to confront the culprit and give proof to dispute the wrongdoing. They must do this alone and not gossip around which is frowned upon in Akan culture, for “*animguase mfata Okanni ba*” (disgrace does not befit an Akan). The preservation of honour is deemed a crucial virtue within Akan culture, warranting the utmost attention and effort.

After a confidential conversation, the adherent should invite one or two people to see the disciple's reconciliation endeavour. If an attempt fails, the disciple should bring the situation to the church, the congregation of Christians who have gathered for worship. Perhaps the Akan culture's reverence and deference towards elderly individuals and religious authorities will have a significant role in this context. The disciple should treat the brother as a non-believer if he disobeys the church. The church must discipline the brother; the rules for treating the transgressor will be righteous and approved by God. The follower should help the offender, who is seen as an unbeliever, to accept Jesus Christ.

### **Implication of Matthew 18:15-18 for peace-making in Ghana**

The text guides Ghanaians, who are predominantly identified as Christians, on conflict resolution strategies, with a focus on promoting peace-making efforts in the event of interpersonal disputes.

According to the teachings of Jesus Christ, in the event that an Akan or a Ghanaian commits a transgression against a fellow brother or sister, either by birth or otherwise, the offended party should not anticipate the offender rectifying their wrongdoing. Instead, the offended party should promptly approach the offender and confront them with evidence of their actions in order to challenge or disprove their behaviour. The essence of this is to maintain the unity within themselves to live in harmony. It is advisable to maintain confidentiality between the parties involved in this issue, with the primary objective of enabling the transgressor to acknowledge, comprehend, and rectify their misconduct, rather than engaging in a dispute with the aim of emerging victorious. Maintaining confidentiality is paramount because the offender might not know what he has done wrong. Spreading the news or explaining to others instead of directly addressing the offender tends to result in gossip, which is not given the necessary attention among the Akans, in particular, and Ghanaians, in general. This is because Ben-Nun (2021), quoting Peter Vadja, remarks that gossip serves as a form of attack on the offender to disempower him from being active and functioning. In situations where a private conversation between two parties becomes difficult due to the offender's refusal to acknowledge their wrongdoing, it is advisable for the offended party to seek the presence of one or more witnesses from the same environment during subsequent attempts to reconcile. An elder could fulfill this role, as disputes are often resolved by elders who possess extensive experience and wisdom and enjoy a high degree of societal reverence.

In order for reconciliation to occur, it is imperative that the aggrieved party continue their efforts towards resolution in the event that the transgressor remains unwilling to acknowledge their culpability. It is advisable for the individual to bring the issue to the attention of the church leadership in order



to achieve a peaceful resolution. This could be the church the offender attends or otherwise, as long as it belongs to the body of Christ. The church, because the largest percentage of Ghanaians are Christians who belong to different denominations.

In the event that the transgressor refuses to acknowledge their transgressions, it is appropriate for the aggrieved party to publicly identify them as unbelievers. This is to enable the offended person to know how to relate to him, not as a mature Christian but as an unbeliever. Knowing this will enable the offended person to approach the offender as an unbeliever who needs to be won for Christ. The offended person would now devote much time to the offender by leading him to Christ. This is to enable the offended individual, who happens to be a mature Christian, not to relent in winning his brother but to make the necessary efforts to win the lost.

Subsequently, the church imposes discipline upon the transgressor, which is deemed righteous and validated by divine authority, emphasising the significance of personal dignity in adhering to God's will through the church. In situations where an Akan or a Ghanaian individual feels offended, refraining from severing ties with the offending party is recommended. Instead, it is recommended that the individual continues to engage with the offender in a manner that is consistent with the principles of evangelism, with the ultimate goal of leading the offender towards a Christian faith. Due to the perpetual nature of evangelism, the aggrieved individual must persistently pursue the offender, who is considered a non-believer, in order to lead them to Jesus Christ, regardless of any obstacles.

## **Conclusion**

The impact of the Bible on global and local peace challenges is subjective and influenced by individual beliefs and interpretations. Nevertheless, for many, the Bible offers profound spiritual and moral guidance, emphasising principles such as peace and reconciliation. According to Adam & Kyeremeh (2022), actively embracing the church's foundation on biblical tenets, particularly those related to peace, can play a role in fostering societal harmony. As a result, Akan-speaking Christians in Ghana and communities dedicated to the teachings of the Bible, particularly the peace-making strategy elucidated in this paper, have the potential to foster stability and harmonious coexistence in Ghana and across Africa. Through the adoption of the conflict resolution approach delineated in this paper, individuals can actively contribute to the alleviation of localised conflicts. Following Jesus' guidance, the approach recommends addressing the offender privately, steering clear of gossip, and actively pursuing peace when necessary. If initial attempts prove unsuccessful, the next step involves involving witnesses and seeking assistance from church leaders. The approach

encourages treating the offender with the perspective that they may not have embraced the Christian faith, promoting a call for repentance and reliance on God's forgiveness. The church is then advised to implement suitable disciplinary measures, prioritising personal dignity and aligning with God's will. The study concludes that Matthew 18:15–18 provides a stronger foundation for peace-making efforts among the Akan-speaking Christians and Christians in Ghana as a whole. This approach, when pursued, has the potential to foster stability and peaceful coexistence in Ghana and across Africa, thereby reducing pockets of conflict.

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# La Problématique d'Intégration de la Jurisprudence Internationale sur le Délai Raisonnable d'Exécution des Jugements en Droit Burundais

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## Résumé

La sécurité juridique des affaires et celle du titulaire du droit ainsi que l'ordre social ne peuvent être atteints que dans la mesure où les droits subjectifs revendiqués devant les juridictions et reconnus par un jugement coulé en force de chose jugée sont effectivement exécutés, sans trop attendre. La finalité du procès n'est pas seulement de rechercher la vérité en observant les garanties de bonne justice, mais la sécurité juridique commande par ailleurs que l'exécution soit faite dans un délai raisonnable. Selon la jurisprudence internationale, le délai du procès arrive à son terme au moment où le droit revendiqué trouve sa réalisation effective. Il s'analyse depuis la saisine jusqu'à l'exécution définitive du jugement. Même si la Constitution burundaise consacre le délai raisonnable du procès, cette garantie, encore moins ses critères d'appréciation n'est pas définie, ni détaillée par aucun texte législatif ou réglementaire. Elle n'est non plus consacrée par la jurisprudence nationale. En droit burundais, la phase d'exécution est parfois plus compliquée à mettre en œuvre pour diverses raisons. L'inapplication des critères jurisprudentiels du délai raisonnable, les déficiences systémiques dans les procédures d'exécution, l'incohérence normative constituent en grande partie les handicaps au délai déraisonnable d'exécution. Ces lacunes conduisent à des délais déraisonnables d'exécution des jugements. Eu égard aux avancées de la jurisprudence internationale dans l'encadrement du délai raisonnable d'exécution, le droit burundais devrait asseoir une culture du délai raisonnable

en capitalisant cette source du droit pour éviter la remise en cause des décisions de justice et promouvoir ainsi la sécurité juridique des affaires. Sur base d'une méthodologie documentaire, l'étude a pour objectif d'analyser les problèmes au délai raisonnable d'exécution et de voir dans quelle mesure les critères d'appréciation du délai raisonnable peuvent constituer un remède à la problématique d'exécution des jugements en temps réel.

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**Mots-clés:** Exécution des jugements, délai raisonnable d'exécution, critères d'appréciation du délai raisonnable, célérité dans l'exécution, lenteur dans l'exécution

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## **The Problem of Integrating International Jurisprudence on Reasonable Time for Execution of Judgements in Burundian Law**

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### **Abstract**

The legal certainty of business and that of the holder of the right as well as social order can only be achieved to the extent that the subjective rights claimed before the courts and recognized by a judgment having the force of *res judicata* are effectively executed, without waiting too much. The purpose of the trial is not only to seek the truth by observing the guarantees of good justice, but legal certainty also requires that the execution be carried out within a reasonable time. According to international case law, the trial's period ends when the claimed right finds its effective realization. The reasonable time is analyzed from the beginning of the trial until its execution. Even if the Burundian Constitution consecrates the reasonable time, this concept, even less its criteria of appreciation is not defined, nor detailed by any legislative or regulatory text, nor enshrined by national jurisprudence. In Burundian law, the execution phase is sometimes more complicated to implement for various reasons. The non-application of the jurisprudential criteria of reasonable time, systemic deficiencies in execution procedures, normative inconsistency largely constitute handicaps to unreasonable execution time. These shortcomings lead to unreasonable delays in the execution of judgments. In view of international jurisprudence's advance in the framework of the reasonable time of execution, Burundian law should establish a culture of reasonable time, by capitalizing on this source of law in order to avoid the calling into question of court decisions and thus promote legal certainty

business. Based on a documentary methodology, the study aims to analyze the handicaps to the reasonable execution time and to see how the criteria for assessing the reasonable time can constitute a remedy to the problem of executing judgments in real time.

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**Keywords:** Execution of judgments, reasonable time of execution, criteria for assessing the reasonable time, speed of execution, slowness of execution

## L'introduction

« *Le repos des familles et de la société toute entière se fonde non seulement sur ce qui est juste mais sur ce qui est fini* » (Montesquieu, cité par Bouty, 2015).

Dans un Etat de droit, la sécurité juridique du titulaire du droit et l'ordre social ne peuvent être atteints que dans la mesure où les droits subjectifs revendiqués devant les juridictions et reconnus par un jugement coulé en force de chose jugée sont effectivement exécutés, sans trop attendre. Pour répondre efficacement à sa fonction, la justice, en tant qu'institution, devrait inculquer à la communauté judiciaire le besoin de trancher le litige en temps réel et de l'exécuter définitivement. Que serait l'autorité judiciaire si elle n'avait le pouvoir de mettre un point final aux situations litigieuses ? Comment également concevoir une société où les situations juridiques demeureraient indéfiniment incertaines, où les droits resteraient éternellement litigieux ? Un souci élémentaire de sécurité juridique commande d'apporter une réponse définitive aux litiges (Ibidem).

Théoriquement, cela s'inscrit en droite ligne avec la Constitution du Burundi qui dispose que « Toute personne a droit, dans une procédure judiciaire ou administrative, à ce que sa cause soit entendue équitablement et à être jugé dans un délai raisonnable » (article 38 de la Constitution de la République du Burundi, 2018.). Bien plus, l'exigence de bénéficier des acquis de la décision de justice équitablement et dans un délai raisonnable est également véhiculée par la Déclaration universelle des droits de l'homme qui a consacré depuis 1948 le droit à un procès équitable en son article 10 et le Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques (article 14 du Pacte international relatifs aux droits civils et politiques, 1966). La Charte africaine des droits de l'homme en son article 7, la Convention interaméricaine des droits de l'homme en son article 8, la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés en son article 11, la convention européenne des droits de l'homme en son article 6 sont également le socle de la jurisprudence internationale sur le procès équitable qui comprend en son sein le délai raisonnable d'exécution.

Aux yeux de la jurisprudence de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme fondée sur l'article 6 de ladite convention, toutes les phases des procédures judiciaires tendant à vider les conflits doivent aboutir dans un délai

raisonnable, sans que l'on puisse excepter les phases d'exécution, postérieures aux décisions sur le fond. (Arrêt Robins c. Royaume-Uni, 23 septembre 1997). A l'instar de la jurisprudence européenne, la Cour et la Commission africaine ont entériné dans une jurisprudence constante, les critères d'appréciation du délai raisonnable qui promeuvent le délai raisonnable d'exécution du procès (affaire *Wilfred Onyango Nganyi et 9 autres* contre la République-Unie de Tanzanie, 23 juillet 2013; affaire 253/02 *Antonie Bissangou / Congo* rendu par la commission africaine des droits de l'homme, 29 novembre 2006). Selon cette jurisprudence, le respect du délai raisonnable suppose le maintien d'un équilibre entre les intérêts du requérant et les exigences d'une bonne administration de la justice ou de la sécurité juridique (Corten, 1997). En se référant à la jurisprudence internationale déjà consacrée par de la Cour européenne et la Cour interaméricaine ( affaire *Boddaert c/Belgique*, 12 octobre 1992 ; affaire *Suárez-Rosero c/ Equateur*, 20 janvier 1999 ; affaire *Wilfred Onyango Nganyi et 9 autres* contre la République-Unie de Tanzanie, 2013), la Cour et la commission africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples ont consacré au même titre que ces juridictions internationales la complexité de l'affaire, le comportement du requérant, le comportement des autorités judiciaires et étatiques ainsi que l'enjeu du litige pour le requérant comme critères d'appréciation du délai raisonnable du procès, y compris la procédure d'exécution.

A toutes fins utiles, le Burundi est lié par les instruments internationaux et nationaux qui prévoient le délai raisonnable du procès. En effet, il est lié par le Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques (Décret-loi n° 1/009 portant adhésion du Burundi au Pacte International Relatif aux droits civils et politiques, 14 mars 1990 ) et la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme depuis le 28/7/1989 (Décret-loi n° 1/029 portant ratification de la Charte Africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples, 28juillet 1989) ainsi que le protocole portant création de la Cour africaine depuis le 27/6/2000. Au regard de l'article 19 de la Constitution du Burundi, il est incontestable que cette jurisprudence internationale constante sur les critères d'appréciation du délai raisonnable du procès déjà consacrée par la Cour africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples lie le Burundi d'autant plus qu'il a ratifié ce protocole portant création de cette Cour. Selon l'article 19 de la Constitution, les droits et devoirs proclamés et garantis par les textes internationaux relatifs aux droits de l'homme régulièrement ratifiés font partie intégrante de la Constitution.

Etant donné que le droit d'être jugé dans un délai raisonnable qui inclut l'exécution du jugement est proclamé par la Constitution burundaise (article 38 de la Constitution de la République du Burundi, 7 juin 2018) et d'autres instruments juridiques internationaux (article 14 du PIDCP, 1966; article 7 de la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme, 27 juin 1981) qui lient le Burundi, il sied d'analyser son application dans la pratique de l'exécution des jugements



par les cours et tribunaux. Car, comme l'a dit Charles de Gaulle, ce qui est écrit, fût-ce sur un parchemin, ne vaut que par l'application (De Gaulle, 1970). L'objectif de cette étude est d'identifier les éléments ayant une influence positive sur l'efficacité des procédures d'exécution et les entraves au délai raisonnable d'exécution afin d'émettre des propositions qui militeraient pour l'exécution dans un délai raisonnable. Pour atteindre cet objectif, l'analyse de la problématique, la question de recherche et les hypothèses ainsi que la méthodologie à suivre dans le recueil des données, nous serviront de guide dans la discussion des résultats. Une conclusion générale mettra fin à notre analyse.

## **I. La problématique scientifique**

Le droit burundais met en place des règles de procédure qui ont pour objet de fournir aux titulaires des droits subjectifs les moyens de les faire restaurer par l'exécution, mais l'efficacité de cette mise en œuvre reste problématique en termes de délai. En effet, les critères d'appréciation du délai raisonnable qui devraient promouvoir le délai d'exécution sont méconnus du droit burundais. Malgré cette carence jurisprudentielle, le code de procédure civile essaie de réglementer les voies d'exécutions (articles 238, 246 du code de procédure civile, 2004) mais les problèmes d'effectivité d'exécution dans un délai raisonnable restent observables dans la pratique. L'article 238 du code de procédure civile dispose que les jugements ne peuvent être exécutés contre ceux auxquels ils sont opposés qu'après qu'ils leur auront été notifiés sous forme de grosse, à moins que l'exécution n'en soit volontaire. En partie, les problèmes de signification liés à la mauvaise volonté ou aux manœuvres dilatoires de la partie perdante, à l'insuffisance des moyens logistiques de se rendre sur terrain contribuent à l'exécution tardive des jugements. En plus de ces causes énumérées, l'incohérence normative quant aux agents d'exécution des jugements et quant à la définition de la compétence de chacun, les pratiques procédurales instituant des recours contre l'exécution, l'inobservation des règles de procédure sur les voies de recours en matière d'exécution (*Niyonkuru, 2016*) sont également à l'origine des problèmes d'exécution dans un délai raisonnable.

Au regard de cette problématique, force est de nous interroger: la conception du délai raisonnable du procès en droit burundais concourt-elle à l'affermissement d'un régime juridique d'exécution des jugements garantissant la sécurité juridique des requérants en temps réel? Autrement dit, les critères du délai raisonnable, en tant qu'éléments influençant son calcul, sont-ils connus et pris en compte par les agents chargés de l'exécution des jugements? Si tel n'est pas le cas, quels en sont les causes et obstacles? Quelles sont les perspectives pour asseoir réellement l'exécution des jugements dans un délai raisonnable? Bien évidemment, le rapport entre le prescrit légal (le

droit dans les codes) et le droit vivant (la pratique), réalité concrète que vivent les justiciables au Burundi sera découvert à travers la réponse à ces questions. L'on ne pourra y arriver qu'après avoir vérifié les hypothèses suivantes: l'application des critères jurisprudentiels influençant le calcul du délai contribue aux lenteurs d'exécution; les déficiences systémiques dans les procédures d'exécution, l'incohérence normative quant aux agents d'exécution sont parfois à l'origine du délai déraisonnable d'exécution; l'insuffisance des moyens logistiques pour les descentes sur terrain contribue au délai déraisonnable d'exécution.

## **II. La méthodologie**

Dans l'évaluation de la problématique d'exécution des jugements, notre analyse portera sur la jurisprudence de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme, sur celle de la Cour africaine des droits de l'homme et sur la jurisprudence burundaise. Le recours à cette jurisprudence internationale a pour objet de montrer comment se fait le décompte du délai d'exécution et les critères qui influencent son calcul. L'analyse vise également à mettre en relief l'importance accordée à la procédure d'exécution par la jurisprudence internationale et les obstacles qui entravent l'exécution en droit burundais. Dans l'optique d'évaluer la temporalité d'exécution et les difficultés y relatives, quelques jugements et arrêts coulés en force de chose jugée sont discutés. La discussion des résultats permet de tirer les leçons du droit comparé sur la manière dont le droit burundais pourrait s'inspirer de cette jurisprudence internationale. L'analyse porte sur les dossiers ordinaires et ceux relatifs aux affaires prioritaires revêtant un caractère alimentaire pour voir si le juge burundais traite ces dernières avec la célérité voulue par la jurisprudence internationale.

Concrètement, par la prise en main du dossier physique au greffe de chaque juridiction visitée, nous avons consulté les jugements et arrêts pour en analyser la temporalité, la durée de la procédure d'exécution et les causes de retard identifiées en aval de l'instance. Le travail est réalisée sur base d'une méthodologie documentaire d'analyse des textes de lois, des ouvrages, des jugements et arrêts coulés en force de chose jugée, de la jurisprudence nationale et internationale relatives au droit à l'exécution.

## **III. Les résultats**

Les résultats de notre recherche portent sur la jurisprudence de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme, celle de la Cour et commission africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples ainsi que sur la jurisprudence nationale à travers les jugements et arrêts rendus. Sur le plan de la jurisprudence de la Cour européenne sur l'application de l'article 6 de la Convention européenne des droits de l'homme, nous avons consulté l'arrêt *Robins c. Royaume-Uni* du

23 septembre 1997, l'affaire *Bendayan Azcantot et Benalai Bendayan c. Espagne* du 9 juin 2009, l'arrêt *Moreira de Azevedo c. Portugal* du 23 octobre 1990, l'affaire *Estima Jorge c. Portugal* de 1998, l'affaire *Hornsby* contre Grèce du 19 mars 1997. D'autres arrêts rendus par la Cour européenne notamment l'affaire *Boddaert c. Belgique* du 12 octobre 1992, l'affaire *Deumeland c. Allemagne* du 20 mai 1986, *Martins Moreira c. Portugal* du 26 octobre 1988, l'affaire *O c. Royaume-Uni* du 8 juillet 1987 ont retenu notre attention.

Devant la cour africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples, le délai raisonnable d'exécution se fonde sur l'article 7 de la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples. L'affaire *Wilfred Onyango Nganyi et 9 autres* contre la République-Unie de Tanzanie sur base de la requête n° 006/2013 du 23 juillet 2013, l'affaire 253/02, *Antonie Bissangou c. Congo* devant la commission africaine ont attiré notre attention.

En droit burundais, notre recherche porte sur les dispositions de la Constitution, notamment l'article 38 qui parle du délai raisonnable du procès et sur certaines dispositions du code de procédure civile régissant l'exécution, en l'occurrence les articles 228-246. Notre recherche a porté également sur les recherches déjà réalisées et sur la pratique judiciaire en matière d'exécution. Les jugements RS 13841, RSA 7150/223/2019, RSC 1163, RS 9896, RSA 20/2012, RS 10197, RSA 1/201 bis, RSC 652, RS16187,RS 13035,RS13024,RS 13028, RC 596/06, RC 6830/2018, RC 6830/2018, RC 1716/94, RC 2557, RCA 5904, RCC 12850, les recours en exécution devant la Cour suprême RE 66,RE 145 et 145 bis, RE 64, RE 67,RE 68 et 68bis, ont été analysés. Les recours en exécution devant le Ministre de la justice dans les affaires RC 2741/2014- RCA 5907-RCSA 3794; RC 919-RCA 133bis-RCC8432; RC 730-RCA 349-RCC 8695; 97/CA/75; ont retenu également notre attention.

Au regard des exigences de l'article en termes de taille, tous ces jugements cités ne vont pas être discutés d'autant plus qu'ils accusent des ressemblances en termes de causes de retard d'exécution. La discussion de certains jugements modèles choisis pour leur pertinence va nous éclairer sur la problématique et les solutions qui permettraient de corriger les retards excessifs observés dans l'exécution des jugements.

#### **IV. La discussion de résultats**

Dans la discussion des résultats, il est question de circonscrire comment se fait l'appréciation du délai raisonnable d'exécution dans la jurisprudence internationale et les éléments influençant son calcul selon la jurisprudence internationale (A) et de discuter la durée d'exécution (B) ainsi que ses obstacles (C) devant les cours et tribunaux du Burundi.

## A. L'appréciation du délai raisonnable d'exécution

Selon la jurisprudence internationale, il est difficile de prévoir le délai d'exécution d'une décision de justice, car l'exécution dépend non seulement des diligences accomplies par le créancier, mais aussi de la solvabilité du débiteur. L'appréciation du délai raisonnable d'exécution se fait *in concreto*: le caractère raisonnable doit s'apprécier dans chaque cas suivant les circonstances de l'affaire et doit être prise en compte dans l'ensemble de la procédure (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Frydlender c. France*, 27 juin 2000, § 43). Néanmoins les longues périodes d'inaction et de stagnation sans explication ne sont pas acceptées (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Beaumartin c. France*, 24 novembre 1994, § 33).

Qui plus est, le délai d'exécution est indissociable de celui de notification du jugement. Ce dernier peut être réduit de manière concrète soit par l'action d'un agent d'exécution, soit par la forme simplifiée d'un courrier avec accusé de réception (Commission européenne pour l'efficacité de la justice, 2021). Ainsi, le délai dépend soit de la diligence de l'agent d'exécution, soit du bon ou du mauvais fonctionnement des services chargés d'exécuter. Chaque pays, en pareille situation, évalue un délai moyen comme indicateur d'efficacité, car il est de l'intérêt de la crédibilité de la justice que le justiciable qui a obtenu une décision de justice puisse la voir notifiée et exécutée dans les meilleurs délais (*ibidem*).

A titre indicatif, dans les pays justiciables devant la Cour européenne, les délais de notification ne sont pas identiques, mais un délai moyen standard est commun pour bon nombre d'Etats. Concernant le recouvrement d'une créance à une personne domiciliée dans la ville où siège la juridiction, sur les 28 États ou entités ayant fourni des informations en 2018, 27 ont affirmé qu'il est possible d'accomplir la notification à la personne visée dans un délai compris entre 1 et 30 jours. Ainsi, certains Etats notifient dans un délai de 1 à 10 jours; de 6 à 10 jours ainsi que de 11 à 30 jours. Cela s'explique par des différences en fonction du type d'affaires concernées ou du domaine dans lequel la décision a été prononcée (*ibidem*). Seul l'Angleterre a affirmé qu'il peut aller au délai de 30 jours.

Quant aux standards, la jurisprudence européenne qui a inspirée celle de la Cour africaine sur l'appréciation du délai raisonnable du procès fait apparaître les standards suivants en matière de durée des procédures d'exécution: pour les affaires qui ne revêtent normalement aucune complexité dans le cadre d'un recours indemnitaire, une diligence particulière s'impose aux Etats afin que l'exécution soit faite dans le plus bref délai possible (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Belperio et Ciarmoli c. Italie*, 21 décembre 2010, § 42). A l'origine, dans l'affaire *Belperio et Ciarmoli c. Italie*, les requérants ont saisi les juridictions italiennes afin d'enjoindre à l'entreprise de construction de V.S., qui avait effectué des travaux dans le bâtiment où ils habitaient, de

remettre les lieux en état. Non satisfaits de la durée de la procédure devant les juridictions italiennes, ils ont saisi la Cour européenne pour dénoncer le délai excessif. La Cour a considéré que la période à prendre en compte a débuté le 12 octobre 2001, lorsque les requérants ont saisi la Cour d'appel de Rome, et s'est terminée le 24 juin 2004, lorsqu'ils ont obtenu le paiement des indemnités octroyées par celle-ci. La procédure a donc duré deux ans et huit mois. Aux yeux de la Cour, rien dans le dossier de la requête n'indique que ce long temps puisse être lié au comportement des requérants ou à la complexité de l'affaire. Partant, ne relevant aucun motif particulier qui aurait milité pour la durée excessive, la Cour a estimé que les autorités italiennes ont violé l'article 6, paragraphe premier, sous l'angle du droit à un jugement dans un délai raisonnable (*Idem*, § 48).

Concernant les délais de procédure, lors de la communication de cette même affaire, le 9 juin 2009, la Cour a fixé la durée à environ un an et six mois pour un degré de juridiction, la phase d'exécution incluse. Pour deux degrés de juridiction, y compris la phase d'exécution, elle a fixé deux ans et six mois le délai dans lequel une procédure globalement considérée devrait s'achever pour être considérée raisonnable. Ainsi, afin de satisfaire aux exigences du délai raisonnable au sens de l'article 6, paragraphe 1 de la Convention, la Cour a estimé que la durée d'une procédure devant la Cour d'appel compétente et la Cour de cassation, y inclus la phase d'exécution de la décision, ne devrait pas, en principe et sauf circonstances exceptionnelles, dépasser deux ans et six mois (*idem*, § 73).

Relativement à l'exécution tardive des jugements par les autorités étatiques russes, saisie par les requérants résidant dans différentes régions de la Fédération de Russie, la Cour européenne, sur base de sa jurisprudence a dégagé certaines présomptions permettant de statuer plus efficacement sur de nombreuses affaires répétitives (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Gerasimov* et les autres c. Russie, 1er juillet 2014, § 169). Ainsi, la Cour a jugé qu'un retard d'exécution de moins d'un an dans le paiement d'une indemnité judiciaire pécuniaire était en principe compatible avec la Convention, tandis que tout retard supérieur était *prima facie* déraisonnable (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Kosheleva* et autres c. Russie, 17 janvier 2012, §19). Toutefois, cette présomption peut être renversée au vu des circonstances particulières et en tenant dûment compte des critères d'appréciation du caractère raisonnable précités. Par exemple, dans l'affaire *Belayev* c. Russie du 22 mars 2011, un retard de plus d'un an dans le paiement d'une dette judiciaire a été jugé acceptable compte tenu de l'attitude peu coopérative du requérant.

Soulignons à toutes fins utiles que ces requérants avaient obtenu des décisions judiciaires internes contraignantes, ordonnant aux autorités de l'Etat de leur fournir un logement ou divers services en nature, mais l'exécution de ces jugements a été considérablement retardée et certains jugements restaient

non exécutés. Notons qu'il ne s'agit là que de standards, dont la Cour peut toujours s'éloigner, compte tenu des circonstances particulières de chaque affaire et au regard des critères d'appréciation du délai raisonnable du procès.

## **B. La durée d'exécution devant les juridictions burundaises**

Dans l'optique d'analyser si le droit burundais s'accommode ou non à la jurisprudence internationale, nous comptons vérifier nos hypothèses à travers une discussion des cas pratiques recueillis à titre illustratif. Ces derniers sont confrontés aux critères d'appréciation du délai raisonnable qui sont la complexité de l'affaire, l'enjeu du litige pour le requérant, le comportement des autorités judiciaires et étatiques ainsi que le comportement des parties au procès.

### **1. La complexité de l'affaire**

La complexité d'une affaire peut être inhérente à la pluralité des parties impliquées dans l'affaire ou aux divers éléments à recueillir (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Humen c. Pologne*, 15 octobre 1999, § 63). Sur le plan juridique, elle peut provenir de la rareté de la jurisprudence au niveau national, de la nécessité de l'interprétation du droit, de la longueur des procédures nationales et le besoin de faire des expertises. Même si l'affaire ne présente pas en elle-même une complexité particulière, le manque de clarté et de prévisibilité de la loi applicable peut aussi la rendre difficile et contribuer de manière déterminante à l'allongement de la durée de la procédure (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Paroisse gréco-catholique Lupeni et autres c. Roumanie*, 29 novembre 2016, § 150). Néanmoins, la complexité d'une affaire ne suffit pas toujours à justifier la longueur d'une procédure. Les autres critères d'appréciation du délai raisonnable entrent en ligne de compte. La complexité n'exclut pas que le délai déraisonnablement long dû à l'explicable stagnation d'instruction soit sanctionnée même dans les affaires très complexes (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Ferrantelli et Santangelo c/ Italie*). Dans cette affaire, toutes les phases de la procédure se sont déroulées à un rythme régulier, mais il s'est produit l'explicable stagnation de près de deux ans durant la première instruction, entraînant ainsi le caractère déraisonnable.

Après avoir circonscrit la complexité de l'affaire, force est d'analyser comment les autorités judiciaires burundaises traitent les affaires revêtant un aspect de complexité et la temporalité y relative. A titre illustratif, l'affaire n°126/C.73 qui a connu deux degrés de juridiction a été exécutée définitivement après un délai déraisonnablement long. En effet, depuis la saisine de la première juridiction en 1973 jusqu'à la décision définitive sur le recours en exécution en date du 3/2/2022, un délai de plus ou moins 48 ans s'est écoulé.

### **Comment la procédure judiciaire de cette affaire s'est-elle déroulée ?**

La saisine du tribunal de résidence de *Gisozi* a eu lieu en 1973 et le jugement a été rendu en date du 29/10/1975. Le jugement d'appel a été rendu sous le n°97/CA/75 par le tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* en date du 22/2/1977. Ce jugement rendu en dernier ressort a décidé le partage équitable de la propriété foncière entre les trois fils de NTA (dispositif du jugement n°97/CA/75, 22 février 1977). Le tribunal de résidence de *Gisozi* a exécuté le jugement définitif mais les requérants ND. et MW. lésés par cette exécution ont saisi l'inspection générale de la justice pour demander la correction des irrégularités de partage du terrain querellé. En date du 3/5/1978, l'inspection générale de la justice a ordonné au tribunal de grande instance de vérifier l'exécution. Malgré cette directive, le tribunal de grande Instance de *Mwaro* n'a pas exécuté et il a fallu que l'inspection générale rappelle à plusieurs reprises dans ses lettres adressées au président du tribunal de grande instance en date du 6/8/1985 et du 29/1/1986 (lettre de la commission de contrôle judiciaire référenciée sous le n°100/011/ND.J/H.G/86).

Curieusement, ces correspondances n'ont pas été fructueuses et les requérants ont réitéré leur demande de vérification devant l'Inspection générale de la justice dans leur lettre du 8/10/1998. Dans sa réponse du 23/10/1998, l'Inspecteur général de la justice a adressé une correspondance au président du tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro*, l'intimant encore une fois de prendre en main la vérification de ce dossier en lui demandant de convoquer les parties aux litiges pour les informer que les experts du cadastre national se rendront sur place pour mesurer le terrain querellé aux frais des litigants (lettre de l'inspecteur général de la justice référenciée sous le n° 555/212/V.K/98 ). Cette correspondance n'a pas été fructueuse car le tribunal de grande instance n'a pas été diligent d'autant plus que les parties n'ont pas été informées de cette correspondance.

En date du 18/8/1999, l'Inspection générale de la justice a réitéré avec insistance sa demande de vérification auprès du tribunal de grande instance pour que ce dernier communique aux parties le contenu de la lettre du 23/10/1998 (correspondance de l'Inspection générale de la justice du 18/8/1999 référenciée sous le n°555/146/K.C./V.K./99). En date du 8/11/2005, l'Inspection générale de la justice a adressé encore une fois une correspondance au président du tribunal de grande instance pour poursuivre l'exécution du jugement avec le concours des techniciens géomètres qui ont déjà produit des rapports à ce sujet (correspondance de l'Inspection générale de la justice référenciée sous le n°555/425/K.J.B/2005). Elle rappelle au tribunal de grande instance que, compte tenu des dispositions du code de l'organisation et de la compétence judiciaire, il revient à cette juridiction de parachever l'exécution dudit jugement et de prendre une décision définitive

(articles 25 et 37, loi n°1/08 du 17 mars 2005 portant code de l'organisation et de la compétence judiciaire).

A cet égard, le tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* a ordonné au tribunal de résidence de *Gisozi* de refaire l'exécution (correspondance n°552.028/65/2006 du président du tribunal de Grande instance de *Mwaro* en date du 27/2/2006). En date du 12/4/2006, ce dernier s'est rendu sur les propriétés foncières en litige, mais il a refusé de refaire l'exécution arguant qu'il est déjà dessaisi; que l'Inspection générale de la justice a confié la mission de poursuivre l'exécution au tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* et non au tribunal de résidence de *Gisozi* ( correspondance du président du tribunal de résidence de *Gisozi* adressée en date du 25/4/2006 au président du tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* référenciée sous le n°552/028.2/17/2006 et du procès-verbal de descente sur terrain pour exécution dressé par ce tribunal de résidence le 12/4/2006).

Après quoi, le tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* a pris les choses en main et s'est rendu sur les terrains querellés le 1/10/2009, accompagné par les géomètres du cadastre national. Le tribunal a constaté que les trois frères ont des parts inégales et a procédé au partage équitable; mais le fils KA. qui exploitait la plus grande superficie a affiché une résistance en refusant de céder une partie aux deux autres frères. Par la force de la loi, il a fini par accepter de garder 25 hectares 57 ares et de céder 8 hectares 86 ares au frère MW. qui avait la petite partie et de céder également 1hectare 20 ares à l'autre frère ND (procès-verbal d'exécution provisoire dressé par le tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* le 1/10/2009). Ce jour-là, le temps n'a pas permis d'achever l'exécution car il faisait nuit et il a fallu que le tribunal de grande instance remette la poursuite de l'exécution en date du 15/10/2009. A cette date, la descente a eu lieu et les activités de mesurage pour partager équitablement n'ont pas terminé car la pluie a freiné l'activité. L'exécution a été reportée au 29/10/2009(procès-verbal d'exécution provisoire dressé par le tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* le 15/10/2009). Mais, à cette date la descente n'a pas eu lieu et l'affaire est restée en dormance dans les tiroirs jusqu'en date du 7/6/2017. A cette date, la succession de KA. a saisi le Ministre de la justice pour demander l'annulation du rapport du 9/1/2003 produit par les experts du cadastre national arguant qu'il a été mal dressé.

Dans sa correspondance du 6/2/2018, le Ministre de la justice a intimé au président du tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* de surseoir à exécuter et de saisir les services locaux compétents dans les travaux de mesurage afin qu'ils mesurent la propriété querellée et produisent un nouveau rapport sur lequel va s'appuyer la juridiction pour départager les trois frères (lettre du Ministre de la justice adressée au président du tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* en date du 6/2/2018, référenciée sous le n°550/204/CAB/2018 ). Par après, le tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* s'est rendu sur les lieux en date



du 13/11/2018, a poursuivi l'exécution conformément au rapport du 9/1/2003 et l'a achevée en respectant la dernière exécution faite par les juges du même tribunal le 15/10/2009 (procès-verbal d'exécution provisoire dressé par le tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* le 13/11/2018). Même après cette exécution, toutes les parties n'ont pas été satisfaites d'autant plus que le représentant de la succession MW. a adressé une correspondance en date du 19/11/2018 au président du tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* lui demandant de vérifier si chacun des trois frères a reçu 25 hectares 57 ares. En date du 14/12/2021, le tribunal de grande instance s'est rendu encore une fois sur les lieux accompagné d'un expert utilisant le GPS dans le mesurage. Toutes les parties ont accepté d'utiliser ce GPS et après mesurage, il a été avéré que le partage avait été inéquitable. Mais ce jour-là, le tribunal n'a pas été en mesure de réajuster le partage. Finalement, le tribunal est retourné sur terrain en date du 3/2/2022 pour clôturer l'exécution et chacune des parties en conflit a reçu 25 hectares 29 ares 31 centiare (le procès-verbal de vérification définitive dressé par le tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* le 3/2/2022).

### **Peut-on dire qu'un tel délai si long est inhérent à la complexité de l'affaire?**

Vraisemblablement, le besoin de recourir aux expertises des géomètres, la longueur des procédures nationales, le manque de clarté et de prévisibilité de la loi applicable ainsi que l'incohérence entre le droit et la pratique, constituent des aspects qui rendent l'affaire complexe. La complexité dont il est question ici réside en grande partie sur le plan juridique en l'occurrence la méconnaissance de la jurisprudence internationale applicable en matière d'exécution, pour sauvegarder la sécurité juridique des affaires en temps réel. Néanmoins, cette complexité ne peut pas justifier un tel retard si long. L'inaction et les temps morts affichés par les autorités judiciaires depuis le 29/10/2009 jusqu' au 7/6/2017, la non diligence des requérants, les manœuvres dilatoires de la partie qui avait la plus grande superficie sont à l'origine du délai d'exécution déraisonnablement long. Cela confirme notre hypothèse selon laquelle l'inapplication des critères jurisprudentiels sur l'appréciation du délai raisonnable contribue aux lenteurs d'exécution.

## **2. L'analyse de la temporalité du procès dans les affaires prioritaires ayant un enjeu particulier pour les requérants**

La nature et l'importance des questions soulevées dans l'affaire exigent dans certains cas une diligence spéciale de la part des autorités judiciaires. L'enjeu du litige pour le requérant recommande de juger rapidement certains dossiers appelés "affaires prioritaires" (Commission européenne pour l'efficacité de la justice, 2021). Ces dernières exigent une célérité particulière bénéfique non seulement au requérant mais aussi, dans

certain cas, à la société en général en raison des incidences sociales et économiques en cause (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Ruiz-Mateos c. Espagne*, 23 juin 1993, §52). Tel est le cas dans les affaires concernant l'état et la capacité des personnes, dans les matières qui relèvent du contentieux du travail (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Toth c. Hongrie*, 30 mars 2004, §62) et de la sécurité sociale, lequel englobe celui des pensions (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Borgese c. Italie*, 1992, § 18), celui des licenciements abusifs contestés et des suspensions en violation de la loi. En outre, une diligence particulière s'impose eu égard aux éventuelles conséquences qu'une lenteur excessive peut avoir notamment sur la jouissance du droit au respect de la vie familiale (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Laino c. Italie*, 18 février 1999).

Selon l'article 231 du code de procédure civile, la remise de la grosse du jugement ou de l'acte à l'huissier de justice vaut pouvoir pour toute exécution pour laquelle il n'est pas exigé de pouvoir spécial. Curieusement, dans la pratique, lorsque les formalités exigées par cette règle d'exécution sont déjà accomplies, ce n'est pas toujours évident que l'exécution du jugement devienne automatique même si l'affaire est dite prioritaire et revêt un caractère alimentaire pour le requérant et sa famille.

En effet, dans l'affaire RS 13841 rendu par le tribunal du travail en date du 16 août 2016, ce dernier a décidé que le licenciement pour motif économique infligé aux travailleurs NG. S et HA. P est abusif. Il a accordé des dommages et intérêts aux victimes de ce licenciement respectivement pour le montant de 6.176.628 et 5.223.120 francs burundais. Le tribunal avait été saisi en date du 15 septembre 2015 par des travailleurs qui avançaient que les critères de référence en cas de licenciement pour motif économique n'ont pas été respectés.

Ledit jugement a été porté en appel devant la Cour d'appel de Bujumbura par l'employeur sous le RSA 7150/233/2019 en date du 8 février 2017 mais la cour a confirmé le premier jugement. Non satisfait, l'employeur s'est pourvu en cassation en date du 27/12/2019 sous le numéro RSC1163 mais son pourvoi a été déclaré irrecevable par la chambre de cassation en date du 31/5/2021. Les victimes du licenciement abusif avaient été signifiées du jugement en date du 21/9/2021. L'employeur a été signifié du jugement le 22/9/2021. Depuis lors, la condition préalable de signifier les parties au procès pour procéder à l'exécution du jugement était remplie.

Curieusement, même si le jugement de la Cour suprême était devenu définitif et comportait la formule exécutoire enjoignant toute autorité compétente de procéder à son exécution (article 229 du code de procédure civile, loi n° 1/010 du 13/05/2004); cette mise en œuvre n'est pas intervenue si vite. Cela montre qu'en pratique, le fait d'avoir gagné un procès devant une juridiction ne procure pas nécessairement au plaideur le bénéfice de la décision qu'il a obtenue. Malgré que l'arrêt de la Cour suprême soit devenu définitif, il

n'a de valeur pour les victimes du licenciement abusif que s'il est exécuté et bien exécuté. Du moment qu'il consacre une solution au litige, ce dernier subsistera tant que la solution d'indemniser ces victimes du licenciement abusif n'aura pas été appliquée systématiquement.

Normalement, tout ira bien si celui qui a perdu le procès exécute volontairement la décision prononcée contre lui. Ce qui est évident dans le cas d'espèce, l'employeur ne l'a pas fait ainsi. Les gagnants ont dû s'engager dans le nouveau combat judiciaire d'exécution qui leur a été long, pénible et décevant pour obtenir la mise en œuvre du jugement par l'huissier de justice. Avec l'aide de la force contraignante de la Cour suprême, la situation a finalement été décaissée. Dans sa correspondance, le président de cette Cour a enjoint au président du tribunal du travail de procéder à l'exécution de ce jugement conformément à l'article 236 du code de procédure civile en vue de débloquent la situation (Correspondance du Président de la Cour suprême n°552/01/11802/552/cs/2021, 15 novembre 2021). Au bout du compte, Il a fallu recourir au commandement préalable à la saisie-exécution en date du 18 janvier 2022 sommant l'employeur à payer en passant par le compte du tribunal du travail ouvert à la Banque centrale.

Depuis le 8 février 2017 date d'appel jusqu'au 18 janvier 2022, date d'exécution, un délai de 4 ans 11 mois s'est écoulé. Au sens de la jurisprudence internationale la procédure d'appel, celle de la cassation et celle de l'exécution ne devrait pas dépasser 2 ans 6 mois (Voir supra, affaire *Belperio et Ciarmoli c. Italie*, communication de la Cour européenne des droits de l'homme, 9 juin 2009). Le temps qu'a duré cette procédure, depuis le 15 septembre 2015 jusqu'au 18 janvier 2022, soit 6 ans 4 mois est de loin supérieur pour le cas d'une affaire revêtant un caractère alimentaire, si l'on se réfère à la jurisprudence internationale. Cela montre que les autorités judiciaires n'ont pas été diligentes dans l'accélération de l'affaire prioritaire qui revêt un enjeu particulier pour les requérants. La partie perdante a affiché un comportement dilatoire en s'abstenant d'exécuter dans un bref délai, ce qui a fait qu'un délai déraisonnablement long s'est écoulé sans que les requérants ne soient restaurés dans leurs droits. Cela confirme encore une fois notre hypothèse selon laquelle l'inapplication des critères jurisprudentiels influençant le calcul du délai raisonnable contribue aux lenteurs d'exécution. Cette lacune nous incite à analyser comment doit être l'attitude des autorités judiciaires.

### **3. Le comportement des autorités judiciaires et étatiques**

Au regard des délais déraisonnables observés dans les affaires ci-haut discutées, plus d'un se demande à qui sont imputables tous ces retards. Quel est le rôle des autorités judiciaires et celui des parties au procès dans ce mauvais fonctionnement? Comment doit être concilié le comportement des parties au procès et celui des autorités judiciaires ? Selon la jurisprudence

internationale, le comportement des parties au procès et particulièrement celui des requérants ne peut conduire à un constat de violation du délai raisonnable, même si le délai est manifestement excessif. Cela n'est vrai que lorsqu'aucune inactivité notable n'est imputable aux autorités judiciaires (arrêt Strasbourg dans affaire *Ferrantelli et Santangelo c/ Italie*).

Pour le bon aboutissement du procès, les autorités judiciaires, particulièrement les juges doivent vérifier, au regard des éléments du dossier, s'il ne ressort du comportement des parties et surtout le débiteur de l'obligation d'exécuter une pratique abusive ou dilatoire tendant à allonger la procédure; sans que ne lui soit reproché, le fait d'utiliser les voies de recours disponibles (arrêt Strasbourg dans l'affaire *Erkner et Hofauer c. Autriche*, le 23 avril 1987, §68 ). Si les retards sont dus à la structure du système judiciaire (arrêt *Hadjidjanis c. Grèce*, 28 avril 2005), ces autorités étatiques doivent aménager ce système de manière à exécuter sans retard excessif. Les périodes d'inactivité dues à une surcharge chronique de la juridiction, au manque de moyens matériels ou à l'insuffisance manifeste du personnel judiciaire entraînent la responsabilité de l'Etat. Les juges sont tenus d'exercer les pouvoirs mis à leur disposition par la loi afin de remédier à d'éventuelles manœuvres dilatoires des parties à la procédure (arrêt *Costa Ribeiro c. Portugal*, 30 avril 2003).

Même si la jurisprudence internationale l'envisage ainsi, la diversité des autorités burundaises intervenants dans l'exécution et parfois la contrariété de leurs décisions compromettent la jouissance des droits consacrés par le jugement en temps opportun. En effet, selon l'article 246 du code de procédure civile, le recours contre les jugements rendus en matière d'exécution est porté devant une formation collégiale de la juridiction immédiatement supérieure dans un délai n'excédant pas quinze jours. A la lecture de cet article, le seul recours contre l'exécution admise est celui exercé par la juridiction immédiatement supérieure à celle qui a exécuté le jugement en premier lieu.

Néanmoins, dans la pratique, les recours sont déférés devant le Ministre de la justice, devant l'inspection générale de la justice ou devant les juridictions supérieures telle la Cour suprême ou les cours d'appel. Au lieu d'observer le prescrit de cet article, certains justiciables non satisfaits de l'exécution soumettent le recours en exécution devant l'une ou l'autre autorité citée ci-haut. Tel est le cas notamment dans l'affaire RC 919-RCA 133 bis-RCC 8432 concernant la contestation d'exécution sur les collines de *nyab.* et *musi.* entre les parties au procès NZ. et ND. L'affaire a été tranchée successivement par le Tribunal de résidence de *Gisozi*, le Tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro*, la Cour suprême en cassation et l'inspection générale du ministère de la justice en révision. Le jugement RC 919 a été rendu par le tribunal de Résidence de *Gisozi*, en appel sous le RCA133bis a été rendu par le tribunal de grande de *Mwaro* et la cassation sous le RCC 8432 et la

demande en révision devant le cabinet du Ministre de la justice a été rejetée. Le jugement définitif a donné gain de cause à ND. en ordonnant qu'il doit rester sur la colline *nyab.* et NZ. doit garder la colline *musi.*

Devenant définitif, le jugement RCA 133 bis a été exécuté par le Tribunal de résidence de *Gisozi* en date du 11/8/1999 qui a érigée les bornes sur la colline *nyab.* en violation du dispositif qui précisait que chacun d'eux doit rester sur sa colline d'autant plus que les propriétés sujettes à contestations ne sont pas contiguës. Cette exécution a été validée par la première vérification du Tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* en date du 3/11/1999 (lettre du Ministre de la justice n°550/57/CAB/2004, 13/2/2004).

Non satisfaite de cette exécution, la partie au procès ND. a saisi l'inspection générale de la justice et cette dernière a intimé en date du 17/12/1999 à chacune des parties au procès de rester sur sa colline conformément au dispositif du jugement RCA 133 bis (correspondance de l'inspecteur générale de la justice n°555/279/K.C/99, 17/12/1999). Cette partie gagnante ND a également saisi le président de la Cour suprême le 14/5/2001 pour contester l'exécution faite au détriment de son intérêt, en violation du jugement définitif.

Dans sa correspondance adressée au président du Tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro*, le président de la Cour suprême a ordonné de corriger toutes les irrégularités quitte à exécuter le jugement RCA 133 bis non cassé conformément à son dispositif et en droite ligne avec l'arrêt RCC 8432 qui l'a validé (correspondance du Président de la Cour suprême référencée sous n°552/01/67/552.028/RCC8432, le 12/2/2002). En date du 31/7/2002, le Tribunal de grande instance s'est rendu sur terrain pour la deuxième fois pour vérifier l'exécution faite par le juge du Tribunal de résidence et l'a invalidée arguant qu'elle a été faite en violation du dispositif du jugement (procès-verbal de vérification du tribunal de grande instance, 26/8/2002). Le tribunal a ordonné que ND jouisse paisiblement de sa propriété sur la colline *nyab.* en interdisant l'autre partie NZ de ne plus perturber cette jouissance.

Après cette deuxième vérification, l'affaire en exécution a été soumise au Ministre de la justice par NZ. En réponse à cette demande, dans sa correspondance du 13/2/2004, le ministre a intimé au président du Tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* de retourner sur terrain pour ériger les bornes départageant les deux parties au conflit (lettre du Ministre de la justice référencée sous n°550/57/CAB/2004, du 13/2/2004). A son tour, le tribunal de grande instance a ordonné au tribunal de résidence de refaire l'exécution dans l'optique de se conformer aux directives du Ministre de la justice du 13/2/2004. Une nouvelle exécution a été faite par le tribunal de résidence de *Gisozi* le 30/6/2010 en érigeant pour la deuxième fois les bornes sur la colline de *nyab.* qui avaient été détruites par le Tribunal de grande instance de

*Mwaro*(procès-verbal de la deuxième exécution du tribunal de résidence de *Gisozi*, 30 juin 2010 ).

En date du 28/2/2012, pour la troisième fois, le Tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* s'est rendu sur terrain. Il a vérifié ce qui a été fait antérieurement et a conclu que le jugement RCA 133 bis qui a connu toutes les voies de recours (pourvoi en cassation et en révision) sans être réformé doit être exécuté en conformité avec son dispositif. Par rapport à l'injonction du ministre de la justice du 13/2/2004 ordonnant d'ériger des bornes, le Tribunal de grande instance a répondu que les procès-verbaux et les lettres même du ministre ne peuvent pas changer le dispositif du jugement (procès-verbal d'exécution IR/MRO/1051/RCA 133bis du tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro*, 28 février 2012). Ce tribunal a confirmé son exécution du 31/7/2002 arguant qu'il ne peut pas se rétracter sur base de l'injonction du ministre sous peine de violer le dispositif du jugement. Enfin, ce Tribunal de grande instance a détruit et invalidé les bornes érigées par le tribunal de résidence de *Gisozi* arguant que cette délimitation ne figure nulle part dans le jugement coulé en force de chose jugée.

Non satisfaite de cette dernière vérification du Tribunal de grande instance, le représentant de NZ. a saisi le Ministre de la justice pour décrier cette vérification arguant qu'elle a eu gain de cause sur la propriété de *nyab*. Au bout du compte, dans sa correspondance du 7/3/2018, le ministre de la justice lui a répondu que sa demande remet en cause le jugement RCA 133 bis devenu définitif car le jugement attribue cette colline à ND. Cette correspondance clarifie que ND. doit garder la colline de *nyab*. et NZ. doit rester sur la colline de *musi* conformément au dispositif du jugement (lettre du ministre de la justice référenciée sous le n°550/255/CAB/2018, du 7mars 2018).

A travers ce cas, force est de noter que les différentes autorités telle l'Inspecteur de la justice, le président de la Cour suprême, le Ministre de la justice, les juges du Tribunal de grande instance, les juges du Tribunal de résidence, sont répétitivement intervenus dans l'exécution et leurs décisions étaient parfois contradictoires et remettaient en cause le dispositif du jugement. Au regard de la diversité des autorités impliquées dans l'exécution de ce jugement, il sied de souligner l'incohérence entre le droit et pratique et cette dernière supprime la volonté du législateur véhiculée par l'article 246 du CPC.

Réellement, certaines directives d'exécuter données par certaines autorités étaient incohérentes avec le dispositif du jugement. Plusieurs agents sont intervenus dans l'exécution sans en avoir la compétence, sans se soucier du prescrit de cet article qui confie l'exécution au juge de première instance et la vérification au juge d'appel. Les divergences et interventions intempestives

des autorités incompétentes ont contribué sensiblement au retard excessif d'exécution.

Eu égard aux délais déraisonnablement longs, qui ont émaillé l'exécution de ce jugement, il y a lieu d'affirmer que les déficiences systémiques dans les procédures d'exécution, l'incohérence normative quant aux agents d'exécution, le décalage entre le droit et la pratique, la remise en cause de l'autorité de la chose jugée et les manœuvres dilatoires des parties sont à l'origine du délai déraisonnable du procès. Ce cas d'espèce témoigne encore une fois le rôle prépondérant des autorités judiciaires dans l'exécution des décisions de justice. Cela confirme notre hypothèse sur l'importance indéniable des critères d'appréciation dans le déroulement du procès. Cette affirmation nous conduit à l'analyse du comportement des parties au procès.

#### **4. Le comportement des parties au procès**

Selon la jurisprudence internationale, le comportement des parties au procès et particulièrement celui du requérant joue un rôle fondamental dans le processus de déroulement du procès. Sauf en cas de négligence, le comportement du requérant ne peut conduire à un constat de violation du délai raisonnable, même si le délai est manifestement excessif.

Pour le bon aboutissement du procès, les juges doivent vérifier, au regard des éléments du dossier, s'il ne ressort du comportement des parties et particulièrement le débiteur de l'obligation d'exécuter, une pratique abusive ou dilatoire tendant à allonger la procédure, sans que ne lui soit reproché, le fait d'utiliser les voies de recours disponibles (CEDH, affaire *Erkner et Hofauer c. Autriche*, le 23 avril 1987, § 68). Même lorsque les autorités judiciaires affichent la volonté d'exécuter, quoique tardive, le comportement de la partie perdante handicape parfois l'exécution définitive du jugement coulé en force de chose jugée. Tel a été le cas dans les affaires RC 730-RCA 349-RCC 8695.

En effet, l'affaire RC 730 qui oppose *Ko.* et *Ni.* porte sur la contestation de la propriété foncière de la colline de *Gishi*. La saisine du Tribunal de résidence *Rusaka* a été faite par *Ko.* en date du 14/1/1992 alléguant que la partie adverse veut s'emparer de cette colline *Gishi* qui est sa propriété. Le jugement sur cette affaire a été rendu le 24/1/1992 en donnant gain de cause à *Ko.* sur cette propriété.

Non satisfait de ce jugement, *Ni.* a interjeté appel devant le Tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* sous le RCA 349 en date du 17/6/1992. Après les différentes audiences de plaidoirie, le jugement a été rendu le 31/12/1998 en confirmant le jugement RC 730 (jugement RC 730 rendu par le tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* en date du 31/12/1998). L'affaire a été déférée en cassation sous le RCC 8695 mais le pourvoi en cassation a été rejeté.

Devenant définitif, le jugement RC 730 a été exécuté partiellement par le Tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* en 2000 en érigeant la délimitation

séparant les deux parties en conflit. En date du 17/8/2004 et 4/9/2004, l'exécution a eu lieu également en échangeant les terrains reboisés. Même après cette exécution, les conflits ont perduré car les bornes ont été enlevées et il a fallu que le tribunal de résidence de *Rusaka* se rende sur terrain en date du 21/11/2008 pour faire respecter les bornes érigées par le tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* (procès-verbal d'exécution du Tribunal de résidence de *Rusaka* dressé en date 21/11/2008).

Non satisfait, *Ni* a interjeté appel contre cette exécution arguant que la première exécution mal faite a eu lieu au moment où il était hospitalisé. En date du 8/11/2013, le Tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* est retourné sur terrain pour vérifier l'exécution faite par le Tribunal de résidence de *Rusaka*. La vérification a validé l'exécution du Tribunal de résidence. Le Tribunal de grande instance a constaté que *Ni* continue à remettre en cause le jugement coulé en force de chose jugée en perturbant la jouissance paisible de *Ko*. Il a rejeté la demande en vérification de *Ni* et a décidé d'ériger de nouveau les bornes détruites en conformité avec la première exécution décriée par *Ni* (procès-verbal d'exécution du Tribunal de Grande instance de *Mwaro* dressé en date du 8/11/2013).

En date du 5/3/2014, *Ni* n'a pas accepté la décision du Tribunal de grande instance et a formulé un pourvoi en révision devant le Ministre de la justice arguant que le jugement RC 730 est injuste d'autant plus que l'un des juges qui a tranché l'affaire a des relations familiales avec la partie adverse. Son pourvoi a été rejeté au motif qu'elle ne cadre pas avec les conditions de révision prévues par l'article 44 de la loi sur la Cour suprême de l'époque et il lui a été demandé de respecter le jugement rendu, devenu définitif (procès-verbal d'exécution du tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro*, 8/11/2013).

Même après cette réponse du Ministre de la justice, la partie perdante n'a pas accepté le verdict. Constatant que l'autorité ministérielle avait été changée, la partie non satisfaite a saisi le nouveau Ministre de la justice pour dénoncer la vérification faite par le Tribunal de grande instance. Dans sa correspondance du 5/2/2016, le nouveau Ministre de la justice a souligné que l'exécution n'a pas respecté le dispositif du jugement et a ordonné ce tribunal de retourner sur les lieux pour corriger les irrégularités en érigeant de nouvelles bornes (lettre du Ministre au président du tribunal de grande instance en date du 5/2/2016 référenciée sous le n°550/2099/CAB/2016.).

En date du 28/6/2017, répondant à l'appel du Ministre, le Tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* s'est rendu encore une fois sur les lieux mais il a constaté que la vérification faite par ce même tribunal en date du 8/11/2013 est correcte (procès-verbal de vérification du Tribunal de grande instance de *Mwaro* daté du 28/6/2017). Infatigable, la partie perdante *Ni* n'a pas cessé ses revendications auprès du Ministre de la justice. Ce dernier a commandité une vérification conjointe de ses conseillers et des juges du Tribunal de grande



instance en date du 1/2/2018. Cette commission conjointe a constaté que le requérant *Ni* remet en cause le jugement en voulant que la propriété gagnée par l'autre partie lui soit attribuée. Même ce jour-là, il n'a pas été satisfait et a promis de saisir le Président de la République (procès-verbal de vérification du tribunal de grande de *Mwaro* du 1/2/2018 dressé conjointement avec les conseillers du Ministre).

Après cette vérification conjointe, le Ministre de la justice a notifié au procédurier infatigable qu'après avoir envoyé ses conseillers et les juges du Tribunal de grande instance, il est avéré que l'exécution a été faite conformément au dispositif du jugement. En soulignant que cette notification rectifie ce que le Ministre avait écrit au président du Tribunal de grande instance dans sa lettre du 5/2/2016 contestant la vérification faite, elle a demandé à la partie perdante d'accepter la décision rendue (lettre du Ministre de la justice en date du 19/3/2018 référenciée sous n°550/246/CAB/2020).

Malgré cette lettre du Ministre combien précise, la partie perdante a réitéré ses revendications et contestations. Au bout du compte, le Ministre de la justice a répondu en date du 19/2/2020 avec insistance, en clarifiant qu'il a envoyé à maintes reprises ses conseillers et juges qui ont toujours convergé sur l'exécution faite. Il lui a signifié que le jugement au fond et son exécution sont équitables, qu'il lui est demandé de le respecter, en s'abstenant de faire perdre du temps aux autorités judiciaires et à la partie adverse (correspondance du Ministre de la justice du 19/2/2020 référenciée sous n°550/265/CAB/2018).

Dans cette affaire sous analyse, il sied de constater que depuis la saisine en date du 14/1/1992 jusqu'à la décision définitive du Ministre de la justice en date du 19/2/2020, un délai déraisonnablement long de plus de 28 ans s'est écoulé sans que la partie gagnante ne soit rétablie définitivement dans ses biens. Ce cas témoigne un comportement de la partie perdante caractérisé par la volonté hostile à l'exécution, qui se traduit par des manœuvres dilatoires et une remise en cause de l'autorité de la chose jugée. Il s'agit d'une violation du droit de propriété dans la mesure où le bien protégé par l'autorité de la chose jugée doit rentrer sans délai dans le patrimoine de la partie gagnante.

En réalité les différentes manœuvres dilatoires et recours intempestifs affichés par la partie perdante concourent au délai déraisonnable. Ces lenteurs qui ont émaillé le déroulement de cette affaire sont inhérentes à la méconnaissance de la jurisprudence internationale sur le délai raisonnable de la part des autorités judiciaires qui auraient dû constater, en temps réel, l'épuisement des voies de recours pour refuser les remises en cause de l'autorité de la chose jugée. En vertu de cette jurisprudence, les recours intempestifs, une conduite procédurière attestée par de multiples demandes et autres réclamations concourent grandement à retarder et à prolonger la procédure d'exécution (Guide sur l'article 6 de la convention européenne des

droits de l'homme (volet civil), 30 avril 2021). Cela montre que si le juge ne reste pas vigilant, le comportement des parties au procès peut contrevenir au délai raisonnable des procédures judiciaires. Ce délai est également remis en cause par les divers obstacles tels les problèmes de significations des jugements et ceux liés à la logistique qui font l'objet de discussion dans le point suivant.

### **C. Les obstacles au délai raisonnable d'exécution**

En plus des problèmes d'exécution observés ci-haut, les problèmes de significations des jugements sont récurrents et contribuent au délai déraisonnable d'exécution suite aux problèmes logistiques de se rendre sur terrain. Selon l'article 238 du code de procédure civile, les jugements ne peuvent être exécutés contre ceux auxquels ils sont opposés qu'après qu'ils leur auront été notifiés sous forme de grosse, à moins que l'exécution n'en soit volontaire. Ces problèmes sont également liés à la mauvaise volonté de la partie perdante d'accepter le verdict, à l'incohérence normative quant aux agents d'exécution des jugements et quant à la définition du rôle de chacun. De plus, les pratiques procédurales liées aux manœuvres dilatoires dans les recours contre l'exécution limitent également l'effectivité de l'exécution au détriment de la partie gagnante. L'inobservation des règles de procédure sur les voies de recours contre l'exécution contribuent à l'écart entre le droit et la pratique ainsi qu'à la violation du délai raisonnable d'exécution (L'article 246 de la loi n° 1/010 du 13/ 05 / 2004 prévoit un seul recours, mais les procéduriers en abusent jusqu'à saisir des autorités incompétentes).

Dans le même ordre d'idées, ces problèmes d'exécution sont également évoqués par le ministère de la justice qui, dans sa politique sectorielle 2020-2027, souligne que les problèmes en rapport avec l'exécution des arrêts et jugements sont en grande partie liés, soit aux dysfonctionnements du système judiciaire, soit aux voies d'exécution qui sont restées empiriques, sans aucune évolution dans le temps. Dans cette politique sectorielle, le ministère reconnaît qu'au-delà de ce qui doit être amélioré en termes de prestations des services judiciaires, une réforme des voies d'exécution s'avère toujours indispensable (stratégie sectorielle du ministère de la justice, 2020-2027, p. 20). Il affirme que la plupart des jugements ne sont pas exécutés à temps et qu'il n'est pas non plus garanti que ceux qui sont exécutés le soient correctement (ibidem).

Qui plus est, les recherches qui se sont focalisées sur l'exécution des jugements au Burundi soulignent la problématique d'exécution des décisions judiciaires liée aux moyens de déplacement. Selon *Dominik Kohlhagen*, les entretiens faits avec les nombreux justiciables et les membres d'associations de défense des droits humains ont affirmé être régulièrement confrontés à des demandes de « frais de taxi » communément appelée "*inderuzo*", littéralement "brancard". Cette somme demandée aux justiciables par certains juges pour se

transporter sur les lieux d'exécution (*Kohlhagen, 2007*) avoisinerait généralement dix mille francs burundais, mais pourrait atteindre quarante mille francs burundais selon certaines informations (*ibidem*). Selon le même auteur, certaines personnes interrogées évoquaient cette pratique avec une grande évidence, montrant qu'elles ignoraient vraisemblablement son caractère illicite. Dans plusieurs cas, les interlocuteurs affirmaient ne pas pouvoir faire exécuter les jugements par manque de moyens financiers (*ibidem*). Parfois, cette pratique de « frais de taxi » est également observée dans la procédure de signification des jugements. Cette analyse confirme notre hypothèse selon laquelle l'insuffisance des moyens logistiques pour les descentes sur terrain contribue au délai déraisonnable d'exécution.

## Conclusion

Aux termes de notre analyse, il appert que le caractère raisonnable du délai d'exécution doit s'apprécier en tenant compte des critères dégagés par la jurisprudence internationale. L'appréciation centrée sur ces critères a promu l'efficacité et la crédibilité de la justice en réduisant les lenteurs des procédures judiciaires et les temps morts dans l'exécution des décisions de justice. Les jugements discutés en droit burundais corroborent l'inapplication de cette jurisprudence. Cela débouche sur le délai déraisonnable d'exécution, empêchant ainsi la partie gagnante de jouir pleinement des acquis du procès. De surcroît, cette analyse nous a révélé plusieurs agents intervenant dans l'exécution et parfois leurs décisions sont contradictoires. Les mêmes autorités se rétractent dans leurs décisions. Sur cet aspect, nous soutenons l'avis du Docteur Aimé Parfait *Niyonkuru* affirmant que l'analyse de la législation et de la pratique burundaises révèle une diversité d'agents d'exécution des décisions de justice et une incertitude quant à la répartition des tâches et à la légalité des interventions de certains agents. Pour les uns, la question se pose en termes de carence et pour d'autres, le problème se pose en termes de compétence (*Niyonkuru, 2016*).

Certes, la méconnaissance de la jurisprudence internationale fait que le droit au délai raisonnable ne soit pas revendiqué devant les juridictions burundaises par les justiciables victimes du délai déraisonnable. Les retards excessifs qui s'observent dans les jugements ci-haut discutés sont des signes éloquentes qui montrent que cette garantie incontournable du procès équitable n'est pas interprétée selon sa quintessence; que le monde judiciaire ne lui accorde pas sa juste valeur. Pour faire face à ces problèmes, nous sommes du même avis que le ministère de la justice qui, dans sa stratégie sectorielle, envisage professionnaliser et valoriser la fonction d'huissier en revoyant les textes existants (stratégie sectorielle du Ministère de la justice, 2020-2027). À notre sens, la mise en place d'un fonds d'indemnisation des victimes des faits dommageables en cas d'insolvabilité ou en cas d'inexécution,

l'indemnisation des victimes du délai déraisonnable apporterait une plus-value à la crédibilité de la justice.

Pour autant que le Burundi est lié par la Charte africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples (Décret-loi n° 1/029 portant ratification de la Charte Africaine des droits de l'homme et des peuples, du 28/ 7/ 1989) et le protocole portant création de la Cour africaine depuis le 27/6/2000, le législateur burundais, les autorités judiciaires et étatiques, les praticiens du droit en l'occurrence les magistrats, les avocats devraient capitaliser la jurisprudence de la Cour africaine afin d'asseoir en droit et dans la pratique la garantie du délai raisonnable d'exécution. Cela permettrait d'utiliser le temps judiciaire de manière efficace, en évitant les temps morts du procès. A l'instar de la Cour européenne qui met à la charge des États membres l'obligation d'organiser leur système judiciaire de telle sorte que leurs juridictions puissent garantir à chacun le droit à l'exécution dans un délai raisonnable (affaire *Hornsby* contre Grèce, 19 mars 1997 ), la Cour africaine devrait enjoindre aux pays membres d'inclure dans leurs législations interne les critères d'appréciation du délai raisonnable. Les autorités étatiques et judiciaires devraient être sensibilisées sur les implications et les sanctions éventuelles du délai déraisonnable des procès et ainsi anticiper sur les éventuelles actions en justice des victimes. Au sens de Montesquieu, nous sommes d'avis que « Le repos des familles et de la société toute entière se fonde non seulement sur ce qui est juste mais aussi sur ce qui est fini ». Par rapport au respect du temps d'exécution dans la jouissance des fruits du procès, nous épousons également l'idée de l'avocat Franck *Abikhzer* selon laquelle « le temps est un bien si précieux et le délai raisonnable un fruit gorgé de promesses ».

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## “What’s COVID-19 Vaccine Like?” – From A Cognitive Frame to A Similitive Proposition

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### Abstract

Frames and propositions are supposed to be cognitive acts that play a significant role in the perception of reality and the enactment of discursive practices. The linguistic scrutiny of the Covid-19 pandemic discourse could shed light on how the figurative language, similes in particular, are conceptualized by the cognitive structures and represented discursively as surface-level manifestations of the pandemic reality. Thus, the present research is concerned with the analysis of discursive as well as cognitive structures of the figurative language to delineate on relevant theoretical stances. To scrutinize how similes work on a discursive dimension, a discourse analysis is applied, which qualitatively characterizes the concordance lists of the target lingual units obtained from The Coronavirus Corpus <https://www.english-corpora.org/corona/>. As for the investigation of the cognitive basis of similes, source and target entities/ concepts are identified to focus on the propositional structures. The paper argues that similes as opposed to metaphors explicitly expound propositions and communicative frames in the discourse to avoid incipient cognitive ambiguity of the comparison. The two-fold cognitive shift is evident, which morphs a cognitive proposition into a textual one and lessens the exact sameness. Moreover, discursive elaboration of a simile as a short explanatory phrase transforms into a mini explanatory narrative to provide rationale for the novel source concepts of comparison (i.e., computer software, technology, and adventure), which could be rather complex for the human mind to perceive. As it appears, similes may come

forward as more tangible cognitive-discursive structures that assist the human mind to cope with novel cognitive comparisons.

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**Keywords:** Simile, figurative framing, similitive proposition, cognitive linguistics

## Introduction

The entire world was challenged by the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic at the end of 2019 that marked the outbreak of the virus. Metaphorically speaking, people would say: *'we have not seen the light at the end of the tunnel yet.'* Metaphors have been pervasive and represented abundantly in the coronavirus discourse competing with the world's leading discourses of politics and economy. Metaphors for the pandemic have been extensively researched (Craig 2020; Nerlich & Jaspal 2020; Semino 2021; Guliashvili 2022; Döring and Nerlich 2020;) as they reflect people's attitudes, their cognitive stances in relation to the pandemic and the microscopic virus ravaging the unperturbed existence people used to have 'before coronavirus invasion'.

Similes may not be as powerful figures of speech as metaphors, but the question "what's the COVID-19 vaccine like?" fueled the research. In doing so, the paper attempts to focus on the investigation of the above-mentioned discursive figure represented in the coronavirus corpus, which possesses different rhetorical and discursive features. Apart from cognitive and discursive similarities that metaphors and similes share, the evidence-based characterizations manifest cognitive and linguistic peculiarities similes may promote (Israel, Riddle Harding & Tobin 2004; Gentner & Bowdle 2008; Dancygier & Sweetser 2014; Cuenca 2015; Romano 2017).

The aim of the present article is to identify the basic cognitive rationale of a simile in the naturally occurring discourse of the COVID-19 pandemic. The explication of the cognitive basis of similes in this paper does not imply that the same procedural steps were taken by the creators or recipients of the target language. Rather, it would be more reasonable to expound an analytic framework of a similitive language along with its conceptualization as a theoretical stance. In this paper, I have an endeavor to show that similes operating on cognitive structures are realized into explicit textual propositions of a comparison and could be expanded through *elaboration* (an extended part of a simile, which will be delineated in the following section) as well as extricating communicative frames, which tend to influence the recipients.

## Similes

Simile manifests a comparison between two entities, which do not resemble each other. Simile, unlike metaphor, explicitly indicates the



comparison through certain words “like” or “as” and target and source entities/concepts are directly represented. The investigation of similes and metaphors dates to the origin of Rhetorical Theory. Interestingly, Aristotle discerns that the difference between these figures of speech is contingent upon a slight distinction: “the simile is also a metaphor ... the difference is, but slight” (Aristotle III,4). The analysts and theorists have been trying to scientifically account for the existence of two alike, but at the same time different figures rendering a metaphor as an elliptical simile (Miller 2021), or a direct result of the metaphorical mapping given in language (Lakoff & Johnson 1980; Glucksberg & Keysar 1990). In the end, a simile and a metaphor appear to be the case of an ontological priority: “Which comes first metaphorical egg or the chicken of the similitude?” (Glucksberg 2001,29). However, the fact that they both still do exist vindicates the perspective that both are the reflections of human mind: the metaphor – based on implicit cognitive and the simile – based on overt cognitive-discursive comparison.

In a traditional sense (“the equivalence approach”) a simile could be characterized as an *expanded metaphor* as it “simply makes explicit what a metaphor merely implies” (Israel et.al. 2004,123), as well as being conceptualized alike (Tversky 1977; Glucksberg & Keysar 1990; Addison 1993). The equivalence approach was a case of critique (Romano 2017). Nevertheless, psycholinguistic and discourse studies come forward with the disparities that similes can bring about (e.g., Aisenman 1999; Chiappe & Kennedy 2000; Chiappe, Kennedy & Chiappe 2003; Croft & Cruse 2004; Bowdle & Gentner 2005; Gentner & Bowdle 2008; Dancygier and Sweetser 2014; Glucksberg & Haught 2006; Israel et al. 2004).

The primary and most notable difference between metaphors and similes is the presence of an overt marker *like* and even this slight linguistic - structural difference could contribute to the changes in meaning and function (Langacker 1987, 2013). From this perspective, *like* is a standard-bearer, which sets the difference between a simile and a metaphor explicitly alluding to the source and target domains, as well as initiating the mapping process. Cognitively, mappings and interpretations of metaphors and similes cannot always be identical / similar, which could explain the fact that not all the metaphors could be transformed into similes or vice versa (Romano 2017). Metaphors are perceived as categorizations, whereas similes are understood as comparisons, and from a psycholinguistic perspective, the cognitive comparison is slower, as it requires more processing stages (Roncero et al., 2021, 95). Nevertheless, similes could propose more ingenious conceptual mappings, which render them preferable figures of speech (e.g., Israel et al. 2004; Bowdle & Gentner 2005; Moder 2012; Dancygier & Sweetser 2014). Discursive functions of the figurative language are yet another factor contributing to the discrepancies between metaphors and similes. The

empirical data gained through the real communicative contexts reveal that metaphors mainly work on a conceptual level via a lexical-paradigmatic axis of the discourse, while similes manifest both linguistic-discursive and conceptual features pertinent to the syntagmatic axis (e.g., Cuenca 2015; Romano 2017). Regarding the structure and semantics of a simile, three componential model is evident: A (*comparandum* – the target, or the topic of comparison), B (*comparatum* – the source, or the vehicle of comparison), and E (elaboration – explication of the implicitness) (Cuenca 2015, 143). Thus, *elaboration* makes the implicit aspect of comparison (A is like B) explicit by a syntagmatic addition to the core structure of a simile. Consequently, if *like* is a comparison marker linking the element A with the element B in a simile, *elaboration* is an overt discursive indicator of the mapping between A and B (without an indicator the identification of the shared features between the conceptual domains could be ambiguous due to cultural and epistemic/informational backgrounds).

### **From Frames to Figurative Framing**

It is essential to characterize what the cognitive reality of a simile could be. At this point propositional analysis would be a relevant means to explore psychology of language processing though well-established predicate and argument structure proposed by Bovair and Kieras (1985), which was rendered as workable, “dramatic” and indirectly capturing some aspects of a cognitive reality (Perfetti and Britt 1995, 16). This theorization of the cognitive reality does not necessarily mean that all human cognition is propositional in essence; the human cognition is realized through image schemas, which have a continuous analogous structure as opposed to propositions with a discrete finitary structure (Crisp 2002, 11). Image schemas, such as SOURCE - PATH - GOAL, through cognitive semantics is viewed as embodiment of a human mind (Gibbs and Colston 1995). As for the propositions, they could provide a hierarchical series in the form of a foundation of the text (Kintsch and van Dijk 1978; Kintsch 1998) as well as being the carriers of some kind of cognitive reality, which is not the basis or medium of all human cognition. Crisp (2002, 14) states that it is discernible to construct a metaphorical proposition for every linguistic metaphor through a three-level approach: “The first level is that of the surface linguistic expression; the second level is that of the metaphorical proposition; the third level is that of the cross-domain mapping”. The second intermediary level expounded in this approach is on the one hand practical, as it is most probably that human mind cannot directly move from a surface structure (i.e., a linguistic metaphor) to a conceptual domain mapping and on the other hand, it is theoretical as propositions may have the cognitive reality, which is not equivalent to all human cognition being propositional.

As for the notions of ‘frame’ and ‘framing’, they need to be more tangibly defined to be applied in empirical studies (Dijk 2020), as well as minimizing the use of ‘frame’ in the sense of equally ambiguous concept ‘perspective’ (Schon 1993). Supposedly, the other more feasible notions and phenomena are camouflaged by the concepts of ‘frame’ and ‘framing’ (Dijk 2023). Therefore, it must be identified that ‘frames in thought’ are different from ‘frames in communication’ (Druckman 2001). The latter includes verbal and non-verbal ‘pictorial’ frames (Abdel-Raheem 2019). Communicative frames are contingent on cognitive frames, they emerge on the surface when “cognitive frames are encoded in language art, or another medium, causing the cognitive frames to be created or activated in someone else's mind” (Sullivan 2023, 6).

The conceptualization of ‘framing’ is most essentially provided by Goffman (1974, 21) who defined ‘frames’ as ‘schemata of interpretation’ that capacitate individuals ‘to locate, perceive, identify, and label’ phenomena in the social milieu of our world. Thus, frames tend to operate where communication takes place, where discursive practices are overtly represented, where occurrences around us enter the discursive dimension influencing or more precisely shaping people’s perception and attitudes. If frames are meant to cognitively predispose people in favor of certain policies, and regulations, then mass media is certainly a relevant discursive platform to instrumentalize ‘frames’, which is a dynamic process. To frame is “to select some aspects of perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text in such a way that as to promote a particular problem definition, casual interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described” (Entman 1993, 52). Consequently, framing is accomplished by the construction of meaning, which is a key factor in the instrumentalization of so-called schemata.

From the perspective of cognitive linguistics ‘meaning’ of lingual units is deeply rooted in human experiences, and the assignation of meaning to the language is no other than involvement of other cognitive domains in the process of meaning making, such as memory, perception, imagination, and reasoning (Croft and Cruse 2004). Since human cognition has an inherent nature of constantly shaping the understanding of complex social phenomena by comparing them with more experience-based perceptions of reality, it is obvious that figurative language, metaphor in particular, which is the reflection of conceptual comparison, fleshes out as a *metaphoric frame structure*. The latter comes across as an enactment of a *source-frame* and a *target-frame* projection to make events, processes, policies, abstract notions more tangible and perceivable for the audience (Lakoff and Johnson 1980).

In the case of figurative language, metaphor for instance, two viable elements are linked through a choice of lexical unit: the source frame element

being indexed in the discourse and ‘the referential element in the target situation or frame’ (Hart 2023, 252). Thus, the choice of a source element in reference to the target frame is open-ended and is defined by cultural and historical knowledge affected by individual and shared emotive experiences. Accordingly, logical, culturally, and historically determined, knowledge along with cognitive-emotive experiences regarding the source frame legitimate potential actions within the target frame. Therefore, metaphor is accountable for consequences as to “how a particular issue is ‘framed’ or structured, which aspects are foregrounded and which are backgrounded; what inferences are facilitated, what evaluative and emotional associations are triggered, what courses of action seem to be possible and so on” (Semino 2008, 91).

Metaphoric frames are interesting due to their inherent nature of relating two different frames through conceptual structures where *the source-frame* is projected over *the target-frame* to conceptualize actions, entities, and events via providing specific patterns for thinking that serve the purpose of perceiving the complexity of a phenomenon (Lakoff and Johnson 1980). As a discursive construct, frame elements may be indexed by *lexical units* in the language to conceptualize referential occurrences, and as far as metaphor is involved a lexical unit establishes the link between “the source-frame element indexed and the referential element in the target situation of frame” (Hart 2023, 252).

Metaphoric frames have been tracked down in the discourse of the pandemic; the research proposes versatile conceptualizations of *danger*, *violence*, and *threat* cognitive frames through the pervasive domains of war, natural disasters, fire, monsters, to influence people’s right of choice. Nevertheless, these hegemonic frames could be challenged by other novel metaphors projecting the frames of *solidarity*, *cooperation*, and *responsibility* (Olza, Koller, Ibarretxe-Antunano, Perez-Sobrino, & Semino 2021; Perez-Sobrino, Semino, Ibarretxe-Antunano, Koller, & Olza 2022).

Metaphor and simile both are the reflections of the human mind: the metaphor – based on implicit cognitive and the simile – based on overt cognitive-discursive comparison. Similes are also based on cognitive frames, which are extricated in the discourse through communicative frames. The present study focuses on the communicative frames enacted by similes, as the cognitive-discursive dimension of this figure of speech may play a pivotal role in the emergence of a textual simulative proposition.

## Methods

The method that is applied to the present research is a discourse analysis, which qualitatively scrutinizes the target lingual units in their social context. The essential context of the Covid-19 pandemic is used to investigate the meaning-making that is pertinent to the similes and characterizes the

Covid-19 vaccines and the process of vaccination per se. The empirical material for the study derives from Brigham Young University coronavirus corpus <https://www.english-corpora.org/corona/> (Davis 2019). Corpus research tools (e.g., concordance lists, key words in context) are used to delineate on the discursive and cognitive functions of the covid pandemic similes to identify prominent patterns and develop appropriate theoretical stances.

The first stage is the provision of a concordance list based on the specific string of the target lingual units. The lingual data in focus are contingent on the following proposition “target is like source” where vaccine/vaccination is the target, and the source is X – an open discursive choice. The data were retrieved in the form of a concordance list based on the search string “ \* *vaccin*\* \* *like*” . (The asterisks before and after the token *vaccin* allow for the linguistic variations such as “vaccine is like”, “vaccination is like”, or “being vaccinated is like” as well as the variation of the linking verbs “be”, “look”, “feel”, and “seem”). At the time of the research, the search yielded competing similes with a certain amount of hits (665) out of which 135 were similes with the linking verbs: *be*, *look*, *feel*, *seem*. At the following stage of the research, based on the conceptual mapping source and target entities/concepts were identified to characterize the basis of comparison. The dataset for the present research was compiled and deposited on Harvard Dataverse<sup>1</sup>. The dataset is represented by the excel files that include the information concerning the target figurative language and is freely accessible for further scrutiny.

## Results and Discussion

### Surface Level Representations and Frames

In this part of the discussion, the identification of textual/surface level representations of similes expands into the characterization of a cognitive foundation with the focus on source concepts/entities and communicative frames, respectively.

The similes have been manually categorized in relation to their semantic features. A wide array of similes in the concordance lists can be divided into relatively more frequently occurring semantic categories pertinent to the source entity/concept of comparison. The source concept is a more tangible object of the comparison, the entity that provides an explanation for the vaccine. The following source concepts/entities were identified: *computer software and technology*, *security and regulations*, *military intervention*, *tournament*, *panacea*, and finally, *adventure*. The linguistic variations of the similes in connection with these source concepts are represented below in

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<sup>1</sup> <https://doi.org/10.7910/DVN/2VUPKT>

Table 2. The mapping is defined by comparing the target entity (vaccine/vaccination) with a variety of source entities/concepts.

Table 2. Categorization of COVID-19 similes based on source concept/entity

Source Concept/Entity	Similes
<b>Computer software Technology</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* software program to the body</li> <li>* a SpaceX shuttle</li> <li>* a self-destruct or biodegradable messenger carrying instructions to make the most important.</li> <li>* a metallic implant</li> </ul>
<b>Security</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* a helmet for Corona</li> <li>* a bulletproof vest/mask</li> <li>* a protection shield against the virus.</li> <li>* an umbrella in the rain</li> <li>* seatbelt</li> <li>* extra security</li> <li>* putting on your seatbelt.</li> <li>* a parking brake: It works well once a car is in the park but not nearly as well when you're racing down the highway.</li> <li>* obeying traffic rules: It's a lifesaving system.</li> <li>* pass</li> </ul>
<b>Military Intervention</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* shooting at a moving target with a fixed gun</li> <li>* a "force field"</li> <li>* Frontline doctors and nurses</li> <li>* a moving target</li> </ul>
<b>Tournament</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* getting your immune system ready for a big match against the virus</li> </ul>
<b>Panacea</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Nectar</li> <li>* Medicine</li> <li>* the light at the end of the tunnel</li> </ul>
<b>Adventure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* arriving at base camp on Mount Everest</li> <li>* embarking on a treasure hunt</li> </ul>

The categorization and qualitative analysis of the similes yielded noteworthy communicative frames, promoting vaccine administration as a positive and acceptable procedure to safeguard the healthcare of the world population. Therefore, almost all the source concepts/entities of the comparison sustain the positive meaning. President of Moderna, Dr Stephen Hoge stated in February 2020: "RNA is like a software molecule in biology. So, our vaccine is like the software program to the body" (Park 2020) responsible for generating an immune response to the body and when the population gets vaccinated "It is like watching software updates load" said Tracy Epton (2021), Healthcare psychologist at Manchester University. Framing the process of vaccination as a software program update, which is a beneficial procedure for normal functioning of a device, conjugates the two cognitive frames: the frame of vaccination with the frame of software update. This comparison seems to be extremely popular due to the resemblance

between the DNA/RNA and computer software coding as the society is more open to accepting and activating the communicative frames when they are disseminated by a reliable or authoritative sources (Sullivan 2023, 10).

Another interesting similarity is established in Ho Ching's interview (former CEO of Temasek Holding) where she quotes the former director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Tom Freiden: "So an mRNA vaccine is like a self-destruct or biodegradable messenger carrying instructions to make the most important bit, the spike, for our immune system to recognize and learn to fight" and it works like a "special biodegradable recorder tape" with instructions for the body on how to make the spikes of the virus (Ang 2021).

The HSE's lead for infection control, Professor Martin Cormican explains that: "Getting vaccinated is like getting your immune system ready for a big match against the virus" (O'Leary 2021). Thus, he creates a simile that conjugates frame of vaccination with the frame of playing a match.

Security frame is realized by ample source concepts (Table 2), which compare vaccine to *helmet for corona, putting on seatbelt, obeying traffic rules, which is a lifesaving system, etc.* Thus, it activates the familiar schema of being secured in everyday life via certain measures or commodities, which are mapped onto the target concept of vaccine or vaccination. This process minimizes the cognitive dissonance that may arise in connection with vaccine administration and people would feel more inclined to get vaccinated. Similarities between familiar experiences and novel phenomenon seem to ease the process of acceptance.

Adventure concept as a source is yet another case of a new frame that is associated with finding a valuable vaccine that can ensure safety and protection: "The lack of information has also stressed-out New Yorkers who say finding an available vaccine is like embarking on a treasure hunt, with social media posts as clues to where to call next to find the elusive vaccine dose" (Proper & Cutler 2021).

The source concept of the simile in the pandemic discourse appears to be quite versatile ranging from the lexical domains of *computer software and technology, security and regulations, military intervention, and tournament to panacea* and even *adventure*. Therefore, the frames of technology, war, security, sport, and medicine are aligned with the frame of the pandemic, thereby transferring the notions of certain experiences onto the global phenomenon. All the source entities are about showing the benefits of vaccination by framing the vaccine or the process of vaccination as more comprehensible for the people. Nevertheless, some source concepts bear the challenge of the vaccination. In this sense, the procedure is compared with *shooting at the moving target*, which makes it more difficult to attain the most valuable goal (Castillo-M.D 2021) or the other attitude, which compares the

vaccine administration to “blaming certain books in school libraries to have sex...” (Shafer 2022). The contradicting communicative frames challenge the process of vaccination as they may give rise to the cognitive frames, which might not be compatible with one another.

### **Cognitive Shift**

In this part of the paper, I will focus on the structure of a simile, which is a key to the most discernible differences between similes and metaphors on a discursive as well as cognitive level. Extract 1 (Tribune Desk 2020) below explicates the similitive proposition, which establishes likeness of mRNA and a vaccine with the software program. Moreover, an extension of a simile - elaboration, expands into an explanatory statement to avoid ambiguity.

- (1) Dr. Stephen Hoge, president of Moderna, while speaking to TIME, said: ‘mRNA is really like a software molecule in biology, therefore, our vaccine is like the software program to the body, which goes and makes the [viral] proteins that can generate an immune response.’

The proposition in this example ‘mRNA is really like a software molecule in biology’ and ‘our vaccine is like the software program to the body’ explicitly states a comparative equation in the discourse (syntactically it is the combination of a copular phrase *be like* + *noun phrase*), which is not the case for a metaphoric proposition. The latter is more an intermediary cognitive link standing prior to the emergence of a linguistic or a surface level metaphor (Crisp 2002, 14). And an elaboration is discourse-syntactic expansion of a similitive proposition to make the essence of comparison more comprehensible for the public. Therefore, a cognitive mapping is transferred onto the surface level overtly stating the similarity between a biological molecule and a software program. Otherwise, it could be obscure to equate a molecule with a software program.

For more consideration, extract 2 (Cullen 2020) would provide an interesting stance. The simile in German doctor’s interview expounds that the benefits of vaccination should outweigh the risks and the precautionary principle - *dictum primum nihil nocere* (‘first, do no harm’) is vital to avoid the complications due to frequent mutations of the pathogenic genome. The similitive proposition here is the combination of *a copular phrase (be like)* and *a gerundial phrase*, which makes it syntactically more complex than the previous example. Nevertheless, for more clarification, it is also followed by an elaboration:

- (2) ... If frequent mutations occur, vaccination is like shooting at a moving target with a fixed gun: you can hit the bull's eye, but you usually miss. Thirdly, the pathogen should occur only in humans



because its eradication is possible only if it does not find shelter in animals. Finally, vaccination should provide long-term and comprehensive protection against the targeted disease.

If we get back to the simile that appeared in Professor's Cormican's interview, it claims that: "Getting vaccinated is like getting your immune system ready for a big match against the virus" (O'Leary 2021), which is yet another example of *a copular phrase + a gerundial phrase* without syntactic elaboration. Nevertheless, the necessity of dissolving ambiguity is resolved by a miniature narrative of an explicatory nature.

(3) Professor Cormican said: Getting vaccinated is like getting your immune system ready for a big match against the virus. For most of us our immune team is ready for action after the standard vaccine dose; for some people whose immune system is starting from a lower base, it's weaker: they need an extra training session, an extra vaccine dose to get them ready for that match and that's what the additional dose is about for the immunocompromised. It's getting them ready for that if they meet the virus.

The same can be said about the simile that compares vaccine with a "special biodegradable recorder tape" with instructions for the body on how to make the spikes of the virus (Ang 2021). For the people, this comparison would be complex to digest cognitively. Therefore, former CEO of Temasek Holding adduces an explanatory mini narrative instead of an elaboration, which typically represents a short phrase. Therefore, the existence of a mini narrative is crucial for the perception of the novel comparison. An elaboration of a simile appears to be substituted by an explanatory narrative to assist the human mind establish relevant cognitive comparisons:

The biodegradable "tapes" of mRNA instructions are wrapped within fatty bubbles to protect them for a little more and help them enter the body's cells. Without the bubbles, the "tapes" will disappear quickly, she added. As for the cells, they have "tape recorders", which allow them to read the mRNA instructions to begin producing the spikes.

As we can see, the simulative proposition (a target entity is like a source entity) unlike a metaphoric proposition, resides in a discursive dimension indicating *a cognitive shift* of a proposition into a discursive realm. An expansion of a simile into a syntactic elaboration or a miniature narrative seems to be essential for clarifying the essence of a simile, as they discursively map the overlapping features of the two entities in the discourse; Thus, the incipient ambiguities, which the comparison may bear, are averted. While metaphors imply the cognitive comparisons and mappings, similes come

across as explicators, especially when at one glance contradictory source entities are compared, e.g., a biological molecule and a software program, or a medical procedure and a shooting for sport.

## Conclusion

In this paper, I have endeavored to show how similes perform cognitive and discursive functions in comparison with metaphors. The first level of a simile representation is contingent on its linguistic-textual appearance, which is grounded in the cross-domain mappings of the target and source concepts/entities. The most vulnerable part here is an intermediary – a propositional link, which in the case of metaphors, is cognitive. However, regarding a simile, a similitive linguistic statement is propositional by its nature, which activates a discursive comparison. Therefore, as opposed to metaphors the two-fold cognitive shift is evident: 1. *A cognitive proposition morphs into a textual/linguistic proposition (implicitness changes into explicitness)* : this theoretical stance is conditioned by detecting both the source and the target entities in a simile on a textual level in terms of a propositional phrase, and 2. *A similitive proposition lessens the exact sameness of the target and source concepts/ entities to avoid ambiguity while mapping the domains* : with regard to this point of view, a simile comes forward as a more realistic device stressing the similarity as opposed to a metaphor, which directly states that a target concept is a source concept.

From the discourse perspective, similes have a versatile structure. The similitive proposition is followed by (1) *an elaboration* to give more details about the comparison, or (2) a mini narrative that explains the essence of the comparison. To be more precise, we can contend that an elaboration of a simile is substituted by a mini narrative when a substantial explanation is essential for the novel sources of comparison.

The human mind needs to digest cognitive comparisons. The metaphors that focus on the sameness of the source and target entities or concepts could be more experience based, as they imply the metaphoric propositions and cognitive mappings. Nevertheless, similes being more cautious, stress the similarity between the two concepts; Thus, the recipients of this figurative language may skip the stage of the implicit cognitive mapping and overtly frame the aspects of reality. As it appears, similes could propose more ingenious comparisons when novel source concepts are used to talk about the new phenomenon.

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## Identifying Areas of High Gold Potential Using Geochemical Prospecting Methods: The Tenado Area in the Boromo Birimian Belt, West-Central Burkina Faso, West Africa

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### Abstract

The investigation area is located in the central-western region of Burkina Faso, in a geological environment that incorporates the Paleoproterozoic formations of the Boromo greenstone belt. This zone already has several gold showings and an active zinc mine, but no major gold deposits. The aim of this study is to define target areas with high gold potential for further prospecting. To meet this objective, we mainly used total rock geochemistry and stream sediment geochemistry methods. The combination of stream sediment gold content and litho-geochemical data has enabled us to highlight two areas of gold (Au) and various metal anomalies. The gold



content of stream sediments is mainly influenced by that of the parent rock from which they are derived. In fact, strong gold anomalies are more common in clay sediments than in sandy sediments. These clay sediments are derived from basic rocks (basalt) and intermediate rocks (andesite-dacite), while the gold-poor sandy sediments are derived from granitoids. Basic to intermediate rocks are fertile for primary gold. Anomaly zone one (01) in the northern part of the study area (Kelsio, Zoula, Poa and Dyoro) and anomaly zone two (02) in the southern part of the study area (Kwademan, Baguio, Bérédo, Bonga and Baganapou) show occurrences of mainly gold and various metals (Zn, Cu, Ni).

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**Keywords:** Anomaly area, Paleoproterozoic, Boromo Birimian Belt, Burkina Faso

## 1. Introduction

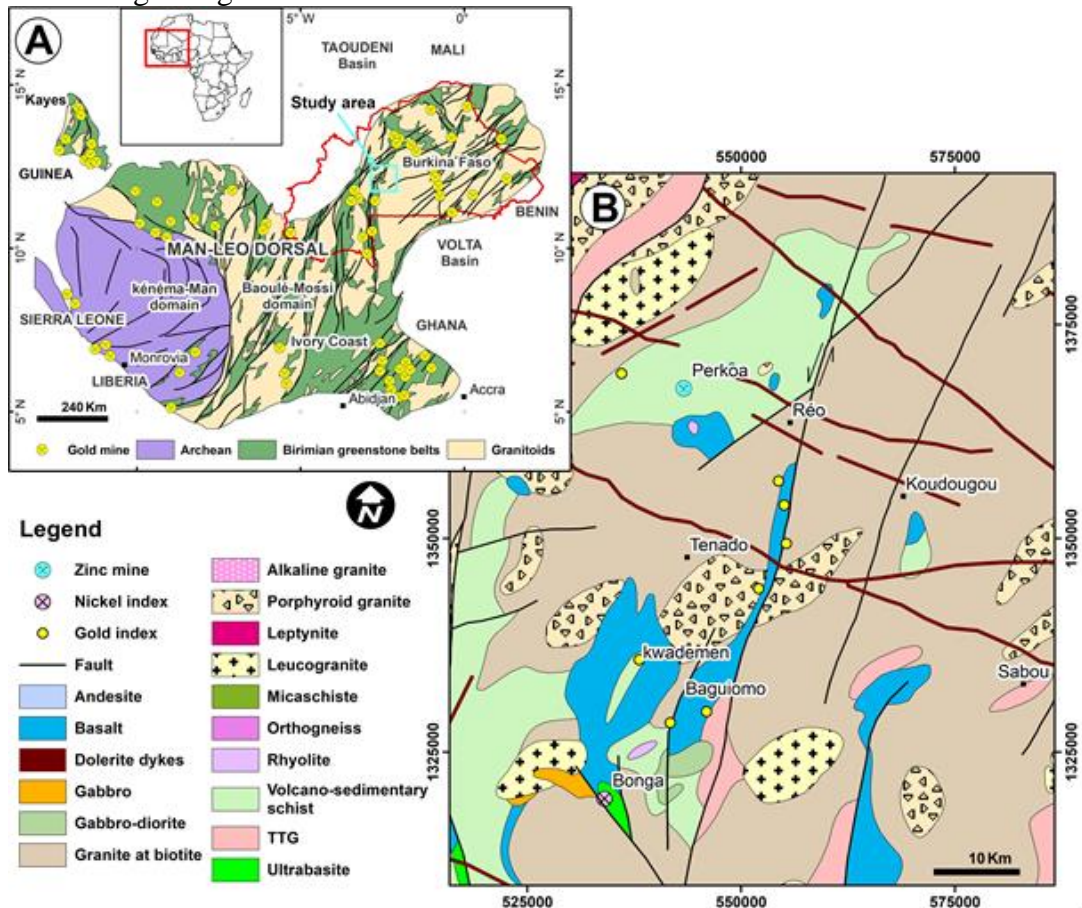
Many studies of the West African craton have shown that it is rich in metal mineralization (Milési et al., 1989, 1992; Groves et al., 1998; Markwitz et al., 2016; Goldfarb et al., 2017; Masurel et al., 2021). This craton is made up of two major dorsals: the Reguibat dorsal to the north and the Man/Leo dorsal to the south. In the Man/Leo Ridge, Archean formations lie to the east and Paleoproterozoic formations to the west (Fig.1-A). The Paleoproterozoic formations in this western part of the dorsal are still called Birimian formations (Kitson, 1918; Junner, 1940; Bonhomme, 1962; Bessoles, 1977) and are affected by the Eburnian orogeny (Feybesse et al., 2006). These Birimian formations consist of alternating greenstone belts cut by different generations of granitoids (Hirdes et al., 1996; Doumbia et al., 1998; Gasquet et al., 2003; Baratoux et al., 2011; Ganne et al., 2014).

Most orogenic gold deposits in the Man/Léo dorsal and particularly in Burkina Faso are contained in greenstone belts (Castaing et al., 2003; Giovenazzo et al., 2018). In view of the mining potential offered by these Birimian volcano-sedimentary belts, we turned our attention to the Boromo greenstone belt, which is already known for its gold and base metal potential.

Today, geochemical prospecting is increasingly used in mineral exploration to detect and delineate areas of geochemical anomalies of one or more metals (Carranza, 2010; Yousefi et al., 2013; Abdolmaleki et al., 2014; Darehshiri et al., 2015; Shine et al., 2022). There are several methods of geochemical investigation, depending on the element to be investigated. These include litho-geochemistry, soil geochemistry and stream sediment geochemistry for metal detection. Although stream sediment geochemistry can be used to search for metal anomalies, this type of sample remains transported, and it is imperative to involve other geochemical prospecting methods such as litho-geochemistry. Indeed, the difficulty in analyzing stream

sediment data lies in determining the source from which it originates (Ndome Effoudou-Priso et al., 2014; Sorokina, 2019; Noa Tang et al., 2020). The availability of outcropping rock samples near stream sediment sampling points for litho-geochemical analysis would be a major asset in delineating areas with high gold potential.

This study is carried out in the central-western region of Burkina Faso, which was the subject of a geochemical prospecting study in 1982. This work led to the discovery of the Perkoa Zn-Ag sulphide cluster deposit (Franceschi and Ouédraogo, 1982). Since then, other initiatives have followed (Kabore et al., 1989), but to date no major gold (Au) deposit has been discovered in the area. The aim of this work is to delineate zones of interest with high gold potential in the Central West region, in order to guide future prospecting with a view to discovering a large gold deposit. To achieve this, we used stream sediment data and total rock geochemistry (litho-geochemistry). We discuss the origin of gold in stream sediments.



**Figure 1.** (A) Modified litho-structural and metallogenic map of the Léo dorsal, after Milesi et al. (2004) and (B) Synthesis geological map of Burkina Faso, modified after Castaing et al. (2003).

## 2. Regional geological context

The geology of the central-western region is dominated by granitoids and the volcano-sedimentary formations of the Boromo greenstone belt (Fig.1B). The combination of granitoids and volcano-sedimentary belt is late cut by dolerite dykes (Castaing et al., 2003; Dahl et al., 2018). The portion of the Boromo greenstone belt that crosses the study area in the Tenado commune is composed of volcanic rocks, volcano-sedimentary rocks and sedimentary rocks.

The volcanic series is composed of basalt, andesite, dacite and rhyolite. There is also the presence of ultrabasite, most often associated with gabbros (Béziat et al., 2000). The sedimentary formations include metagrites, tuffaceous schists, sericite schists and manganiferous black schists (Schwartz and Melcher, 2003; Chevremont et al., 2003). Intercalations of gabbros, Rhyolites, dolerites and diorites are found throughout the volcano-sedimentary package. These assemblages are organized into greenstone belts by two generations of granitoids in the study area, The first generation is represented by the TTG (Tonalite Trondhjemite Granodiorite) series, which outcrops mainly in the extreme NW and SE of the study area, Their emplacement locally induces amphibolite-facies metamorphism at the contacts with the Boromo greenstone belt formations (Chevremont et al., 2003). The second generation, consisting of biotite granite, porphyritic biotite granite and leucogranite, outcrops throughout the study area (Chevremont et al., 2003; Ouedraogo et al., 2003). All these formations are later cut by NW-SE trending dolerite dykes. Structurally, three deformation phases (D1 to D3) are accepted (Feybesse et al., 1990 ; Baratoux et al., 2011; Metelka et al., 2011). The first phase of deformation (D1) is marked by a general NW-SE shortening and oriented the greenstone belt in a N-S to NE-SW direction. The second deformation phase (D2) is characterized by predominantly sinister shear zones, followed by the final deformation phase (D3). The structures of D3 are of the type : steeply dipping crenulation cleavage, trending E-W on average, and reverse faults dipping shallowly to the north or south. These deformation structures have given rise to a number of hydrothermal deposits in the central west, including the Zn-Ag volcanogenic sulfide cluster (VMS) polymetallic deposit at Perkoa and the Kwademen gold deposit.

## 3. Methodology

Total rock geochemistry sampling was carried out on outcrops observed during the mapping phase on a regional scale of 1:200,000. The rocks sampled were conditioned at the BUMIGEB (Bureau of Mines and Geology of Burkina Faso), then underwent treatments ranging from crushing to grinding. The powders obtained from this process are pulverized, sieved to a fine mesh of around 75 microns and then digested with acid (aqua regia) for

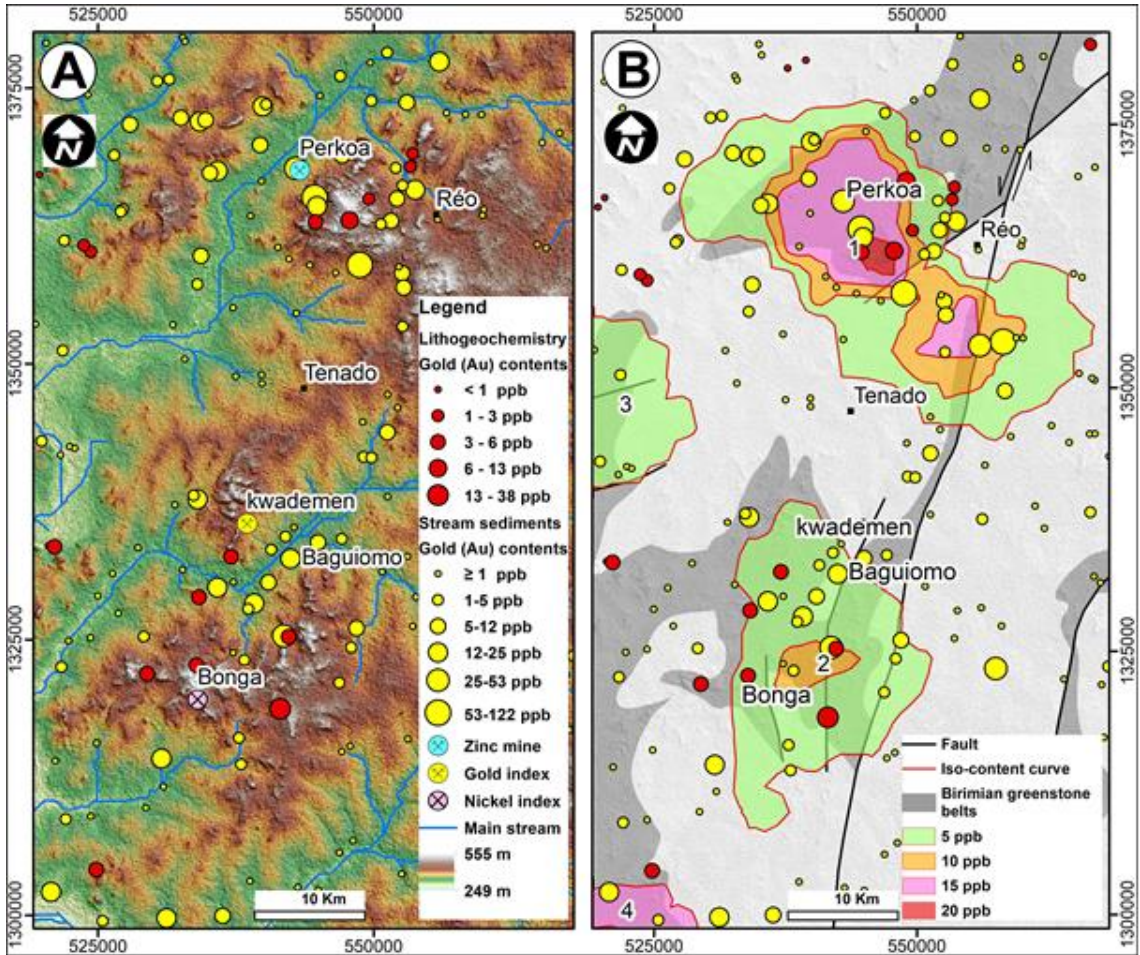
at least an hour in a graphite heating block. After cooling, the resulting solution is diluted to 12.5 ml with demineralized water, mixed and analyzed by inductively coupled plasma-atomic emission spectrometry (ICP-AES). In all, we acquired 32 results from these analyses, which are expressed as a percentage of oxide weight for major elements and in ppb (part per billion) for trace elements and the various metals analyzed (Au, Ag, Zn, Ni, Cu, etc.).

In addition to these total rock geochemistry data, we also used stream sediment data, numbering 284 stream sediment analysis results. As far as stream sediments are concerned, the work was carried out on a regional scale, with several samplings of fine material (1 to 3 kg) deposited in river beds or on banks. The sampling grid is 10 km, i.e. four samples per km<sup>2</sup>. These samples were sieved in the BUMIGEB laboratory to a mesh size of 63 µm and then sent for ICP AES analysis to the BRGM laboratory in Orleans, France. The detection limit in these analyses is of the order of 1 ppb. The geochemical anomaly area delineation method used in this work is the iso-tenor or iso-contour delineation method. It was carried out in ArcMap 10.8 mapping software using the geostatistical interpolation method based on the Kriging technique.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Spatial distribution of chemical anomalies**

The spatial distribution of gold grades in the stream sediment results shows several anomalous gold zones that stand out due to their high concentrations. Most of the high gold grades are isolated and distributed along the banks of the various rivers (Mouhoun, Nazinon and Sissili) drained by their watersheds, with a topography that varies widely in altitude (240 to 480 m), resulting in significant alluvial input (Fig.2A).



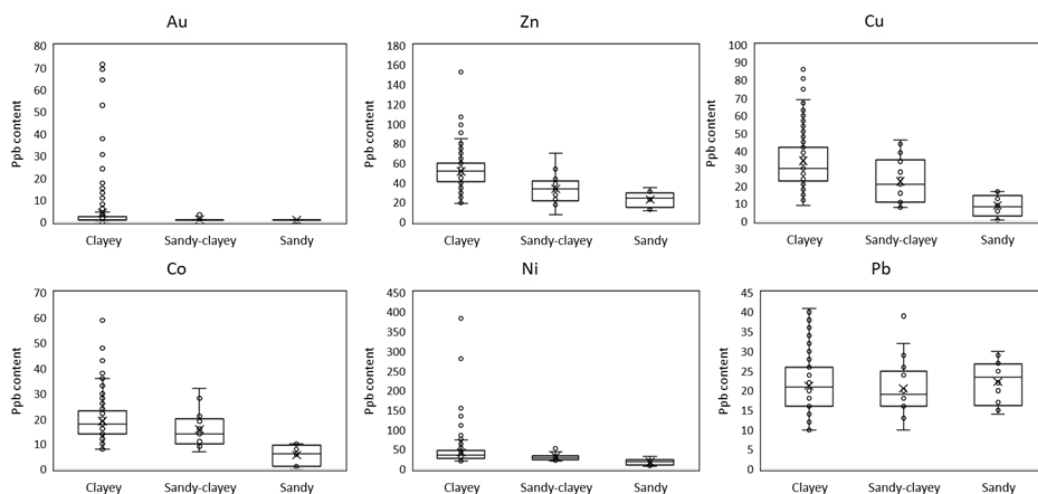
**Figure 2.** A) Map showing the distribution of gold grades from river sediments and litho-geochemical data against the background of the Digital Elevation Model (DEM). B) Map of delineated Au anomaly zones.

Analytical data from stream sediments show two (2) major gold (Au) anomaly areas (Fig.2B). Most of the four anomaly areas are located in the Boromo greenstone belt. Within these four zones, two (2) anomaly areas stand out from the rest, namely anomaly areas 1 and 2 respectively located in the vicinity of the Perkoã mine and the Kwademen artisanal mine by their high grades of certain elements such as: Au, Zn, Cu and Ni (Table I).

**Table I. Anomaly zone 1 and 2 stream sediment data table**

Samples	OA482	SR388	OA480	SM408	OA489	SR385	OA491	SR436	SM329	SR384	YI036	SM324	YI040	SM328	KS9	KS13	SM383	SM387	SM391	KS11	OA452	SM381	SM385	OA450	JG7	JG3	JG5	OA448	JG9
Anomaly	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2	Zone 2
Material	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey	clayey
Long	-2.59	-2.53	-2.59	-2.63	-2.67	-2.52	-2.63	-2.68	-2.52	-2.52	-2.6	-2.46	-2.49	-2.51	-2.66	-2.65	-2.63	-2.65	-2.67	-2.65	-2.61	-2.61	-2.64	-2.61	-2.62	-2.55	-2.56	-2.63	-2.57
Lat	12.35	12.33	12.34	12.42	12.37	12.35	12.39	12.41	12.29	12.37	12.37	12.21	12.25	12.27	11.97	11.91	12.03	12.01	12.03	11.97	12.08	12.05	12.02	12.07	11.99	11.99	11.98	12.06	11.95
<b>Majors elements (wt%)</b>																													
SiO <sub>2</sub>	50.5	52.2	59.9	60.3	62	62.5	63.7	63.7	63.8	66	66.5	76.7	76.7	78.5	46.6	51.7	59	59.1	59.1	60	61.1	61.4	61.4	62.7	63.4	65.4	65.5	79.3	79.9
Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	14.7	16.1	11.9	12.9	12.8	10.8	12.7	13.8	12.4	10.7	9.3	10.8	9.6	11.2	20	16	15.8	16.3	15.2	13.6	12.6	12.4	12.6	12	11	11	11.7	10.5	8.7
Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	8.2	8.6	7.6	6	4.3	5.7	5	3.9	6.2	5.5	5.5	4.2	6.3	3.9	9.7	6.6	6.8	3.8	5.7	6	5.9	5.6	6.1	6	6.4	5.7	5.8	3.5	1.7
CaO	2.6	1.1	2.4	1.4																1.8		1.5	1.4		2.2	1.1	1.3		
K <sub>2</sub> O	0.8	1.1	0.7	0.8	1.1			1.3	0.9	0.8	0.9	1	0.7	0.9	1.2	1.1	1	1.2	1.3	0.9	0.9	0.9	1	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.8	1	0.8
MnO	0.23	0.17	0.15	0.09	0.13	0.11	0.08	0.05	0.12	0.09	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.13	0.09	0.1	0.07	0.15	0.06	0.13	0.06	0.07	0.17	0.09	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.04
TiO <sub>2</sub>	1.08	1.69	1.16	1.16	1.42	1.44	1.23	1.34	1.24	1.52	1.25	1.17	1.55	1.34	1.31	1.32	1.32	1.46	1.38	1.08	1.38	1.27	1.3	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.23	1.19	1.18
Au (ppb)	9	4.5	15.3	16.2	15.3	5.6	6.8	6.1	8.4	4.3	37.7	7.7	38	7.8	1	3.3	8.8	1.5	24.2	4.2	1	16.9	13.6	4.4	30.7	5.3	4.7	4.4	2.8
<b>Traces elements (ppm)</b>																													
Co	48	36	34	25	20	25	21	16	25	28	18	18	18	16	31	31	23	19	33	17	27	17	21	28	18	13	13	16	8
Ni	70	79	56	76	34	42	48	38	38	56	30	30	31	32	135	282	68	43	55	54	40	56	79	48	68	47	49	37	23
Cu	76	83	81	41	31	54	34	28	58	60	50	34	41	23	58	42	61	34	52	55	38	50	54	40	51	43	42	30	21
Zn	80	99	66	59	52	55	60	49	68	58	43	40	41	39	82	52	61	59	62	41	63	50	60	64	42	40	43	35	20
Y	39	57	40	39	48	44	41	45	40	34	44	42	39	47	46	46	41	52	46	33	52	38	38	42	30	31	32	37	46
Nb	20	32	23	26	31	28	26	34	26	21	20	31	22	38	26	31	27	39	29	21	33	26	25	26	22	26	24	30	33
Ba	414	332	272	323	443	359	471	455	305	267	269	388	237	348	438	387	414	502	539	356	372	345	378	379	220	261	295	409	272
La	30	43	27	40	55	32	40	50	34	22	27	44	25	47	47	53	45	69	50	29	53	33	34	37	21	26	26	40	41
Ce	58	66	45	64	92	53	68	79	59	36	67	87	63	99	72	87	59	122	86	41	97	41	48	67	27	36	36	67	78
Pb	10	18	10	17	15	13	<10	17	13	10	19	20	14	19	13	12	13	22	16		26	11	12	23				21	
Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub> /TiO <sub>2</sub>	13.61	9.53	10.26	11.12	9.01	7.5	10.33	10.3	10	7.04	7.44	9.23	6.19	8.36	15.27	12.12	11.97	11.16	11.01	12.59	9.13	9.76	9.69	10.17	9.17	9.32	9.51	8.82	7.37
SiO <sub>2</sub> /Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	3.44	3.24	5.03	4.67	4.84	5.79	5.02	4.62	5.15	6.17	7.15	7.1	7.99	7.01	2.33	3.23	3.73	3.63	3.89	4.41	4.85	4.95	4.87	5.23	5.76	5.95	5.6	7.55	9.18
Cr/Ni	2.24	1.7	2.21	2.62	2.21	2.19	2.02	2.42	2.13	1.63	2.83	2.03	2.23	1.94	1.3	1.16	2.15	2.07	1.96	2.46	1.68	2.07	2.47	1.56	2.56	2.3	2.57	1.89	2.35

Overall, it can be seen that stream sediment samples, mainly of the clay type, are the most mineralized in Au, Cu, Zn and Ni compared with sandy samples (Fig.03). In tropical environments, alteration of the mafic (basalt) to intermediate (andesite) formations of the greenstone belt will yield mainly clay samples. Whereas in granitic formations, feldspar and ferromagnesian minerals will tend to weather into clay (kaolinite, gibbsite etc.) and quartz, being highly resistant to weathering, will be associated with clays (sandy-clay material). In addition, these clays will disperse and, in the end, the quartz grains will concentrate to form essentially sandy material. Despite all this, it is difficult to establish a direct correlation between the origin of clays and the parent rock from which they are derived. Moreover, in terms of metal content, there is contamination linked to artisanal gold panning. As a result, the levels of various metals in stream sediments are often contrasted in relation to certain types of material sampled.



**Figure 3.** Moustache box of the distribution of various metals in stream sediments

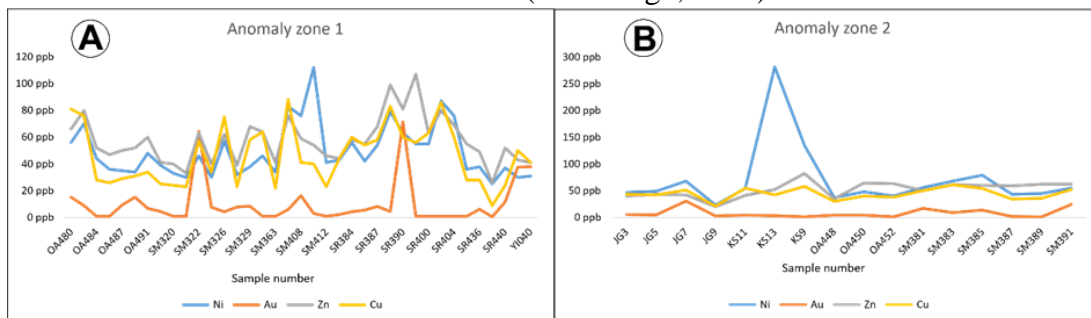
The spatial distribution of gold (Au) grades from total rock geochemistry shows that anomaly areas 1 and 2 are zones of high gold potential (Fig.2B). Pearson correlation coefficients calculated from stream sediment data from anomaly zones 1 and 2 show an intercorrelation between certain metals (Table II). A strong correlation is observed between Ni-Cr and Cu-Co-Zn, while gold (Au) shows a weak correlation with Co, Cu and Zn.

**Table II.** Correlation matrix between metal contents from zone 1 and 2 stream sediment data (n= 53)

	Au	Co	Cr	Cu	Ni	Pb	Zn
Au	1	0.24	-0.04	0.18	-0.06	-0.15	0.08
Co		1	0.43	0.75	0.41	0.04	0.75
Cr			1	0.38	0.83	-0.11	0.32
Cu				1	0.32	-0.18	0.72

Ni	1	-0.15	0.31
Pb		1	0.25
Zn			1

Anomaly zone 1 (01), located in the Perkoa locality, has Cu values ranging from 1.76 to 326.31 ppb, followed by Ni, Zn and Au respectively, with values up to 112 ppb (Fig.4A). In zone one (01), a complex of Zn-Pb-Ag-Au anomalies has been described at the Perkoa zinc mine within the differentiated volcano-sedimentary formations of the greenstone belt (Kabore et al., 1989). In the second anomaly area (2), Ni levels stand out with values as high as 282 ppb (Fig.4B). Bouga is located within this zone, where nickel showings are reported in a set of Ni-Co-Cr anomalies resulting from peridotite alteration, extending over a small area (Kabore et al., 1989). Furthermore, in this zone (02) another set of Au-Cu-Ag anomalies has been reported at the Kwademen artisanal mine and has been described as related to quartz veins or silicified zones mineralized in sulfide and Au (Ouedraogo, 1988).



**Figure 4.** A) Gold grade distribution in Anomaly Zone 1;  
B) Gold grade distribution in Anomaly Zone 2.

## 4.2 Geochemistry of volcanic units

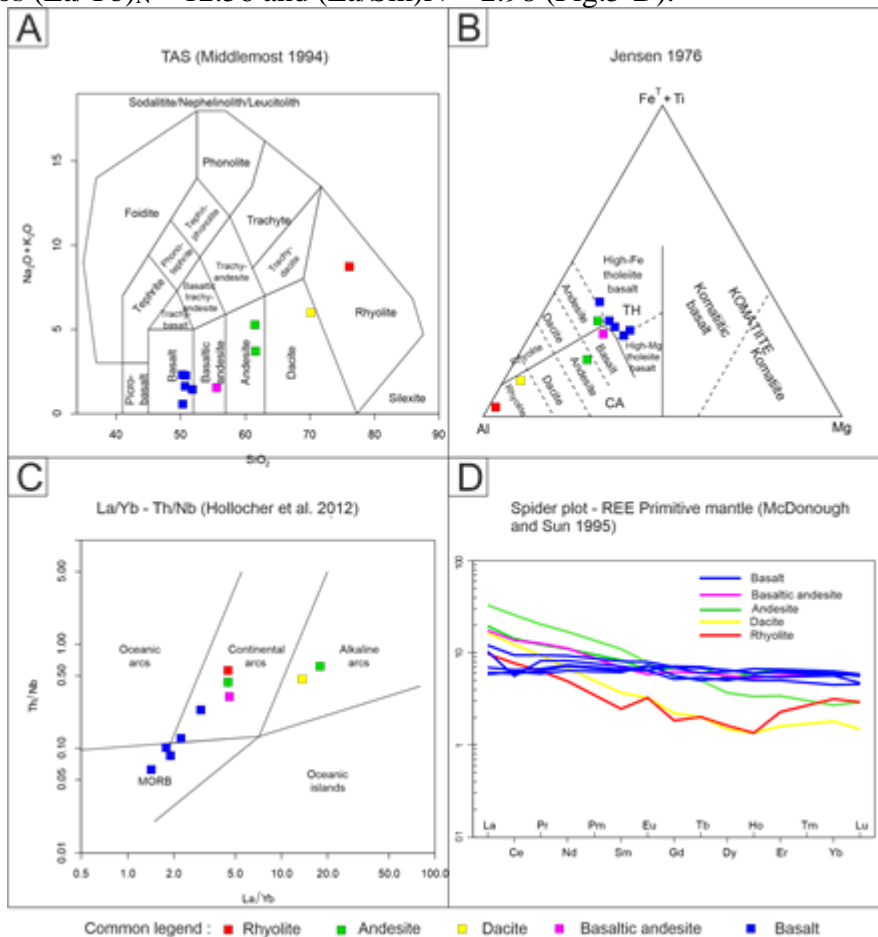
The total rock geochemistry of the various volcanic units (Table III) reveals that the volcanic formations present in the study area range from basic to acidic in composition, passing through intermediate terms according to the TAS diagram (Middlemost, 1994) (Fig.5-A). These volcanic formations are essentially basalts, basaltic andesites, andesites, dacites and rhyolites. Basalt flows are characterized by variable SiO<sub>2</sub> contents ranging from 45.09 to 50.88% (Fig.5-A). In Jensen's (1976) diagram, basalts show an affinity for the iron-rich tholeiitic series, while andesites, dacites and rhyolites are placed in the calc-alkaline series (Fig.5-B). The geodynamic environment of these basalts lies within the mid-ocean ripple field (MORB) based on the diagram of Hollocher et al. (2012) and the calc-alkaline series formations lie within the island arc field (Fig.5-C).



**Table III.** Table of rock geochemistry data on volcanic formations

SAMPLE	E0092	MD0304	MD0321	MD0339	MD0381	MD0448	PC0297	JM0413	JM0427	JM0453	MD0340	MD034A	MD034B
Litho	Dacite	Andesite	Andesite	Basalte	Rhyolite	Epiclastite	Basalt	Ultrabasite	Basalt	Basalt	Basalt	Basalt	Basalt
Long	-2.5	-2.5	-2.7	-2.5	-2.6	-2.8	-2.2	-2.6	-2.7	-2.6	-2.48	-2.5	-2.63
Lat	12.4	12.3	12.1	12.4	12.3	12.1	12.3	11.9	12	12	12.27	12.38	12.07
TiO <sub>2</sub>	0.2	0.7	1.2	1.2	0	0.3	1.3	4.6	0.6	1.1	1.08	1.23	1.13
Al <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	15.3	15.8	14.7	15.2	13.8	10	17.2	61.7	13.7	14.2	14.3	15.33	14.32
Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	3.1	6.4	11.5	12.9	0.6	3.1	10.4	1.3	9.6	12.7	12.68	11.84	12.16
MnO	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.19	0.2
MgO	0.7	4.2	3.8	5.5	0	0.3	5.5	0.2	3.8	4.5	6.81	6.73	3.09
CaO	3.8	5.1	8.5	12.4	0.5	0.9	9.7	4.7	13.6	13.1	10.58	11.74	16.46
Na <sub>2</sub> O	5.4	3.4	3.2	1.4	4.7	2.3	2.9	0.6	1.3	1.3	1.94	2.19	0.45
K <sub>2</sub> O	0.6	1.8	0.3	0.2	3.8	2	0.5	1.6	0.2	0.1	0.27	0.11	0.08
P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	<0.01	0	0.2	<0.01	0.1	0.1	0.11	0.08	0.12
LOI	1.1	1.6	1.4	0.5	1.2	2.8	0.9	3.4	2.8	1.9	2.44	0.59	2.87
Total	98.9	98.4	98.6	99.5	98.8	97.2	99.1	96.6	97.2	98.1	97.56	99.41	97.13
Traces elements (ppm)													
Co	4.3	26.4	44.4	60.9	10.2	13.3	39	0	0	0	56	50.7	40.3
Cr	139	121	3	29	6	13	10	0	0	0	40	7	10
Ag	8	46	15	38	97	20	21	51	16	14	30	46	12
Au (ppb)	13	3	5	3	6	6	3	38	5	6	9	2	6
Cu	15.9	14.6	13	97.8	3.5	3.8	28	17.1	39.2	69	106.27	154	9.79
Mo	2.3	0.4	1.4	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.8	3.8	0.7	0.8	0.42	0.26	0.59
Pb	0.6	10.3	3.9	3.1	54.3	11.9	3.2	9.7	17.9	21.4	11.98	3.48	5.13
Zn	32.4	73	31	15.4	49.6	10.3	47.8	4.4	19.9	39	39.9	34.1	26.1
Ni	9	101.4	14.4	132.2	1.1	13.6	25.3	11.7	44	55.1	143.5	109.8	27.6
Nb	2.8	5.5	4.1	3.2	30.8	3	6.9	17.8	4.1	3.4	2.5	3.5	3.4
Th	1.3	3.4	1.7	0.2	17.4	4.6	0.7	3.5	1.4	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.8
La	10.6	21.4	12.6	4	6.3	28.8	11	33.6	11.4	6.7	4.5	3.8	7.9
Ce	20.7	43	24.2	9.9	12.9	47.4	25.1	54.4	22.9	9.4	11	10.4	15.9
Pr	2.4	5.2	3.1	1.6	1.6	5.9	3.3	7.9	3.2	2.1	1.71	1.5	2.4
Nd	8.5	21.3	13.8	8.9	6.2	21.6	15.3	34.6	13.9	10.3	9.2	8	11.6
Sm	1.5	4.5	3.4	2.6	1	4.1	3.2	5.1	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.5	3.3
Eu	0.5	1.2	1	1.1	<0.5	0.9	1.4	0.5	0.9	1	0.99	1.14	1.23
Gd	1.2	3	3.7	3.8	1	2.4	3.7	3.1	3.4	3.9	2.83	3.11	3.84
Tb	0.2	0.5	0.7	0.6	0.2	0.3	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.54	0.5	0.68
Dy	1	2.5	3.6	4.2	1.1	1.5	4	2.9	3.8	4.3	3.39	3.61	4.39
Ho	0.2	0.5	0.9	1	0.2	0.3	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.9	0.83	0.75	0.88
Er	0.7	1.5	2.9	2.9	1	0.9	2.4	2	2.5	2.7	2.38	2.21	2.78
Yb	0.8	1.2	2.8	2.8	1.4	0.7	2.2	2.9	2.5	2.5	2.5	2	2.63
Lu	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.32	0.31	0.38
Eu/Eu*	1.07	1.02	0.84	1.03	0.75	0.87	1.28	0.40	0.85	0.90	1.09	1.25	1.05
(La/Yb) <sub>N</sub>	9.62	12.56	3.06	0.99	3.18	28.00	3.34	7.83	3.15	1.81	1.23	1.29	2.04
(La/Sm) <sub>N</sub>	4.43	2.98	2.32	0.96	3.95	4.40	2.15	4.13	2.55	1.45	1.04	0.95	1.5

Rare Earth spectra normalized to the primitive mantle (McDonough and Sun, 1995) show a flat profile for basalts and this translates into low fractionation as shown by LREE/HREE ratios  $(La/Yb)_N = 0.99-1.81$ . In contrast, the spectra of basaltic andesites, dacites and andesites show low enrichment in light rare earths (LREE). However, in the calc-alkaline series, andesite shows a high fractionation rate with sufficiently high LREE/HREE ratios  $(La/Yb)_N = 12.56$  and  $(La/Sm)_N = 2.98$  (Fig.5-D).

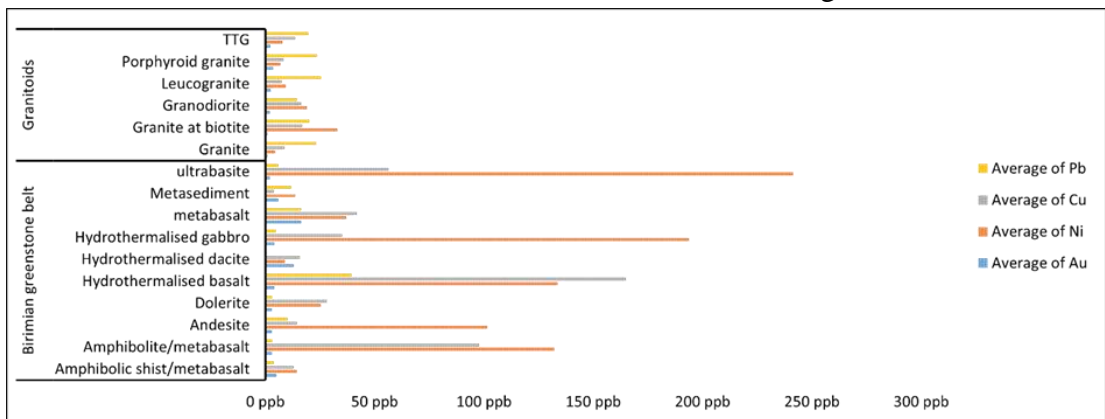


**Figure 05.** (A) Representation of volcanic formations in the diagram by Middlemost, (1994). (B) Magmatic series discrimination diagram by Jensen, (1976). (C) La/Yb vs Th/Nb binary diagram of geotectonic discrimination (Hollocher et al., 2012). (D) Rare Earth spectra of volcanic formations in the study area normalized to the Primeval Mantle (McDonough and Sun 1995).

### 4.3 The nature of the geochemical anomaly sets delineated

Litho-geochemistry essentially distinguishes two sets of geochemical anomalies depending on the family to which the indexed rocks belong: (i) a basic type located in the mafic to intermediate volcanic formations of the Boromo greenstone belt, and (ii) an acid type located in the granitoids with

high silica (62.8 to 74.69%) and potassium (2.04 to 5.54%) contents. The basic type is relatively enriched in metals. The average gold (Au) content is 8.5 ppb in the greenstone formations versus 1.35 ppm in the granitoids, while the average Cu content is 36.15 ppb in the greenstone belt formations versus 10.1 ppb in the granitoids. Overall, the basic type is enriched in Au, Cr, Co, Cu, Ni and Zn compared with the acidic type (Fig.6). From the point of view of metal anomaly distribution, we note that Cr and Ni are specifically much more represented in the ultramafic volcanic formations of the belt and almost absent in granitic facies. They are found in contact zones with the volcanic formations of the Birimian belt and in shear zones where deformation allows mineralizing fluids to remobilize towards these granitic formations. On the other hand, Pb is more prevalent in the granitoids, with levels ranging from 5.5 to 28.6 ppb, but is low or non-existent in the volcanic formations of the greenstone belt.



**Figure 6.** Histogram of average metal content in the main geological formations

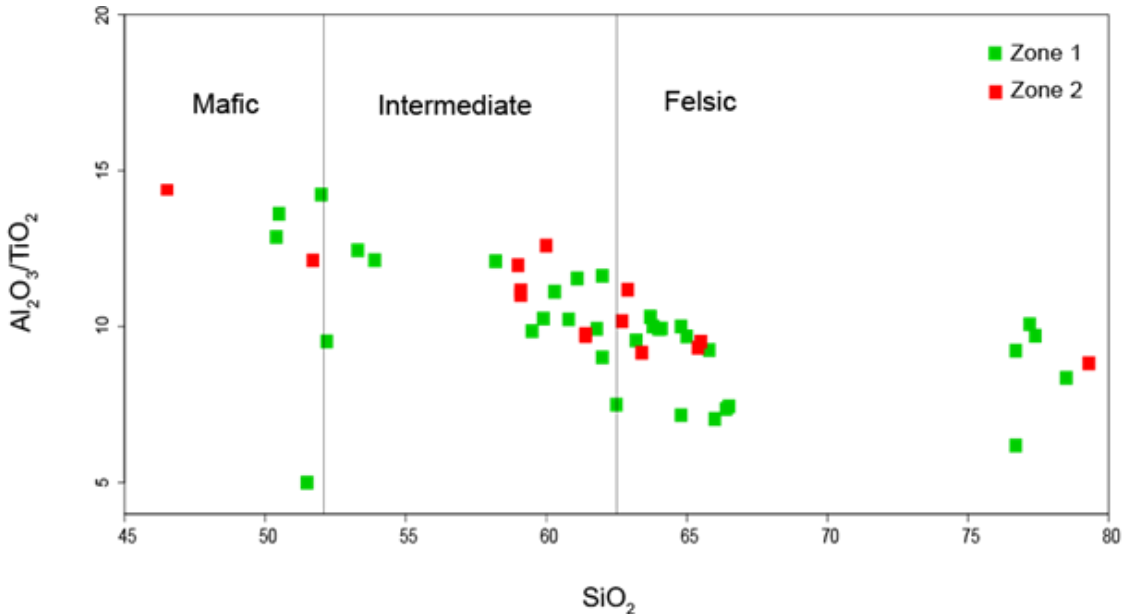
## 5. Discussion

The Birimian formations host several gold deposits considered to be orogenic gold deposits (Milési et al., 1989, 1992; Groves et al., 1998; Markwitz et al., 2016; Goldfarb et al., 2017; Masurel et al., 2021). Most of these deposits are hydrothermal, i.e. linked to the circulation of fluids located in structural faults (Groves et al., 1998). They are mostly syn- to tardi-tectonic (Milési et al., 1989, 1992; Bourges et al., 1998; Markwitz et al., 2016; Goldfarb et al., 2017; Masurel et al., 2021). In fact, mapping and mineral exploration work in the central-western region of Burkina Faso show mostly vein-type mineralization with quartz veins and sulfides. In the discussion that follows, we first discuss the origin of the mineralized sediments and the metal fertility of the formations surrounding these sediments. We then examine the different occurrences of mineralization in the main zones.

## 5.1 Probable origin of stream sediments

Stream sediment data show a pronounced enrichment of Au, Cu, Ni and Zn in clay-type samples, to the detriment of sandy-type samples. The sandy-clay type is low in metal mineralization. This is mainly due to the fact that most of the samples tested in the greenstone belt formations were not only rich in gold, Cu, Ni and Zn, but also yielded clay-type sediments through supergene alteration. However, the origin of the clays is not clearly established, as they may originate from greenstone belt formations and/or granitoid formations. Studies of granite formations show that they weather under the influence of climate to produce sands and clays (Cullers, 1988). However, several studies have already demonstrated the importance of stream sediment sample grain size for prospecting (Ndome Effoudou-Priso et al., 2014; Manuela Vinha G. Silva et al., 2016; Shruti et al., 2017; Sorokina, 2019). Indeed, fine fractions such as clays/limons in sediments are capable of concentrating and transporting many elements associated with most types of mineral deposits (Chandrajith et al., 2001; Manuela Vinha G. Silva et al., 2016; Martinčić et al., 1990; Melo and Fletcher, 1999; Young et al., 2013). In Sri Lanka, for example, the work of Chandrajith et al. (2001) indicates that grain size fractions below 177  $\mu\text{m}$  are considered a preferable fraction to coarse (sand) for geochemical exploration studies of stream sediments in tropical terrains with high content of gold and various other metals.

Analysis of stream sediment data for immobile major elements and trace elements such as Ti, Fe, Al, Th, Sc, Co and Zr are good indicators for investigating the source of sediments (Taylor and McLennan, 1985).  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{TiO}_2$  ratios are most often exploited to search for source rock, due to the fact that they are considered immobile elements during surface weathering (Hayashi et al., 1997; He et al., 2010; Shao et al., 2016). The Al /Ti ratio increases proportionally with Si (Hayashi et al., 1997). According to Hayashi et al. (1997),  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{TiO}_2$  ratios increase from 3 to 8, 821 and 2170 respectively in mafic, intermediate and felsic igneous source rocks. In the present study,  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{TiO}_2$  ratios ranged from 4 to 14 in anomaly zone one (01) for samples with high Au grades. In anomaly zone two (02),  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3/\text{TiO}_2$  ratios range from 6 to 14, also for high Au grades. These results show that the clayey sediments rich in gold and other metals originate mainly from the basic to intermediate magmatic formations of the Birimian belt (Fig.7).



**Figure 7.** Binary diagram illustrating  $Al_2O_3/TiO_2$  vs.  $SiO_2$  ratios of stream sediments in Anomaly Zones 1 and 2 from Le Bas et al. (1986)

In addition to the high gold, Cr and Ni contents in stream sediment samples, anomaly zones one (01) and two (02) delineated confirm this provenance trend. Indeed, ultrabasic rocks produce sediments with high Cr and Ni contents, while low Cr concentrations indicate a felsic origin (Wrafter and Graham, 1989; Garver et al., 1996; Armstrong-Altrin et al., 2004). Cr and Ni concentrations are particularly high in anomaly zone two (02), with Cr/Ni ratios ranging from 1.16 to 2.6 (see Table II).

## 5.2 Fertile gold formations

The geodynamic context of the basaltic formations of the West African Craton (WAC) is defined by two groups of authors. A first group of authors (Zonou et al., 1985; Ama Salah et al., 1996; Béziat et al., 2000; Baratoux et al., 2011; Eglinger et al., 2017; Wane et al., 2018) propose that the WAC basalts formed in a mid-ocean rift or island arc context. The second group of authors propose an oceanic shelf context with mantle plume activity (Abouchami et al., 1990; Boher et al., 1992; Tayllor et al., 1992; Pouclet et al., 2006, Lompo, 2009; Augustin and Gaboury, 2017). Lompo (2009) defined three types of tholeiites for the WAC formations ranging from PTH1 to PTH3. For the geodynamic context, he proposes an oceanic basin formed by subsidence. In view of what has been said above, we propose that the basalts of the Tenado region are linked to emplacement in an oceanic plateau context in connection with mantle plume activity; as this type of basalt displays

chondrite-normalized rare-earth flat spectra similar to those of the West African craton (Lompo, 2009, Augsutin and Gaboury, 2017).

This type of basalt is a primary source of gold and various metals (Augustin and Gaboury, 2017; Ouyia et al., 2022). In the same vein, earlier work by Chevremont et al. (2003) on the Koudougou square degree in the Perkoa locality showed that in the anomalies of the basaltic-type assemblage (basalt), Au, Cu and Mg enrichment distinguishes it from other volcanic formations (Fig. 6). This fertility of basalt in gold and other metals has also been reported in the nearby Houndé greenstone belt (Augustin and Gaboury, 2017). In the previous paragraph, we showed that gold-rich clay sediments are derived from basic (basalt) to intermediate (andesite, dacite) rocks. What's more, our litho-geochemical data show that basalts and intermediate rocks are fertile in gold and various metals. Based on all this, we propose that the source of gold in sediments is related to basic to intermediate rocks.

### **5.3 Evidence of zones with high gold and base metal potential**

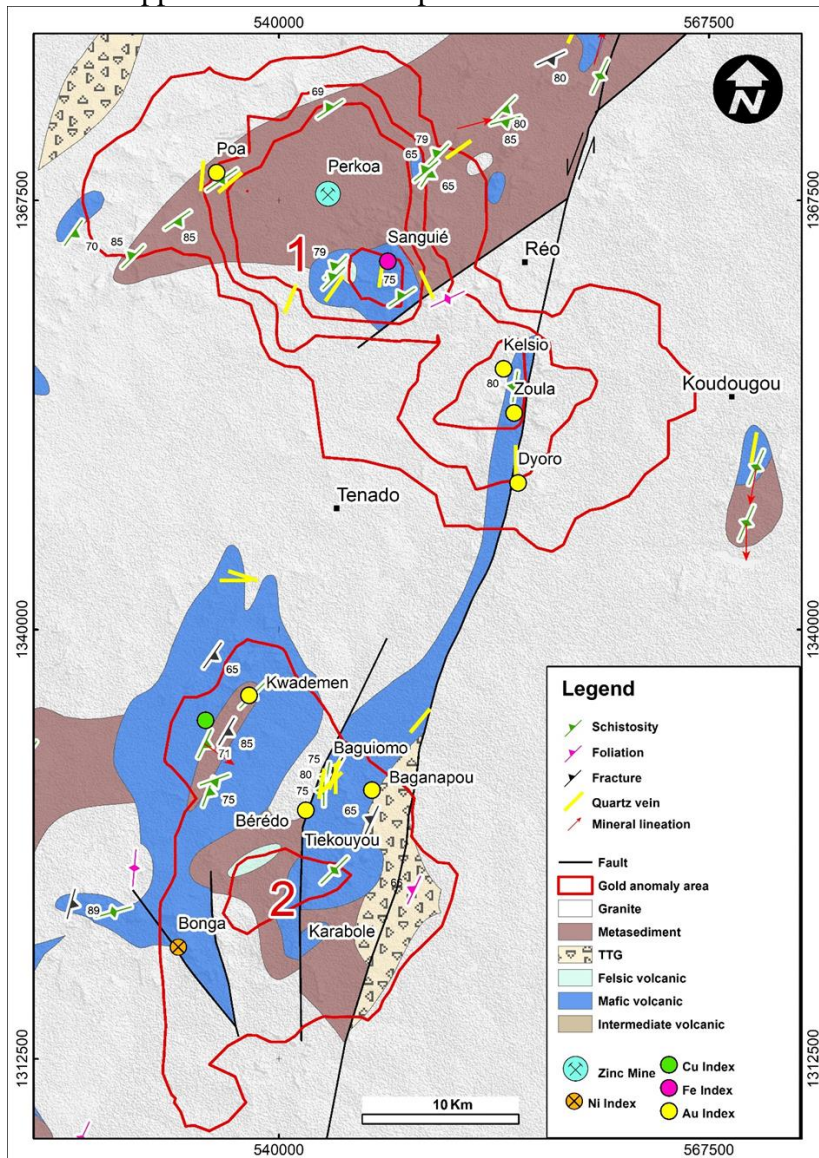
#### **a) Anomaly zone one (01)**

This zone contains four (04) mapped gold showings in the localities of Kelsio, Zoula, Poa and Dyoro (Fig.8). In addition to these gold showings, Perkoa is a zinc mine. The Perkoa deposit is a polymetallic Zn-Ag volcanogenic sulfide cluster (VMS) (Napon, 1988; Ouedraogo, 1989; Milési et al., 1989; Schwartz and Melcher, 2001, 2003). In contrast, in the four (04) gold showings cited, mineralization is mainly vein-type and located in the shear zone. It takes the form of disseminated mineralization with a strong presence of sulfides in silicified zones (Ouedraogo, 1989; Kabore et al., 1989; Lompo, 1991; Chevremont et al., 2003). In all four (4) zones, gold is mined artisanally (orpaillage) in quartz veinlets/veins along a N-S to NE-SW trending structure in highly sheared metavolcanic and metasedimentary host rocks.

#### **b) Anomaly zone two (02)**

A variety of metal showings (Cu, Ni and Au) were recorded in this anomaly area. A total of five (05) showings were recorded, covering the localities of Kwademan, Baguimo, Bérédo, Bonga and Baganapou (Fig.8). The Bonga showing shows Ni mineralization in a zone of supergene alteration in lateritic and bauxitic formations (Kabore et al., 1989; Ouedraogo, 1989). In contrast, the Kwademen deposit shows occurrences of gold (Ouedraogo, 1989; Lompo et al., 1991) and base metals (Cu and Mn) (Lompo, 1991; Ilboudo, 2006; Ilboudo et al., 2015). At Kwademen, prospecting for gold has shown that mineralization is linked to cataclastic quartz veins with free gold, gold-pyrite, arsenopyrite and chalcopyrite, mainly submeridian in orientation (Ouedraogo, 1989; Kabore et al., 1989; Lompo, 1991; Chevremont et al.,

2003). Gold mineralization at Baguimo occurs as pyrite-gold quartz veins or as disseminated pyrite-gold rock (Ouiya et al., 2024). The Bérédo and Baganapou gold deposits occur as vein-type mineralization, with gold finely disseminated, rarely as Stockwerk in strongly hydrothermalized host rocks. Alteration in these zones varies (silicification, sericitization, etc.), but can be much more complex in faulted contact zones with granitoids. The main shear zones show similar orientations to the first anomaly area. The main gold mining activity is gold panning, but in localities such as Baguimo, Tiekouyou and Karabole it appears to be under-explored.



**Figure 8.** Structural map and mineral showings

## Conclusion

The combination of gold content in stream sediments and litho-geochemical data has enabled us to highlight two areas of gold (Au) and miscellaneous metal anomalies. Gold content in stream sediments is mainly influenced by that of the source rock from which it is derived. High gold anomalies are found in both clayey and sandy sediments. Clayey sediments are thought to originate from basic (basalt) to intermediate (andesite-dacite) rocks, while gold-poor sandy sediments are thought to originate from granitoids.

The basic to intermediate rocks are fertile for primary gold. Anomaly zone one (01) in the northern part of the study area and anomaly zone two (02) in the southern part of the study area show occurrences of mainly gold and various metals (Zn, Cu, Ni). The evidence of these two zones thus delineated constitutes zones of major interest for gold (Au) prospecting. These zones are of greatest interest when they occur in shear zones or in close proximity to host formations affected by hydrothermal alteration. Anomaly zone two (02) is located in a shear zone.

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