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Book Review

Amadu Sesay's *Civil Wars, Child Soldiers and Post Conflict Peace Building in West Africa*, Lagos

Egbe, Olawari D.J

Political Science, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

Accepted 3 January, 2014

ABSTRACT

The end of the cold war triggered civil wars in West Africa and beyond. These wars were, in the first instance, caused by ethnic struggles for political supremacy, economic control of natural resources, issues of unemployment, poverty, etc. An immediate byproduct of all these civil wars was the ugly phenomenon of child soldiers (a combatant below 18 years) in the annals of African history. "*Civil Wars, Child Soldiers and Post-Conflict Peace Building in West Africa*" as edited by Amadu Sesay captures not only the phenomenon but their reintegration into civil society.

Chapter one, '*introduction*' by Amadu Sesay and Wale Ismail restates the collapse of central political authority in most West African countries, identifying collapse of communism and superpower withdrawal from Africa as the culprits. The Liberian (1989-2003) and Sierra Leonean (1991-2002) civil wars that ensued there caused untold consequences on sub-Saharan Africa: violation of the African Charter on the Right of the African Child, child soldier phenomenon and their atrocities, refugees resulting from internal displacement, a threatened sub-regional peace, etc (Omangi, 2007).

Child soldiering is a challenge to existing moral norms and regulations that guide the conduct of modern warfare. The reintegration of child soldiers and post conflict reconstruction and peace-building are practical issues that confront war-torn countries. However, post-war conflict management expressed by the international community and sub-regional peace providers had concentrated only on the concern for child soldiers and their atrocities without an effective programme of post conflict reconstruction and peace building (Barbara, 2006). For example, donor reluctance in providing money for disarmament and reintegration programmes sustained a fragile peace in Liberia. Donor reluctance constitutes the research question/problem of the chapter: "*Is there a relationship between the responses of the global donor community and effective peace building and reconstruction in post conflict societies?*"

The collapse of the cold war and the attendant eruption of violence and civil wars in parts of the world brought about an increased growth in the literature on child soldiering. The foremost attempt at global study of child soldiering was the UN setting up of the Machel (1996)'s expert study on the impact of armed conflict on children which noted that,

Armed conflicts in many parts of the world have turned into attacks on children, and it was shocking that thousands of young people are lyrically exploited as combatants.

In spite of the concerns expressed, child soldiering continued to pose a challenge because studies (e.g. Machel's study) failed to clearly identify different categories of child soldiers. The chapter made a clear distinction of categories A, B, and C in enabling a systematic understanding of child soldiering, especially as most child soldier reintegration efforts undermine the girl soldier (Mazurana and McKay, 2007). Conflicts in Africa account for nearly half of the global estimates of 300,000 child soldiers (*Khan, Child Soldiers*). Conflict statistics indicate that from 1960-1980 eight civil wars were fought in the continent and ten more occurred in the next decade (Marshall, 2008: 1946-2004).

The 1996 Machel study noted two modes of recruitment of child soldiers: (i) forced recruitment that entails raids, kidnapping, conscription of children, etc, from schools, orphanages, refugee camps, etc, and (ii) voluntary recruitment which involves the personal decision of children to enlist for service in either national or rebel forces. Both recruitment avenues were adopted in Liberia and Sierra-Leone civil wars. Child soldier voluntarism has been advocated for (Schmidt, 2007) and likewise contested. For example, the Graca Machel study argued that it is misleading to consider such action as voluntary, since their choice was not exercised freely. It is the social, economic, political and other circumstances that made soldiering attractive to children (Wessells, 2010).

Precedence and geography are often identified as instigating contagion effects on child soldiering, as it was in the Liberian and Sierra-Leonean crisis. Precedence refers to the known use of child soldiers in other or earlier theatres of war and the impact of such as a ready made example for subsequent recruitment of children for the war efforts either voluntarily or forcefully. Conversely, geographical contagion explains cross border recruitment or deployment of child soldiers. This is made possible by the close territorial proximity between two or more countries, theatres of conflict, loosely policed borders, regime disposition towards child soldiering, etc. These portend security paralysis in the West African region.

Celestine Bassey's (2003) authored Chapter Two, "*The Nature and Character of Civil Wars in West Africa in the 1990s*" provided a theoretical enablement to the text. The chapter argued that post-colonial states of West Africa lived next to civil conflicts, wherein ethnic cleansing, child soldiers, use of mercenaries, mass rape, starvation, etc, that were hitherto strange within the conflict arena of West Africa became commonplace in the 1990s. But what caused the numerous conflicts? Celestine Bassey identified interplay of internal factors (ethnic conflicts over power sharing, access to resources, collapse of social and economic structures, state failure, etc) and external elements (the cold war ideological rivalry) as the culprits. Elbadawi and Sambanis (*Understanding Civil War*) see solution in African conflicts through political freedom and molding a governance framework that accommodates Africa's social diversity.

Chapter two deserves two observations. First, except for a specified reading audience, the vocabulary is high-sounding and may not be written in free-flowing prose. Second, the chapter has a total of thirty indented citations that made reading laborious. The other contributors makes far fewer indented citations and also far in between. For unexplained reasons the curious reader would wonder why Amadu Sesay, the editor, in his concluding chapter made only a sentence reference to an in-depth and rich literature laden chapter as chapter two; whereas he committed more than a full paragraph to summarize the other chapters in the text.

Charles Ukeje's Chapter Three, "*State Disintegration and Civil War in Liberia*" recounts the collapse of central government under Samuel Doe by forces loyal to Charles Taylor's National Patriotic Front of Liberia (NPFL). Expectedly, Charles Taylor won the follow-up presidential election in July 1997. The new political dispensation was a welcomed respite for the citizens of Liberia that survived the civil war and ECOWAS member states that invested heavily on the Liberian peace project.

ECOWAS was an interested party in the Liberian peace process for obvious reasons: the interrupted fragile peace of the sub-region, heinous human rights abuses, and unprecedented subversion of global norms of civility during combat, notoriety for natural resource plunder, wanton destruction of social amenities, etc (*Kahn, Child Soldiers*). The option of peace accords only paid-off after the Yamoussoukro IV Accord of October, 1991, the Geneva II Peace Conference of June 1993 and the Abuja Peace Initiative of August 1995 were consummated, though, with a glaring lack in child soldier integration component (Barbara, 2006). Liberia Peace owes its enthronement and sustenance to the ECOMOG, the military wing of ECOWAS.

As an intervention force, ECOMOG operations were decimated by a pre-intervention trust from the various warring factions in Liberia. This was so because the interventionist states constituting the ECOMOG lacked the key four attributes of "legitimacy, resource capacity, sub-regional doctrine formulation and transparency required in interventionist roles". Despite the shortcomings of ECOMOG operations in Liberia, it could not be denied the credit of ending the long era of non-interference in the internal affairs of member states of the African Union. It also succeeded in moving ECOWAS from an economic co-operation to a peacekeeping organization that ensures Monrovia remained a safe haven for those fleeing from the country sides.

Liberia's civil war had a contagion effect on her neighbor, Sierra Leone. Charles Ukeje's discourse on state failure in Chapter Four, "*Sierra-Leone: The Long Descent into Civil war*" recounts RUF's devastating invasion and the reechoing success in Sierra-Leone. Like Liberia, interplay of external interests especially from Charles Taylor's NPFL and internal discomforts; ethnic suspicions, ethicised military hierarchy, unemployment, and even greed (Mateos, 2011) triggered RUF invasion on Sierra-Leone. However, the Sierra-Leone crisis took a departure from the Liberian crisis. The external "support" the RUF got from Libya's Muammar Gaddafi (*Day, 2011*), Charles Taylor, and mercenaries from Burkina-Faso, etc, are open secrets (Zoli et al., 2011). Peace was, however, restored in Sierra-Leone by the intervention of Nigerian and Guinean forces. Troop contributions from Guinea and Nigeria were compelled by subsisting bilateral defence pacts they had with Sierra Leone. Though a devastating war, the intervention of ECOMOG and UNAMSIL troops secured the

needed peace (Jaye and Amadi, 2011).

Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) defines a child as “every human being below the age of eighteen years”. Thus, child soldiering is the “inclusion or use of any person below the age of eighteen in any kind of regular or irregular force in any capacity including, but not limited to: cooks, porters, messengers and anyone accompanying such groups other than family members. It includes girls and boys recruited for forced sexual purposes and forced marriage” (UNICEF). The phenomenon not only contravenes Article 1 but also constitutes a threat to society in generating present and future agents of political instability. Their effective rehabilitation into civil society is a vital task to avoid unpleasant consequences (Wessells, 2010).

Though there are international and regional legal provisions prohibiting child soldiering, it remains a global threat (Khan, 2013).

Amadu Sesay and Wale Ismail in Chapter Five, “*The Phenomenon of Child Soldiers in Armed conflicts in Liberia and Sierra-Leone*” advance (i) a feeling of insecurity, (ii) poverty, (iii) the element of revenging the death of loved ones, family relations, (iv) the technological revolution in manufacture of small arms since 1945, and (v) a contagion effect, etc, as reasons that encouraged child soldiering in both Liberia and Sierra Leone conflicts. However, Humphreys and Weinstein (2008) argue that abduction ranks highest as a motive for child soldier participation in civil wars in Sierra Leone.

In Africa, the sanctity of children is expressed in the family, community and in the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (ACHPR). Child soldiering is a direct outcome of political highhandedness, poor management of state resources, abuse of power, and the collapse of economic and social structures. These elements account for the civil wars and phenomenon of child soldiers in Liberia and Sierra-Leone. Osman Gbla from a traditional dimension in Chapter Six titled, “*Conflict and Postwar Trauma among Child Soldiers in Liberia and Sierra-Leone*” state that Africa-specific rehabilitation measures of child soldiers are more germane vis-à-vis Western approaches that are not only perpetrator-based instead of victim-based but also ignorant of local cultures, their families and communities (Wamba, 2004; Kaplan, 2005; Edward and Honwana, 1999).

Osman Gbla identifies anxiety, depression, aggressive behaviour, bed-wetting and recurrent nightmares as visible symptoms of child soldiers (Beach, 2008; Briggs, 2012; ICRC, 2013). But achieving this feat requires the “services of traditional healers and local artisans” that would enable ex-child soldiers to undergo spiritual cleansing in their respective communities to appease their community spirits and thus heal their land. Osman Gbla was quick to indicate that child soldiers traditional reintegration are impeded by the non-acceptance of ex-child soldiers by communities that look at them as cannibals, the problem of dislocated families and communities ex-child soldiers return to, the abject poverty that pervade the communities, the poor state of infrastructure, etc (Zack-Williams, 2006; Atri and Cusimano, 2012).

In Chapter Seven, “*Multilateral Agencies and Post-conflict Peace Building in West Africa: Lessons from Liberia and Sierra-Leone*”, Osman Gbla reiterates the destructive effects of the civil wars on not only Liberia and Sierra-Leone but which also manifest in the destruction of human and material resources, the dislocation of economies, state failure, the spill over effects of the conflicts on the West African sub-region, etc (Lacina, 2006). Post-conflict peace-building efforts must, therefore, emphasize initiatives that will restore sub-regional stability and trust among West African leaders (Ero and Temin, 2004). Osman Gbla urged international (e.g. the AU, UNO) and multilateral agencies (e.g. World Bank, UNDP) working for peace in Liberia and Sierra-Leone to galvanize their efforts to ensure sub-regional peace in West Africa. However, the operations of multilateral agencies are constrained by the lack of effective co-ordination with local institutions, inadequate knowledge and understanding of local conditions, the late provision of logistics and finance, and the limited mandates of most agencies.

Amadu Sesay’s Chapter Eight, “*Conclusion*” indeed concluded the text. It presents a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of the entire text which not only gave a fair chance for a casual reader to have an insight to what the text is all about but also highlighted: (a) that there is no alternative to transparency and accountability in governance towards entire populations and not sections of it, (b) that corruption does empower but such empowerment is transient, (c) that it was worthwhile for ECOWAS to fashion out a protocol on Democracy and Good Government for the sub-region, and finally (d) that there is nothing more fundamental as in seeking for self-help (as demonstrated by the ECOMOG initiative in Liberia and Sierra Leone) when external help seems more of an illusion (Forman and Patrick, 2000). It was little wonder Amadu Sesay (2003: 220) observed in his concluding remarks that,

While the chief cold war warrior; the United States of America and its Western European allies were quick in restoring law and order in the former communist states of Eastern Europe. They have not been so enthusiastic in responding to the dire needs of countries in other parts of the world, and most especially, those in Africa. This is to be expected, since the Cold War premium that was placed on African countries also evaporated with its end. Thus, Liberia, once considered an important Cold War listening and spying out-post for America, could be easily and rather callously disowned after the cold war by Washington D. C as an African problem that required an African response.

The various chapters in the text are all identical in offering and explaining similar causes of civil war in Liberia, Sierra Leone and the rest of West Africa. However, it is never enough to identify only the causes of civil wars in these countries without proffering alternative options and actions to overcome such crises. Thus, the book is pronounced in explaining causes but proffering no alternative options and actions (Collier and Bannon, 2003).

Refugee militarisation is one subject-matter in peace and conflict discourses. It is a dangerous trend that usually emerges from the acquisition of small arms and light weapons among refugees and non-combatants (Whitman, 2000). The Sierra-Leone civil war was a direct outcome of refugee militarisation from Charles Taylor's NPFL. But refugee militarisation and internally displaced persons (IDPs) as key issues were not elaborately assessed and addressed in the entire book (Muggah, 2008). However, only Charles Ukeye's Chapter Three, "*State Disintegration and Civil War in Liberia*" devoted a paragraph (see pp.100-101) to refugee matters.

Apart from chapter two, the themes on child soldier recruitment and history of Liberia and Sierra-Leone are repeated in all other chapters. However, relevant to the development of the various chapters, but their repetition in all of the other chapters is monotonous to the reader.

Finally, the book has several abbreviations some of which are acronyms. These abbreviations and acronyms are not explained. A section on index is vital in enhancing easy accessibility to information in the text. Again, a cardinal interest of the book was on post conflict peace-building in West Africa. No contribution was so pronounced on suggestions on ending civil wars in war-torn countries.

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Full Length Research Paper

Religion, politics and war: Reflections on Mozambique's Civil War (1977-1992)

Mark Chingono

Department of Political and Administrative Studies, University of Swaziland, P. Bag 4, Kwaluseni, M201, Swaziland.

Accepted 29 January, 2014

Religious ideology, in its diverse forms and contradictory roles, was a salient feature of every stage of the Mozambican civil war from 1975-1992. First, the conflict had its roots, partly, in attempts by the state to suppress religion. Second, during the war different groups appropriated and adapted religion to explain, manage and survive the violent turmoil. Third and even more important, religious actors played a crucial role in the peace process and resolution of the conflict. This paper identifies and discusses the varied roles that religious ideology played in the civil war, and highlights the social conditions that made people give to their historical situation a religious interpretation. Based on an interdisciplinary approach, it concludes that religious ideology is a powerful political force that can only be challenged at great cost, and its implications for war and peace are, at best ambiguous, and at worst, catastrophic.

Key words: Conflict, God, ideology, peace, politics, rebel, religion, revivalism, resurgence, war.

INTRODUCTION

Since the birth of species, humankind has taken great consolation and joy in religious practice (Hubbard, 1981), which according to Huntington (1997) is 'the central defining element' of a civilization. Defying and re-defining this history, the ruling Front for the Liberation of Mozambique (Frelimo) and following other socialist countries attempted to secularize society and abolish religion, 'the opium of the people'. Religion was condemned in a slogan such as: "*Abaixabscuntarismo!* (Down with mystical and obscuring ideas!)

However, in trying to abolish religion by decree and achieve rapid development, Machel, the first president of Mozambique, threw his country on the path of war, self-destruction and underdevelopment. Indeed, Frelimo had set itself against a formidable force it was ill-prepared to confront, 'a socio-cultural force in motivation, inclusiveness, participation... sustainability in the humanitarian field' and the conduct of warfare (Pfanner, T, 2005:240). Specifically, attempts to curtail religious

practices fuelled the conflict by giving legitimacy to the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR or Renamo) rebels' claims to be fighting for religious freedoms.

Yet on the other hand, religion was a force for peace as religious conviction emboldened some groups to work for peace in their unique ways. For many of the war weary people, religion was a strategy for surviving the violent turmoil, while for a few strategically positioned; it was an avenue for accumulating wealth and power. In short, the war and religious ideology mutually fed on each other, with the war necessitating increased worship, and believers explaining the war in religious terms.

This paper, a broad brush based on a critical field opinion survey, builds on the existing literature, and adopts a multidisciplinary approach. Giving pride of place to the weak and voiceless by making their life histories central to the analysis, the paper shows that religious ideology is both a powerful and versatile political force that can be adopted and adapted by different people for

*Corresponding author. E-mail: markchingoni@yahoo.com. Tel: 00268 2517 0000, 00268 78 155367.

Abbreviations: CIO, Central Intelligence Organization; **Frelimo**, Front for the Liberation of Mozambique; **MNR/Renamo**, Mozambique National Resistance.

contradictory causes. The extent to which religion can play a positive or negative role in society is contingent upon many factors, and cannot be ascertained *a priori*. The paper concludes that, the implications of increased religious revivalism for war and peace in Africa are, at best ambiguous, and at worst catastrophic.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE WAR

A creation of the Rhodesian Central Intelligence Organisation (CIO), and later adopted by South Africa at Zimbabwe's independence in 1980, the Mozambique National Resistance (MNR, Renamo in Portuguese or Matsangaissa, the name of the first leader of the movement) waged one of the most brutal guerrilla wars on the continent. Starting barely two years after independence in 1975, the war had its roots in both the geopolitics of the Southern Africa sub-region and in the internal dynamics of the country. Ending in 1992, after protracted internationally mediated peace talks in Rome, the war claimed nearly one million lives, displaced one and half million internally, and led to economic destruction estimated at between US\$15 million (Safer World, 1994) and US\$20 million.

History of religion in Mozambique

Centuries before the arrival of Christianity in Mozambique, African traditional religions often constituted a very important force in society. Religious beliefs and authorities exercised a strong influence on the educational, medical, cultural, economic, social political spheres. Religious leaders and spirit mediums led ceremonies and performed the rituals surrounding the appointing of new chiefs, and were consulted on matters such as, drought and war.

As Ranger (1986) notes, during the 1886 Shona rebellion, the spirit mediums organized and led armies into attacking the Portuguese. The spirit mediums exercised great influence on the chief, society and war in the Barwe community, before and during the uprising of 1917 (Ranger, 1986). Similarly, the Makombe revolt of the 1940s was 'initiated by the traditional religious and secular authorities' (Ranger, 1986).

Used by some in anti-conquest revolts, traditional religion had been used by others in cooperation with the colonial state. In an effort to enhance the image and legitimacy of colonial rule and their co-opted and newly appointed *regulos* (chiefs), the Portuguese went to great lengths in supporting and participating in African traditional rituals of succession, in what became known as the 'Africanization of European institutions' (Isaacman, 1972). Thus, by the time of independence, traditional religions were still a strong force sustaining the organization of economic and political power in the countryside.

Competing with traditional religion was Christianity, which had arrived in Mozambique in the sixteenth century. Before that Islam had been introduced by Arab traders, mainly in the northern provinces of Niassa and Nampula. Nationally, Catholics, Evangelicals and Moslems constitute about 23, 17 and 18%, respectively (Berkley Centre, 2013). Since in the central province of Manica, the case study area of this work, those who considered themselves Moslem were a very small minority, this paper does not dwell on Islam much.

During colonialism, Catholicism was the official religion of the state, and the state's ideology was manifestly religious (Isaacman, 1972). The missionaries justified and sanctified the colonial state's conquest and subjugation of the indigenes, and reciprocally, the state exercised jurisdiction over the religious institution, ensuring protection for the Church. The colonial state used Christianity to legitimize its rule, while on their part missionaries built schools to train a submissive technocratic stratum to run the state apparatus (Isaacman 1972). Not surprisingly, in the early days of independence the relationship between the state, traditional religion and the church was sensitive.

Religion as a factor causing and fuelling the war

Officially, Frelimo's position was that religion was a private matter. In reality, however, it was felt it tried, in a Stalinist fashion, to suppress religion as an 'opium of the people', complicity in colonial oppression. Religion and rapid scientific development were believed to be incompatible, and indeed, Frelimo's socialist programme did not accommodate traditional or Christian religions.

Specifically, Frelimo opposed spiritual possession, exorcism by traditional healers and those practises which perpetuated the idea of the chief's greatness. As Fry (1991) notes, 'almost all that was 'traditional' was to be suppressed under such slogans as *Abaixo o feudalismo*, *Abaixo o obscurantismo!* (Down with feudalism, Down with obscurantist ideas). Christian worship was suppressed, church property confiscated and many Christian leaders persecuted and sent to detention camps, euphemistically dubbed re-education centres.

In a historically religious society, suppressing religion inevitably alienated many, and indeed had the opposite effect. Not only did it precipitate a remarkable resurgence in religious revivalism, but it also fuelled the war, as the disaffected joined the ranks of the rebels, which claimed to be fighting for religious freedoms'. In short, in trying to control the Church and to suppress religion, Frelimo alienated many people, and unwittingly helped Renamo's recruitment drive.

Renamo's war for religious freedoms

Ingenuously building on a tradition in which revolts were

inspired and guided by religious agents, Renamo effectively used religion as a recruitment and mobilisation strategy. In a local equivalent of a 'holy war' or jihad, Renamo professed to be fighting a 'war of the spirits', and for religious freedoms. Its counter ideology, backed by force, was to give back power to the spirit mediums, traditional chiefs and elders.

Renamo also embraced and elevated Christianity by, for instance, using spiritual symbols, distributing bibles to its combatants, and encouraging them to attend sermons in the bush (Amnestized Renamo Rebels, 1992). As an integral element of its mobilization strategy Renamo left churches and mosques untouched amidst the wreckage of a town.

To the religious believers, whose world outlook had been dismissed by Frelimo as anachronistic, Renamo therefore became a bona fide liberator. Where Frelimo repressed peasant ideologies, Renamo articulated them and presented them as its cause. Naturally, this helped it win the hearts and minds of many, especially in the central regions of Manica Province and Beira. In Nampula province, Geffray (1991) found out that the uncompromising approach to traditional religion and institutions was a major incentive for the local population to turn its back on the Frelimo state. In a similar vein, in central Manica Province, a story is told of a traditional chief who, when, he joined the rebels, all his subjects followed him.

Sin and war

There was a perceived 'egg-and-hen' relationship between sin and war. Some believed that sin, however defined, was the cause of the war. Others stressed instead that, war had led to increased sinning as social values and structures collapsed. The reality is, there was a dialectical relationship between war and sinning, with both mutually reinforcing the other.

In a purposefully charged but very short Good Friday sermon, a preacher at a Holy Spirit congregation preached that the violent and disturbing changes were evidence of God's power and anger. Subtly attacking the political elite as sinners, he prayed for those unjustly arrested to be released: 'Even those with a sin as dark as charcoal will be forgiven, only if they repent'. Continuing his tirade against the political elite and gloating over the collapse of its power base due to the war, he idiomatically quipped: '*Nyayadzinotongwanedzimwenyaya*', which loosely translates to, 'problems are resolved by other problems'; in every cloud there is a silver lining. By persecuting religious believers, Frelimo had sinned, and its sins had caused the war.

For the Maforga Missionaries (Interview, 1992) the war was the work of Satan and evil spirits: "Although God is behind everything, the thing behind the war is Satanic. There are spiritual things behind it... a lot of evil forces at

work." They added, there was no just element in the war, and "it was a pity that everyone is trying to kill them [Renamo]".

In a similar vein, an Igreja Evangelica Cristo Vive (Interview, 1992) preacher said that the leaders' lack of 'real love and respect', especially for freedom fighters who had brought independence, caused the war. He asserted:

By turning their backs on freedom fighters who brought them to power, the leaders had 'sinned'. Some of these freedom fighters have become Matsangaissa. They want to live well too.

In short, the war and religion mutually reinforced each other, with religion justifying and legitimating war, while war empowered religious leaders.

THE CIVIL WAR AND RELIGIOUS REVIVALISM

During the civil war, religious activism re-emerged with a vengeance that dazzled even the Mozambicans themselves: 'There are too many new churches. Some of them are false prophets'. Such was the ubiquity of wartime religious practice in Mozambique, whose form, content and political articulation was shaped not only by the war, but also by the worldwide Pentecostal explosion. Driving the religious conversion experience was the search for spiritual healing and material welfare/human security, and the felt need for redemption. Fear of death, the unknown and of 'miracles' that were happening forced many to seek refuge in religion.

The phenomenon of religious revivalism was, however, not unique to Mozambique, but is occurring "on a grand scale... in Africa and...throughout the world" (cited in Roberts and Seddom, 1991). In the literature, the significance of this religious resurgence, has been interpreted in widely different ways (Isaacman, 1972; Ranger, 1986; Marshall, 1991; Gifford, 1991; Roesch, 1993; Balandier, 1965; Lantemari, 1985). For example, Isaacman (1972) and Ranger (1986) depict religion either as an instrument of colonial conquest or a form of protest against conquest.

This paper contends that, given impetus by the civil war, religious ideology was deployed in more ways than hitherto identified and documented in the literature. For many, religious conversion was a form of 'survival strategy', in both the material and spiritual senses. For the religious elite, it was a 'holy avenue' to the accumulation of wealth and power, while for the poor who so wished to please the preacher by donating the little they had, it was a royal road to financial ruin and spiritual satisfaction. Also, religious ideology simultaneously contributed to: fostering hatred and love; promoting violence and peace; providing humanitarian aid and thereby entrenching dependency. In a nutshell, war-related anxiety, disruption and grief, and the consequent need to re-interpret, explain and adjust to the harsh reality shaped the specific articulation of religious practice

and discourse.

Religious demographics

While neo-traditionalist and Catholic membership was declining, that of Pentecostal churches was rising. At the risk of over-simplification, the aged seemed to numerically dominate neo-traditional religions, while youths preferred Pentecostal churches.

The majority of the membership of the locally based religious groups came from the poorest social strata. In contrast, membership of the Roman Catholic Church consisted mainly of the relatively well-off, those who could still afford to have wedding ceremonies and to buy fashionable clothes for Sunday services; the decline in Catholic membership, which corresponded to the rise in that of Protestantism and atheism, thus partly reflected rising poverty.

Most of the non-believers or agnostics were relatively educated and wealthy young men, some of whom had been to former East Germany. Conversely, the overwhelming majority of the believers were poor women – mostly single mothers - especially in religious groups involved in channelling and distributing food aid. In virtually all religious groups, women predominated numerically; the religious stress on marital fidelity, the sense of community and humanitarian aid were all major attractions. Thus class and gender divisions were not completely transcended as religious ideology attempted to unite the rich and poor in a spiritual warfare against evil.

Religious conversion as a survival strategy

A multitude of socio-economic, political, cultural, personal and psychological factors accounted for the increased activism of religious believers, as social critics, protestors, rebels, religious entrepreneurs and peace activists. Wartime economic crisis and the struggle for material survival form the backdrop of religious revivalism and the conversion experience. The need to survive, both spiritually and materially, the disintegrations and conflicts within a war-torn society was most significant.

In Manica Province, this religious activism took the form of neo-traditional worship, Catholicism and Pentecostal Protestantism all co-existing in competition and synergy with one another. Some religious groups adopted a more public profile, and engaged in activities that were more explicitly political. Consequently, some of these became the subject of controversy among politicians and scholars alike.

Neo-traditional religion: interpretation, justification and survival

A strong belief that the calamities of the time were

punishment by the ancestors and God for abandoning and neglecting them led many people back to their traditional practices of ancestral worship and veneration. There were numerous cases in which people converted to traditional religion after encountering health, social and economic problems. Illness, drought and the unnecessary bloodletting were explained as an expression of wrath by the dead for not performing traditional rituals to appease and thank them (for life and protection).

The violation of the norms governing the relationship between the dead and the living led to the strange behaviour of nature – drought and floods. Such misdeeds of the living (agency) that lead to punishment by the ancestors can only be redressed by performing the appropriate traditional rituals and achieving reconciliation. Effectively, war-time political economy and the indirect consequences of war are explained in terms of human/spiritual agency, and are reduced to the familiar explanatory category of the relationship between the living and dead.

Naturally, these beliefs strengthened the power of the religious agents, the traditional chief, spirit mediums and traditional healers in particular. These alone, because of their strategic position in the politico-religious temporal/spiritual hierarchy, could offer an interpretation of, and solution to, the problems. As in the case of the Naprarama and Mungoi spirit mediums, such religious authorities were able to exploit this strategic position to curtail Renamo violence.

Adapting to cope with the new social demands, neo-traditional religion became an effective survival strategy and a potent force in the matrix of politics in wartime Mozambique. It played a crucial healing function, both for illness and social trauma, and helped people develop and accept a new set of multi-faceted concepts about the nature of the world. In addition to state secularism, the greatest challenge to neo-traditionalism came from Christianity, its arch rival.

The Christian conversion experience as a survival strategy

'Here people are thirsting for the word of God, and the spiritual uplifting it brings', a local pastor aptly summed up the situation in war time Mozambique. Having lost everything, including faith in leadership, many discovered God, and indeed increasing numbers of people were converting to Christianity, especially to Pentecostal churches. There are many interrelated personal and socio-political reasons for this conversion. Interestingly, the very same reasons that forced some to 'retreat' to traditional religion led others to enthusiastically embrace Christianity. Some 'born again Christians' even claimed to possess divine understanding, to know something or be committed to something beyond the comprehension of

non-believers.

Religiously interpreting the war and the economic crisis, and justifying her religious conversion a young mother of four put it thus: 'It is written in the Bible that towards the end of the world, all these miseries will happen. War, hunger and suffering are all signs of the coming doom'. The appearance of these signs and a sense of sinfulness combined to strengthen her resolve to become a dedicated Christian, and be saved.

Healing, health and the Christian conversion experience

The search for healing and exorcism from possession by an evil avenging spirit of a deceased person (*ngozi*) was cited on numerous occasions as the main reason for conversion to Christianity. Traumatized and dispossessed by the war, many found counselling, solace and spiritual and physical healing from the church. Even more important, membership to a religious group or congregation also offered a sense of belonging and community as well as practical assistance and food aid. In one typical example, a young woman had to become Christian, and subsequently change from one church to another, in search of spiritual healing and exorcism from the avenging spirit of a person who was killed by her uncle. According to a tradition, the evil avenging spirit could only be exorcised when the woman's family pays compensation to the relatives of the deceased in the form of a sacrificial animal, a goat, and a huge sum of money. Both had to be presented at a ritual ceremony organized to put to rest the aggrieved spirit of the deceased. But due to war induced poverty, the woman's family could not afford to pay the compensation and perform the traditional rituals.

In a dramatization of the use of religious ideology as a survival strategy, she abandoned traditional religion and instead, and at the suggestion of a 'saved and born again' Christian, joined the African Zionist Church religious sect. The prophetic leaders of the sect claimed to have the 'healing' powers to dispel demons from their victims. Still failing to heal the woman switched on to yet another sect, the African Apostolic Faith, which she believed to be based on 'true Christianity' that could save her. In a nutshell, as with thousands others, the need to survive illness and wartime economic hardship, which are closely interrelated, drove this woman initially to neo-traditionalism and subsequently to two other Christian churches.

EMPOWERMENT, NEW IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY

The Chigubhu religious sect, a locally based religious movement which combines elements of African traditional dance with Christian religion, is a typical example of

popular grassroots religious movements. Its exaltation of 'wild brotherly and sisterly dance' had earned it rebuke from mainstream established churches and the state. The sect was accused of promoting promiscuity and the breakdown of family life through the all-night uninhibited dance (to drums) and prayer sessions in which 'brothers and sisters freely intermingled'.

For believers, however, dance and prayer was not only the most important expression of brotherly and sisterly love, it was the only way one could achieve genuine communion with Jesus Christ, and be saved. Membership in such a religious group not only fostered love and communion with God, but it also guaranteed caring and material support in times of need. As a single mother and member of the sect, pointed out:

We help each other in times of need...When I was ill a few months ago, other members visited me, bringing with them firewood, water, maize meal powder and sometimes money. Had it not been for their help, my son would have starved to death.

Another separated young woman, who had joined the sect following her separation from her husband who had married three other wives, similarly testified that becoming a Christian 'helps in many ways'. Membership gave birth to a new identity, offered a sense of community, and empowered and fostered love among members, all of which helped her cope with the trauma of separation and wartime economic hardship.

Given the war weary state's increasing inability to provide social welfare, the vital social function which the sect performed cannot be overstated. Participation in the sect's activities also fostered a sense of belonging and community, and helped shape the process of re-defining individual and collective identity. Remarkably, one found a surprising degree of egalitarianism in the congregations. Calling each other 'brother' and 'sister', members appeared to have put aside, to some extent, the traditional respect for status, age and gendered inequality.

THE MAFORGA MISSION AND THE MANY ROLES OF RELIGION

The many roles of religion in wartime Mozambique is most amply demonstrated by the experience of the Marfoga Mission. Established by a white couple in the mid-1980s on a farm about 15 kilometres east of Chimoio town, Maforga Mission was not only the most controversial religious group, but it also exhibits the many contradictory roles of religion. The mission's tense relationship with the government puts into perspective the role of religion in providing humanitarian aid, promoting peace and/or war.

Assisted by short-term volunteers from the West, the

Mission's core activities included provision of basic health care, training in knitting and sewing for disabled men and women, care for the elderly, the disabled and orphans, and provision of food and clothing. Often the Mission fed up to 400 and treated 1000 people a day.

The Mission was attacked left and right by both the government and non-governmental organizations for: operating illegally without registering with the government; engaging in activities that contradicted government policy with respect to concentration of people; using food aid as a bait for membership recruitment; alienating children from their culture; and most seriously, collaborating with Renamo. In its defence, the Mission rejected all these accusations as misinformed and misinforming.

Refuting the accusation of illegality, the Mission stressed that, for them as Christians, it was far more important to save lives than to waste time and resources negotiating through a Byzantine and corrupt bureaucracy for a permit when people are dying. The Mission denied contradicting government policy on concentration of people and using food as bait, a practice that is banned by the code of conduct of international NGOs, thus:

First, we did not invite the children... they simply came on their own. Second, giving aid is not our main objective. We started the programme of teaching women to knit and sew because they kept coming to us seeking help.

Many displaced people interviewed at the Mission had come voluntarily, and indeed thanked God for bringing these good Samaritans to their aid. Providing almost everything from thatching grass, to clothes, food and medicine, the Missionaries were seen as God-sent messiahs.

The most serious criticism levelled at the Mission related to its alleged links to Renamo and apartheid South Africa, and to thus supporting the insurgency. This allegation was substantiated by the Renamo 'attack', capture and subsequent release of the Missionaries in 1987. On their release in Malawi, after spending nearly three months in the bush with their captors, the Missionaries made a press statement which was interpreted as too political and sympathetic to Renamo by the Frelimo government and its allies. The statement was: 'They [Renamo] had treated us to the best of their abilities. They never deliberately harassed nor tortured us'.

Denying any political objectives or connections with any political movement the Missionaries expressed their dilemma thus:

We don't want to be politically involved. But it's difficult to work with the government. You never know what they want and where you stand. The other problem is that, both the right and left wings want us to say things that support them and attack their foes.

From the mission's perspective, the major problem in the country was corruption, directionless and lack of self-discipline: "Since no-one seems to have anything, no-one can be trusted with anything"

The Mission's struggle against satanic forces, sinfulness and selfishness led it into a hostile relationship with the government, other churches and the supposed beneficiaries of its projects. Hinting at the conflict within the religious movements, the Missionaries attributed the sinfulness that had gripped the country to the activities of other churches, which they do not recognize as true Christians. Attacking the Jehovah's Witness first the Missionaries said:

We don't recognize the Jehovah's Witness as a church. Their doctrine that only 144 000 people will go to heaven is blasphemous. As Christians we believe in the Trinity, that Jesus Christ died for our sins, and is our saviour.

Turning to the Roman Catholic Church, the Missionaries attacked it for its liberal code of conduct and for elevating people and worshipping saints, such as the Virgin Mary, which they consider blasphemous.

The Mission had tried to establish links with other smaller churches by encouraging their members to participate in its activities. This seemed aimed at either gradually absorbing these churches or eventually converting their members into the Mission's religion, all in an endeavour to outmanoeuvre its rivals. Earnestly wrestling with the challenges of physical and spiritual warfare, the Mission's stance added to the confusion and animosity in the country.

Religious enterprising and after-life salvation

While some believers were making huge sacrifices and acting nobly in the name of religion, religious capitalist entrepreneurs were trying hard to barricade themselves from poverty and hunger. They were also probably inflicting it onto others by, for instance, underpaying their workers as well as by 'stealing' from the poor who donated the little they had to the church. There were many who profited from religious engagement, and the examples below are only illustrative.

The well pampered youthful Zimbabwean preachers of the Jesus Lives Gospel Reach Tent Ministries were perhaps among the most aggressive in religious enterprising.

Apparently insensitive to the material conditions and plight of those to whom they preached, they led a conspicuously luxurious life that sharply contrasted with that of their Mozambican counterparts. With lots of clothes and food, only leftovers of which they gave to the hungry souls who had assembled to hear them preach the word of God, they looked more capitalist than

Christian crusaders.

One of them, a youth in his early twenties, openly admitted that he had joined the crusaders because, like most of his colleagues, he had failed to get a job in Zimbabwe after completing his high school studies. Although the war was a present threat, he was not regretting having volunteered coming to Mozambique for, 'there are so many opportunities of prospering in life while here. Everything, especially food and clothes, is cheap'. The economic opportunities of cheap second hand clothes (donated by European charities) for resale in Zimbabwe was the major attraction for such enterprising religious crusaders.

Like other such churches, preachers taught that a key aspect of prospering was giving to God first: 'if we give and to the extent we give, God will re-imburse us' (Gifford, 1991: 19). The leader of the group, an overweight man in his late thirties, even went further to praise the Mozambicans for their humility, meekness and openness to the word of God. Contrasting them to Zimbabweans, and drawing a biblical analogy he said:

The Zimbabweans, like the Pharisees in the Bible, are arrogant, self-praising and 'full of I know' (attitude), whereas the Mozambicans are, like the Galatians, humble, polite and open to new ideas. God blessed the Galatians and punished the Pharisees for their boastfulness.

Continuing with his religious discourse, he insisted bluntly that helping the Mozambicans materially was not their objective, for: 'Man does not live on bread alone'. He added that, it is the spirit/soul that needs to be saved. Dismissing the counter-argument that 'man cannot live without bread', he retorted that for a Christian it was enough to simply pray for a starving man, rather than give him food.

This kind of gospel had obvious socio-political effects. It told the people of Mozambique, among the poorest in the world, that material prosperity will be provided by the 'blessings of God'. It encouraged people to accept their earthly miseries, as 'sinners who did not deserve justice' and instead, seek mercy. It is this disarming emphasis on spiritual and after-life salvation that had been the main target for criticism of religious philosophy by concerned observers, and that forced some to atheism. One ill old woman, a non-believer, bitterly remarked when asked why she had not joined any religious group in order to get some help:

It's all the same. At the clinic they want money. The traditional healers want money too. In the church, they also want money all the time. Where can I get the money from?

Many believers, however, would happily donate their last coins to the preacher. Strangely, religious philosophy

derived its strength from the idea of earthly misery and after-life salvation.

Religion as a force for change and peace

Though not acknowledged in official history, many religious actors contributed immensely, in their unique ways, to conflict resolution and the peace process. Many neo-traditionalists believed that if the necessary rituals were performed the war would cease. Similarly, many Christians had faith that if people prayed the war and the other plagues would end. The Moforga Missionaries aptly captured this sentiment thus: "Whatever you say about the war, there is only one thing you can do. Pray and forgive one another". Indeed, in the churches and congregations some people prayed for peace and forgiveness, while others prayed for the punishment of the sinners, the warmonger. Religious tolerance, which was introduced as part of the liberalization package of the 1980s, provided perfect conditions for religious actors to be involved in the peace process.

Neo-traditional religion and the peace process

Neo-traditionalists contributed in many ways to the peace process, reconciliation and post-war trauma treatment. For instance, some neo-traditional religious leaders explained the drought of the mid-1980s as punishment by the ancestors for the senseless blood-shed. Accordingly, they implored their followers to desist from violence. Further, they performed rituals to cleanse those who had been involved in violence and to appease the ancestors. In Gaza Province, for example, the bearer of the spirit medium of Mungoi successfully established a peace zone - to which thousands of peasants flocked - protected from Renamo atrocities. Similarly, Naparama, a spirit medium possessed healer who claimed to have risen from the dead, also established peace zones in the central region of Manica province. It was believed that if rebels fired a shot in those 'sacred' peace zones, they would be cursed by demons. Sharing the same religious beliefs with the masses, the rebels would not dare attack these 'peace zones'.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND THE PEACE PROCESS

The role of religious ideology in giving momentum to the peace process and post conflict development is most clearly illustrated by the Catholic Church, whose history is manifestly political, and whose relationship with the state has vacillated in a love-hate fashion. With the spread of the war, the Catholic Church gradually reclaimed its credibility, especially by involving itself, at various levels,

in bringing the belligerents together to end the war. In the early 1980s, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Beira Gonclaves had urged Samora Machel, then president of Mozambique, to negotiate with the Renamo rebels. In his misplaced faith in a military victory against the rebels Machel ignored the Bishop, who was seen as 'a mediator with sympathies for one of the parties', and instead signed the 1984 Nkomati Peace Accord with South Africa. The Nkomati Peace Accord obliged Mozambique and SA to desist from supporting each other's insurgent movements, the African National Congress (ANC) and Renamo respectively; the accord was flagrantly violated by both parties, and the war continued with greater intensity. In spite of being snubbed by Machel, religious actors continued to pray and campaign for peace, and eventually played a more prominent role in ending the conflict.

The Catholic Community of Sant' Egidio of Rome provide an intriguing instance of religion being used to settle a non-religious conflict. Initially, and in order to encourage Frelimo to relax its suppression of the Catholic Church, the Community sent three airplanes and two ships of essentials to Mozambique as gifts (Berkeley Center, 2013). Eventually, it not became mediator in the conflict, but also sponsored the tortuous peace process, which led to the Rome Cease-fire Agreement of 1992.

BROTHER ELIJAH AND HIS ANTI-WAR PEACE CRUSADE

A most glaring example of the role of religion as social critique and a force for change in war-time Mozambique is the one-man show of Brother Elijah's Honour God Movement. Were it not for the large crowds of people that he drew during his peace and anti-war public sermons in Chimoio city centre, it would have been easy to dismiss him as a madman of no consequence.

A demobilized soldier and a holder of first class nursing certificate, Brother Elijah claimed that, after seeing a vision of God in 1989, he had been on a sojourn 'to spread the gospel and to warn sinners that the day of judgement was imminent'. Since seeing the vision, he had devoted all his time to preaching, healing, and even attempting to reconcile the warring parties.

Some people tried to dismiss this strange preacher as a mad man or beggar but, to their surprise, not only did he refuse money offerings as debased, but he also had made new converts from the crowd. One of the new converts confessed that he had seen a vision of this encounter a few days earlier; he was asked to carry the cross. Some women pleaded with him to accept their genuine offerings of appreciation for his spiritually uplifting sermon, which he eventually did. It was difficult to disperse the crowd after the prayers and preaching, as people seemed to want more.

In an attempt to end the war, Brother Elijah claimed

that he had invited both Chissano and Dhlakama, 'the kings of war', to come for peace negotiations on a mountain in Manica Province that God had designated for talks to end all wars in the world. Since they refused to attend the talks, 'a hell of fire is coming soon to devour the whole world'. Relations of domination and control, oppressor and oppressed were seen in terms of spiritual warfare between forces of evil and good, Satan and God. Though non-believers may have more 'rational' explanations for the war and its consequences, many people believed Brother Elijah's prophecies of doom, and followed him freely.

THE PASTORS FOR PEACE

The quest for peace and love led some to continuously move from one denomination to another in search of 'true' Christianity, genuine love and peace. Clearly illustrating this point is the case of a former pastor in the Assemblies of God (Africa). A demobilized soldier, he left the sect to become a pastor in *Igreja Evangelica Cristo Vive*, because he 'wanted a church which encourages real love and not one that operates like an *'empresa'* (enterprise), as the Assemblies of God did'. War had led to too much sinning in the country. Thus, he was prepared to end the war by any means. Was he the president, he would 'agree to give up the Presidency' in order to achieve peace, and similarly, was he the leader of the rebel movement he would 'give up the struggle for power'.

Contrary to the popular religious view that drought is God's punishment for sin and the bloodletting, he insisted it is God strategy for achieving peace. He wisely explained: 'Drought is God's solution to the war. If there are rains, the war will not end as there will be enough food to feed the belligerents and vegetation cover'. True, an army not only marches on its stomach, but also needs cover. Only through true love and prayer can the country achieve peace and develop, preached the preacher.

From these diverse religious interventions in the peace process, it is clear the relationship between religion, peace and war is a complex one. This complexity partly derives from the many roles that religious ideology plays when appropriated by different people in different contexts.

RETHINKING THE RELIGION, WAR AND POLITICS INTERFACE

In an apparent misreading of Marx, Frelimo attempted to abolish religion by decree. For Marx, the abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of 'man who has not yet found himself or who has already lost himself' is required for their real happiness. However, this cannot be achieved by decree or force. Instead, religion can only be

abolished through the abolition of the material objective conditions that need and sustain religious fantasies: 'The demand to give up the illusions about its condition is the demand to give up a condition which needs illusions' (McLellan, 1972, 122). In other words, religion will 'wither away' only when the socio-economic and political conditions that require it have been transcended. As Frelimo learnt that the hard way, abolishing religion by decree is an impossible task, if not suicidal.

Far from withering away, during the civil war religion ideology was getting stronger by the day as many converts were 'born again' and new churches built. Such a resurgence of religious revivalism, especially in conditions of extreme socio-economic depravation and distress, lends credence to Marx's claim that, God did not create man, but instead, man created God in his imagination. Having lost everything, including faith in the leadership, the war victims and dispossessed of Mozambique discovered God, as their fortress and refugee. They will probably continue to do so for the foreseeable future. However, the implications of increased religious revivalism for war, peace and development are far from clear.

IMPLICATIONS OF RELIGIOUS REVIVALISM

There are two main opposed views, negative and positive, on the relationship between religion, war, peace and development. The 'negative' perspective, most represented by Gifford (1991) and Roesch (1994) posits that, religion is 'disempowering' in many ways and cannot promote peace or development. The 'positive' perspective, articulated most eloquent by Marshall (1991), depicts religion as a force with great potential for individual and collective empowerment. The experience of Mozambique seems inconclusive, as there is evidence to support and refute both views.

Religious ideology as disempowering

Commenting on the 're-treat to neo-traditionalism' in Manica Province in Mozambique, Roesch (1993: 9) asserts:

...people in Mozambique use religious discourses to explain their current problems, and situations and ...in doing so they mystify the economic and political forces that have shaped their current reality.

For him, neo-traditional religious practice is 'mysticism' and has counter revolutionary implications:

While such mystification may serve reactionary political objectives, it does not do so necessarily. In the Mozambican case, however, such religious mystifications

do often serve the reactionary objectives of 'traditional' political authorities who oppose democracy, defend hereditary authority and are concerned to re-instate their lost political powers and economic privileges.

With reference to the continuing spread of Christian fundamentalism in Africa, Gifford (1991) arrives at a similar conclusion. He argues that religion 'leads its adherents to downplay the importance of development, to dismiss it as irrelevant, or even positively to turn their backs on it'. Religion does not act as a spur to Africa's development and peace building.

When poverty, sickness, failing businesses, all of which inevitable in a war-torn society, are explained as punishment by the ancestors, avenging spirits, or God's plan, there is no need to search for better explanations of the causes and solutions of these problems. With the problems accepted as just punishment, ancestral veneration or prayer, instead of social analysis, political activity or development became the remedy.

Often, it is the human factor, and not God's plan, that turns drought, floods, or earthquake into disasters. The Jehovah's Witnesses point out that, God is not responsible for natural disasters: 'the concentration of humans' in areas of 'high mortality risk from disasters is of greater consequence than the severity of the disaster itself: 'Earthquakes don't kill people. Buildings kill people' (Jehovah's Witnesses, 2007, 5). Furthermore, the stress on after life salvation, saving the soul, 'praying' for, instead of feeding, a starving person, can be quite limiting and disempowering as people fatalistically accept their fate as God's plan for them.

Although justified in criticising the dominant state ideology for having stifled the initiative of the poor, the Church's rigid ideology, bureaucratic, hierarchical and gendered structure, also limits its capacity to 'empower the poor' and achieving lasting peace and development. Indeed, the recent threats by the MNR to resume the war are testimony to the limits of religious ideology's peace building potential. Preaching to the oppressed to love their oppressor may be seen as a veiled attempt at legitimating the status quo, and hence further disempowering the weak.

In addition, as politics, religion and money intersected in interesting ways, the strange 'adulterous marriage' between the Bible and money became the norm in many churches. Often religion became the 'holy' avenue to wealth accumulation, and hence power. If money is the source of all evil, why do churches and Christians beg for it all the time?

Another related problem concerns the use of food aid to induce poor people to convert to their faith. Such linkage between humanitarian aid and religious proselytism, which is banned by the international code of conduct for faith-based NGOs, denies the poor choice, and often entrenches the dependency syndrome.

With even more far reaching ramifications for conflict,

monotheistic religions are often absolute, unconditional and authoritarian. Most Christian religions condemned the African traditional religion practice of ancestral veneration as paganism for, 'the dead cannot harm the living' and should therefore stay in their graves. In their defence neo-traditionalists posit that the calamities that have befallen society are punishment by the ancestors for abandoning tradition and uncritically embracing Christianity instead.

Within the Christian fraternity, there is competition and conflict, with each group claiming to be the true followers of Christ, with its version of worshipping as the only correct one. For example the Maforga Mission refused to recognise other religious groups and doctrines, and these in turn refused to recognise it either. Such conflict between religious groups undermined their capacity to contribute to the peace process.

In addition, by providing humanitarian aid, religious agents indirectly prolonged the war. The aid enabled both armies 'to move on their stomachs', as they had easy access to food aid. Apart from that, food aid entrenched dependency. Further, by bringing various groups of people together, religious ideology engendered and fostered relations of control and domination.

Religion as liberating

On the basis of research on 'born- again' Christians in Nigeria, Marshall (1991, 36) arrives at a conclusion radically different from that of Gifford (1991) and Roesch (1993):

Religious conversion is experienced as a liberating and empowering personal re-birth, and...the new spiritual power possessed by the born again individual cannot be disassociated from the 'practical' power to transform his/her social and economic world.

Recourse to religion was an effective strategy for the dispossessed in negotiating for their survival amidst a vicious war. Churches provided shelter, food and clothes as well as spiritual solace. Some neo-traditional religions, for instance those represented by both Naparama and Mungoi, provided their followers with relative security. To this extent the resurgence of neo-traditionalist activism did not constitute a retreat from 'popular politics', as Roesch contended, but rather actually strengthened traditional healers, chiefs and people in a political struggle against both the modern state and Renamo violence.

Women and the poor numerically dominated membership of religious groups precisely because such groups offered them a forum to express their distress. They also offered an opportunity for mobilizing for peace, subverting masculine violence and for becoming visible. For such women, religion has thus been both an

'expression of real distress' and a form of protest against domination. Overall, the mere existence of active religious groups had the effect of strengthening embryonic elements of civil society.

In short, religious practice and analysis is a contested terrain, which is characterised by subjective spiritual experiences and explanations that are vying for hegemony. None of the opposed views on the religion, war and politics interface are wholly wrong or correct. Instead they offer only a partial truth of a more complicated reality. The reality is, while religion became the central ideological apparatus for the 'elaboration of a conceptual challenge to the power monopolies' (Marshall, 1991), it also entrenched the power of religious authorities.

Why is religious ideology so appealing?

Contingent upon the exigencies of surviving a war situation, religious belief offered consoling, if comfortable and simple, answers to complicated and often incomprehensible problems. In the absence of a scientific theory to guide them, the masses adopted religion as a 'general theory' for social engagement. As Marx (cited in McLellan, D, 1972, 123) pointed out:

Religion is the general theory of [a perverted] world, its encyclopaedic compendium, its logic in popular form, its spiritualistic point d'honneur, its enthusiasm, its moral sanction, its solemn completion, its universal ground for consolation and justification

As 'the general theory of a perverted world', religious ideology offered different groups the necessary means and religious/moral basis for identity formation, either opposing domination and the war or justifying the war.

Although some of the problems that led to religious conversion may be an indirect result of the war, people dealt with them according to their beliefs, for "faith" and "belief" do not necessarily surrender to logic: they cannot even be declared illogical' (Hubbard, 1981). In particular, African traditional religion is founded on an episteme that does not quite conform to western forms of rationality. As with religion in general, its appeal lies in the way it successfully reduces the inexplicable and the unfamiliar to the familiar, thereby stabilising the relationships between the living and the dead, the individual and society, and that which is man-made and nature. Thus to dismiss these religious practices as mere 'mystification' reflects the limits of western rationalism as well the power imbalance between the interpreter and the represented. In a context in which the struggle for power at every level had become a 'zero sum' game, and in which other bases of resistance in civil society were absent or oppressed, religious conversion became a pragmatic act

of individual and collective reconstruction. It helped people deal with tensions that arose from violent social change by providing the means for negotiating the personal, social and political conditions they experienced, and through which they were even empowered.

As protest, religious ideology offered a critique and alternative to the status quo ante. This was supremely manifested in the Renamo mobilization and anti-state insurgency and in some religious groups which ignored or even challenged the state. Mystifying and justifying the war, religion became 'opium of the people' that blurred the social forces shaping their situation, and hence stood in the way of radical solutions. Providing a rationale and explanation for their social situation, religious ideology acted as a 'general theory of a perverted world', and by its stress on forgiveness and restraint, it helped build peace and reconciliation between erstwhile foes.

Such complexity of religious practice and discourse partly derives from the disparities in the knowledge (and power) bases of believers, the wide range of social meanings carried by religious movements and their multiple, if not contradictory, significances in different historical contexts.

Summary

In Mozambique, religious intolerance was a very non-survival activity, a short road to trouble, which led to the slaughter and suffering of many people. Using religion as a basis for recruitment, Renamo insurgency crippled the anti-religious Frelimo state. In turn this opened up political space for religious ideology to flourish, and for worshippers to insert themselves in the political arena. With the war and urbanisation as key driving forces, religion became an important factor in fuelling and legitimating the war, proved vital to the provision of humanitarian aid, and the peace process. Believers contrasted the hopelessness, sinfulness and destructiveness of the war and the security, hope and empowerment belief offered in the social construction project.

Western-based churches, which were competing for influence with a variety of locally based religious movements, added to the momentum of wartime religious revivalism. The result was a complex situation in which religion, war, economics fed on each other in a fashion that mocks any attempts at distinguishing between cause and effect, for the effect was simultaneously the cause.

The diversity of religious beliefs and the tensions between these have further complicated the role, nature and stature of religion in society. Such complexity and multidimensionality of religious discourses and practices defy simple binary analytical categories of whether religion is good or bad, negative or positive.

To sum up, in spite of Frelimo's efforts to curtail religious practice, there was, in fact a remarkable

resurgence in religious revivalism during the civil war, with all its bad and good manifestations. In a perplexing fashion, some used religion to, interpret and explain the war, and their predicament. Others used it to justify their actions, and yet others still to obtain material benefit, such as food and profit. While the rebel movement used religious ideology to justify their insurgency, many others prayed and acted to end the war. Depending on context and individual history, religion performed multiple and contradictory functions. It functioned as an expression of 'distress', a 'form of protest', a survival strategy, an 'opium of the people' and a force for peace. Thus the increasing numbers of religious groups reveal large differences in what people want out of life, which is in turn a function of their personal and social histories.

Conclusion

An omnipresent force in all the stages of the Mozambican conflict, religious ideology shaped the dynamics and consequences of the conflict, and left a distinct and lasting imprint on contemporary Mozambique. Condemned by the ruling leftist political elite as 'opium of the masses', used by the rebels as a mobilization strategy, embraced by the masses as a survival strategy, and motivated others to work for peace, religious ideology simultaneously contained a potentiality of radical protest and conservatism, and of violence and peace. In a perplexing fashion, different social groups appropriated, adopted and adapted religious ideology to suit their respective situations and needs. Uprooted from their established social frameworks, many found anchorage and refuge in religion, a force that has not only survived modernity but an important factor in defining it.

Ever since the early religious wars recorded in the Bible, religious ideology remains such a powerful force in the world; in the name of religion, holy wars have been fought with shameless but pious cruelty. Then as now, religion consolidated peace and sanctioned the legitimacy of the state, just as it often engineered its subversion by justifying war. In conclusion, religion is an important political force to reckon with, and the extent to which it can play a positive or negative role in society is contingent upon many factors, and therefore cannot be ascertained *a priori*.

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Full Length Research Paper

Neopatrimonial logic and national programmatic policies in Ghana: A case of rice importation and production policies under the administrations of J.A. Kufuor and J.E.A. Mills

Collins Adu-Bempah Brobbey

Ghana Institute of Journalism, 32nd Gamel Abdul Nasser RD. Osu, P.O.Box GP 677, Accra, Ghana.

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Ghana's 1992 constitution requires a party's candidate to obtain 50% plus one valid vote to win presidential elections. However, no party has ever secured such valid votes in the respective stronghold alone. This study explores whether or not political parties in Ghana are emerging as programmatic parties, and the implications of the lack of programmatic parties for a party's credibility and the deepening of democracy. To undertake this analysis, multidimensional construction of neopatrimonial logic is adopted and NPP's Rice Importation Tariffs and NDC's Savanna Accelerated Development Programme were extrapolated. Findings demonstrated that implementation of these policies has been occasioned by neopatrimonial logic as none of them is a programmatic party. This led to hypothesize that a non programmatic party leads to no credible national policy and programme, and consequently no democratic deepening. Using secondary data and interviews with 2 policy experts, 3 politicians and some respondents selected from among NGOs specialize in governance issues. This study concluded that Kufuor and Mills' rice policies were populist rather than programmatic. Findings from the views of Ghanaians confirmed that the absence of programmatic parties opposes national policy and programmes, in that social interventionist policy of one regime faced implementation challenges in another. This situation often worsens the already dilapidated social conditions.

Key words: Neopatrimonial logic, democratic deepening, national policy, programmatic parties.

INTRODUCTION

In 2004, President John Agyekum Kufuor and the ruling New Patriotic Party (NPP) government reduced the tariff on all imported rice. In 2010, the late President John Evans Atta Mills and the National Democratic Congress (NDC) government also emphasized the need for increasing the production and consumption of locally produced rice under the SADA project (Kufuor's 2004 Budget Statement/ Mills and NDC' 2008 Manifesto, p 76 and 77).

On the surface, the attempts by the two governments to

promote rice importation, production and consumption, is a clear indication that rice has become an important component of the Ghanaian diet. It is for this reason that one can read politics into the locally produced, importation and consumption of rice in Ghana. Against this background, this paper discusses rice importation and production policies under the administrations of J.A. Kufuor and J.E.A. Mills, and attempts at drawing linkages between the above-mentioned policies and neopatrimonial logic (populist and paternalistic politics).

This paper employed qualitative approach or method and used in-depth interviews with experts on policy framing and implementations, scholarly Journal articles and newspapers. This paper discusses the connection between populism and rice policy –issue framing in Ghana.

Before proceeding to discuss populist politics with its implications for Kufuor and Mills' rice importation and production policies respectively, it is indeed necessary to consider two important fundamental but empirical questions:

First, what is the nature of political legitimization of presidents in Ghana? And second, how relevant are votes in legitimizing political authority in Ghana?

The main argument of this paper is that legitimization of both the presidency and vote turnouts intend to facilitate better understanding of why the two presidents could use rice as strategic political mechanism for inducing electorate's votes. The objective of this study is therefore to explore and explain the rationale for the political elite's promise on policy while out of office, but why they tend to oppose or differ from actual policy design while in office. This paper investigates whether or not this unhealthy character of political elites is gaining currency in Ghanaian body politic. It also examines whether or not both the constitutional requirement of presidential candidate to obtain 50+1 valid votes to emerge a winner (Article 63:3), and the zero sum of political power struggles have made or propelled neopatrimonialism in the Ghanaian body politic.

This paper supports the assertion that the provisions of the 1992 constitution on issues of elections and electoral processes tend to spur patronage politics and policy diversions (Nkansah, 2010; USAID, 2010) rather than counteract it. How is this explained?

Although Article (63:3) of the 1992 constitution provides the need to ensure ethnic configuration such that no particular ethnic group gets advantage, this same 1992 constitution also requires that a presidential candidate of a party must obtain 50% plus 1 valid votes in order to confirm him or her as the winner of presidential elections in Ghana. Now, the imperative of each party to be regionally representative, inclusive of the fact that no dominant party has ever been able to secure such valid votes in their respective strongholds alone (Lindberg and Morrison, 2008; Gyimah-Boadi, 2004) underpins the increasing number of critical questions that have come to occupy the center stage of democratic discourse in Ghana.

In which ways have the 1992 constitution spurred neopatrimonial logic? Is the issue of neopatrimonialism gaining currency in Ghanaian body politic? Have any of the elections conducted in Ghana been free from neopatrimonial proclivity? Have the ideologies, policies and

Programmes of Kufuor's NPP and/or Mills'NDC governments ever contributed to securing 50% +1 valid vote? To what extent have rice importation and production policies under the administrations of Kufuor and Mills reflected patronage politics? What explains the rice policy swing under the administrations of Kufuor and Mills? What accounts for the inability of the incumbent to fulfill campaign promises on national policies and programmes in Ghana?

These questions would be addressed in the analysis and discussion section.

In order to gain a better understanding of the nature and application of neopatrimonial logic in Ghanaian body politic, this paper explores and explains Lindberg's (2003) multidimensional construction of neopatrimonial logic such as 'Neopatrimonialism', employed by Kheefeer and World Bank (2006); 'Big-man syndrome' by Jockers et al. (2004); populism as used by Booth et al. (2006) and Whitefield's (2009) 'Competitive Clientelism' as well as Lindberg and Morrison's (2008) programmatic appeal. The intention is to ascertain how these concepts have shaped or are shaping the understanding of politics in Ghana.

This paper also explores the meaning of credible national programmatic policy and the implications of the absence of national programmatic policy for both party's credibility and democratic deepening in Ghana's Fourth Republic. In conclusion, it brings into limelight the influences of rice importation and production policies on Ghanaians under the administrations of Kufuor and Mills. This paper begins with the conceptual framework or issues, with particular reference to Lindberg's (2003) multi-dimensional constructions of neopatrimonial logic, and shows how each of these concepts manifests itself in the Ghanaian body politic.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Issues of party's inability to ensure credible or broad national programmes and policies are hotly debated in third world new democracies, particularly Ghana (Cromwell and Chintedza, 2005; Whitefield, 2009; Van de Walle, 2005; Booth et al., 2006; Ketschelt and Wilkinson, 2007). What is central to this hotly debated argument is? Which of the multiple dimensions of neopatrimonialism does the policy of parties in Ghana reflect? This has led many scholars to pursue empirical research on democratic accountability mechanisms such as clientelism and neopatrimonialism, populist politics and programmatic appeals (Whitefield, 2009; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008; Ketschelt and Wilkinson, 2007). There is a relative lack of clarity in respect of which of these neopatrimonial logics is most prevalent in Ghanaian body politic. In this paper, an attempt is made to elucidate the various constructions of neopatrimonialism.

Multi-dimensional constructions of neopatrimonialism

This paper addresses the empirical gap by first operationalizing each of these multi-dimensional constructions of neopatrimonialism, and then extrapolates with rice importation and production policies under Kufuor and Mills' administrations to reveal dominant type, and the implications for policy-issue framing and implementation of programmes.

To contribute to the debates and to highlight the extent to which clientelist, populist, neopatrimonial and programmatic means of mobilizing votes in contemporary Ghanaian politics are significant, these terms or concepts are employed here simply as models of how Ghanaian political parties choose their linkage strategies. As the Ghanaian case demonstrates; parties may appeal to different constituencies with different linkage tactics or efforts (Aidoo, 2010; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008).

Neopatrimonialism (Big-man Syndrome)

Neopatrimonialism is the vertical distribution of resources that give rise to patron-client networks based around a powerful individual or party. It consists of the centralization of power on an individual to whom all within the system owe their position (Killick and Charles, 2001). It is basically an exchange relationship between unequal (Osei-Asare, 2010; Clapham, 1985), and is a distinct form of acquiring state legitimacy.

Neopatrimonialism arises where patronage politics have managed to displace the legal-rational apparatus. An essential element is the co-existence, in tension, within the state of a legal-rational element and a patronage element. It is the giving and granting of favours where the public/private dichotomy in policy decisions and resource distribution becomes hard to distinguish. It is significant in terms of policy design and implementation.

Neopatrimonial politics have developed the capacity of being able to divert public resources (from national tax revenues and aid funds) for private lucrative gain, undermining development possibilities already restricted by social and economic constraints. It is an important mechanism for ensuring continued support for the ruling party and access to resources. Development policies are, more often than not, designed accordingly, where food or rice projects for example are devised to suit "neopatrimonial logic rather than objectives of food security or poverty reduction" (Ghana, Country Report IEA, 2008). Kitschelt and Wilkinson's definition of clientelism (patronage politics) which focuses on the direct, "contingent" nature of the transaction between patron and client, that is, patrons give in exchange for votes, is instructive and useful.

Populism/ populist politics

Populist politics is the attempt to gain political support

using paternalistic policies, in the form of income redistribution (Aidoo, 2010; Jockers et al, 2004). It is a highly debated concept today since many Ghanaian politicians fall into the tempting trap of following populist policies simply to garner votes. The political class relies on income redistribution to the poor (the masses) in order to "buy" political support to perpetuate the elite's control of political power. In essence, populism is an informal alternative to institutionalized forms of political representation provided by political parties (Aidoo, 2010).

It is a set of economic policy measures or promises directed towards obtaining support from the poor masses. Killick and Charles (2001) identify the following political goals of populism: mobilizing support within organized labor and lower-middle-class groups, obtaining complementary backing from domestically oriented business, and politically isolating the rural oligarchy, foreign enterprises, and large-scale industrial elites. It is pertinent to emphasize that it is competition between elites that drives them to make appeals to poor groups that were previously marginalized from policy debates. Nonetheless, what is offered is not coherent programmes that could eventually transform the circumstances of those poor groups, but isolated (albeit often high profile) transfer programmes, e.g. various forms of subsidy.

The picture that emerges in the case of Ghana is a system that is driven by the constitution (supply side) towards institutionalized parties-an important precondition for programmatic politics; but there is not yet the demand for programmatic politics from large portions of the electorate (Kitschelt and Wilkinson 2007). Hence, Ghanaian political parties resort to populist appeals to some groups and use patronage approaches in other contexts (including the north!) in order to win the 50% + 1 valid votes, necessary for their candidate to become president.

Booth et al. (2006) refer to the populist politics as the strength of political incentives in a country to pursue policies that benefit narrow groups in society (clientelist policies) at the expense of policies in the broad public interest. Populist policies are usually inconsistent with the broad reforms of public policy required to sustain accelerated growth. As the incentives of politicians to use clientelist appeals to gather votes increase, they may for instance, prefer policies that increase local infrastructure to policies that improve education. Moreover, they prefer policies that increase infrastructure quantity for targeted groups to those that improve quality (such as maintenance) for all groups. Also among policies that improve education, they prefer those that increase the number and compensation of teachers to those that improve teaching quality such as adjusting teacher compensation to the educational progress of their students (Booth et al., 2006; van de Wall, 2007).

In Ghana, for instance, there are policies pursued by political elites that reflect purely populist politics. For example, rural electrification and Quality Grains policies

of former president Rawlings and NDC regimes (electricity power was supplied to areas that did not make economic sense and Ms Cotton's rice Scandal) (GNA, April, 1996); Capitation Grants; and School Feeding Programme, NYEP as well as rice tariffs policies of President Kufuor and finally, President Mills' rice project in the SADA policy (Okyere-Darko, 2010). All these policies, to a large extent, though far from exclusion, reflect deliberate attempts by the politicians to tie specific policies to electorates' votes (Van de Walle, 2007).

Booth et al. (2006) note that populist politics has become necessary because vigorous competition for votes in Ghana has not reduced, and this perhaps, has highlighted the attraction of politicians to making clientelist appeals for political support. However, this populist politics has not yielded the desired results within Ghana's polarized political economy, as implementation of these policies have often been occasioned by populist logic. There is also evidence which confirms that neither NPP nor NDC is a programmatic party (Booth et al., 2006; van de Walle, 2007).

This leads us to hypothesize that neither Kufuor's rice importation policy nor Atta Mills' rice production policy reflect non-neopatrimonial oriented programme and policy, and this situation does not only tend to have dire consequences on the credibility of the parties, but also slows down the democratic deepening process in Ghana. This also explains why it is becoming increasingly difficult (albeit these populists policies) for Ghana to conduct national presidential elections without run-offs. This situation, according to Lindberg and Morrison (2008), is propelling political parties resort on programmatic appeal and hence programmatic appeal becomes critical on the agenda of the discourse on neopatrimonialism..

Programmatic appeal

This study makes reference to Diamond and Frank's (2001) definition which refers to a programmatic party as a modern day organized political party mainly focused around election campaigns. It has three characteristics: It tends to have a much more distinct, consistent, and coherent programmatic or ideological agenda, it clearly incorporates those ideological or programmatic appeals in its electoral campaigns and its legislative and government agenda. Basically, its appeals are less diffused, vague and eclectic. It seeks to win control of government through this sharper definition of a party platform or vision, and lastly, as Diamond and Frank (2001) maintain, the programmatic party has a more clearly defined social base, and possibly some firmer linkages to like-minded civil society organizations.

In programmatic politics, a party proposes a manifesto, which offers the potential for gains for some groups, but they are then free to vote for it or not (Aidoo, 2010).

According to Aidoo (2010), if the party wins, those policies are pursued and members of the groups in question benefit from the policies whether or not they voted for the party. He concludes that such an approach is conducive to investment in public goods, whereas clientelism is more commonly associated with private transfers (administered with discretion).

Generally, since voters cannot choose separate parties to represent them on each separate issue, programmatic parties try to offer them an overall agenda that they are broadly comfortable with. In its simplest form, an ideology can be located somewhere on a simple two-dimensional continuum, e.g. left-right, urban-rural. In order to achieve this, a party has to be able to exercise a certain amount of discipline: multiple spokespeople all have to be broadly "on message" and to submit their personal preferences on particular issues to the collective will of the party, once this has been agreed (Aidoo, 2010). Hence according to Aidoo (2010) programmatic politics cannot be "big man" politics, even if a particular founder played a key role in shaping the party; ultimately the party is bigger than individuals.

The programmatic appeal in the context of this paper refers to an arena involving politicians making seemingly credible commitments to citizens regarding broad, national programmatic policies (Booth et al., 2006; Lindberg and Morrison, 2008). Programmatic policies or appeals are normally economic policies but often it seems to be a political issue in disguise. Politicians sometimes resort to programmatic appeals with the intention to capture votes from the policy beneficiaries (Lindberg and Morrison, 2008).

The issue of whether or not political parties in Ghana are emerging as programmatic parties as a result of the difficulties that the demand and supply of constitutional provision poses, such as the need to obtain the 50% +1 valid votes, the need to promote elites settlement and ethnic configuration as well as the reflection of political party representation regionally, is now, extremely interesting, but hotly debated argument in the Ghanaian politic.

Whitfield (2009) advances the competitive neopatrimonial argument by positing that policies pursued by Ghanaian politicians reflect a competitive clientelism. In contrast, Booth et al. (2006) think they are rather populist. Aidoo (2010) argues that when the political parties are out of power they project programmatic policies because there is no way they can afford to push and sustain neopatrimonialism – after all they have empty pockets when out of power. However, these political parties when in power resort to populist or patronage programmes, because they have the means - after all they control state resources.

Contrary to the assertions above, Lindberg and Morrison (2008) argue that recent evidence shows that political parties in Ghana are emerging as programmatic

parties and this is demonstrated by the fact that Ghanaians in particular neither vote on ethnic line nor clientelistic basis. Rather, they vote on the basis of evaluation of past performance and that makes new democracies a "mature" one.

This paper however, challenges their argument that parties in Ghana do not make credible national promises. Can parties make credible national policies and yet not considered as programmatic parties? What shows that the so-called promises (policies) are not archetype of populism? What about the new politicians in the game, on what basis are they evaluated?

In considering Lindberg and Morrison's (2008) position, apart from being limited to the voting culture of Ghanaians (Africans), their conclusion that the basis of the Ghanaian voter is neither ethnicity, tribe nor clientelism, but rather on the basis of evaluative-rationales or past performance of policy and parties do not reflect the socio-political realities. Lindberg and Morrison have inadequate or insufficient explanation of the political realities of particular policy in question. The fact is such "past policy performance" is likely to be quintessential to populist politics.

Some scholars, however, argue that in environments where politicians are unable to attract large fractions of the electorate with broad policy promises, they rely instead on the promises they can make to short change the electorate (Van de Walle, 2007; Jockers et al., 2004; Bratton and van de Walle, 1997). The electorate may represent special interest groups as they are traditionally-defined (organized groups of workers and firms, cronies of political officials), but are just as likely to be residents of a particular village or members of a certain ethnic enclave (Van de Walle, 2007).

In view of this, van de Walle (2007) notes that "programmatic and ideological cleavages have not shaped political competition in Ghana nearly as much as ethnic and regional factors" (p.298). Evidence shows that, though parties in Ghana are more institutionalized and exhibit greater party discipline (Lindberg and Morrison, 2008), they are not programmatic (Whitefield, 2009; Booth et al., 2006). Many scholars have also emphasized that Ghana is not only a neopatrimonial state (Lindberg, 2003; Gyimah-Boadi, 1999; Jockers et al., 2004) but also neopatrimonialism has been institutionalized, (patrons reward clients on obedience but punishes disobedience) (Booth et al., 2006; van de Walle, 2007).

In considering these concepts, it is abundantly clear that Lindberg's analysis does not fit into the analysis made by this paper on neopatrimonial logic. It is in this direction that this paper postulates that at the surface levels the attempts by the two presidents (both Kufuor and Mills) to promote rice importation, production and consumption is a clear indication that rice is an important diet of Ghanaians. It is for the same reason that one can read politics into the locally produced, importation and

consumption of rice in Ghana. Hence, this paper concluded that the rice importation policy under former president Kufuor and the rice production policy under the late President Mills have been occasioned by populist logic.

One question which is very central to this paper is, what accounts for the rice policy swing in the two regimes of Kufuor and Mills?

Factors explaining political party's policy inconsistency in Ghana

This paper supports the assertion made by Booth et al. (2006) that there is no programmatic party in Ghana. This is because politicians in democratic politics strive to acquire and maintain political office. In order to achieve this, the competitive electoral process forces them to at least partially employ the leverage of office to support a loyal constituency (core constituency) (Booth et al., 2006). Impressed by the experience of democracy in contemporary affluent and fragile democracies, most substantive empirical research and most formal theory of democratic competition assumes that politicians pursue electoral constituencies by offering and delivering policies for voters (van de Walle, 2007; Booth et al., 2006) (assuming that the politicians resort to rational choice model).

Evidence shows that politicians are responsive to electorate by advertising and enacting principles and policies sufficiently in line with a stock of constituents to get them reelected, when voters compare the so-called 'credible' commitments and perceived achievements of rival candidates (van de Walle, 2007). Periodic elections make politicians accountable to their voters and enforce a modicum of responsiveness to their demands. This is the essence of what political scientists have called the —responsible party governance model since the 1960s (Booth et al., 2006; CDD, 2008). This refers to instances where parties attempt to provide 'credible' national policies and programmes.

Credible or broad national programmes and policies are usually socio-economic in nature that serves national interest rather than individual or a selected few (CDD, 2008; Booth et al., 2006). Therefore, they are policies and programmes that are not only sustainable but also could endure from regime to regime (Kitschelt and Wilkinson, 2007).

It is important to note that all democratic accountability is based on citizens' demand for and politicians' articulation of programs and delivery of policies (Crook, 2005; Booth et al., 2006). It is therefore a foregone conclusion that credible national programmes and policies have no alternative accountability mechanisms with which politicians might employ for the prospect of winning a critical electoral constituency. The reason is that such policies

reflect broad national interest and therefore do make very little political sense and so requires politicians deciding on the effort they make to develop programmatic appeals and policies. Thus, they often resort to alternative ways to promote their re-election (Debrah, 2004).

The politicians try to bundle accountability mechanisms that show their responsiveness to voters and choose between them. More specifically, there are no complementarities or trade-offs between the deployment of programmatic accountability strategies and clientelistic strategies that rely on the provision of material goods and services targeted to particular voters or small groups of voters contingent upon their delivery of the vote to the candidate or clients (Booth et al., 2006; Crook, 2005).

In the context of neopatrimonial logic, this paper attempts at discussing or analyzing the rice importation and production policies under the administrations of J.A. Kufuor and the NPP, and J.E.A. Mills and the NDC.

Before proceeding to discuss the policies mentioned above, it is important to note that Mills' rice project in the SADA policy document like Kufuor's special tariffs on rice importation have been discussed in this paper as classic examples of public policies which are characterized by populism. With populism as the basis of analysis, this paper extrapolates rice importation and production policies under the administrations of Kufuor and the late Mills. This paper argues that the rice production and importation policies are not national programmatic policies because the former is Northern rice farmer-centered while the latter is urban rice consumer bias. First, this paper focuses on Kufuor's rice policy and attempts to link it with neopatrimonial logic.

Rice importation policy of J.A. Kufuor and the New Patriotic Party (NPP)

Evidence shows that Kufuor and the NPP government when initiating the rice policy, quoted Jerry Rawlings' earlier assertion which emphasizes the importance of rice as indispensable diet for Ghanaians (during Miss Cotton's quality grains issue, GNA, 20-04-,1996);

"I don't know law and I don't understand economics, but I know it when I'm HUNGRY"

Like Rawlings, Kufuor on Tuesday September 28, 2004, emphasized the importance of rice security and sustainability of rice-based livelihoods as fundamental to world food security. Kufuor therefore listed rice among the selected commodities to be tackled within the short-term under the Food and Agricultural Sector Development Programme (FASDEP) which in a way is similar to Mills' SADA (GNA 28-09-2004).

With this programme in place, Kufuor and the NPP government concluded that rice distribution in the country

was not only even but also follows a linear progression trend and would undoubtedly contribute to the successful implementation of the World Food Summit's Plan of action, a global action to ensure food security which Ghana was tasked to co-ordinate (GNA, 28-09- 2004).

An interview with Kasim Kasanga, the then Minister of Environment and Science, revealed "an interesting global view on the extent to which rice a staple food is so significant to the international community." For instance, he stated, "Kufuor's opening speech of the Pan-African Celebration of the International Year of Rice in Accra in December 2002, was emphatic on the formal requests made by governments of 44 African countries to the United Nations General Assembly to declare 2004 as the International Year of Rice." Among these 44 countries Ghana was selected to host the weeklong celebration in the African Region under the theme: "Rice is Life For Africans" in which countries such as Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Guinea, Uganda, Senegal and La Cote d'Ivoire among other countries participated (GNA, 28-09- 2004:4).

Again, this explains why Kufuor's rice importation policy did not only receive justifiable praise but also succeeded in linking rice distribution to measures that were intended to ensure food security and poverty alleviation in the entire country (GNA, 28-09-.2004). Kufuor reaffirmed his position on rice importation policy when he remarked that;

"Already, African leaders as part of their commitment to the goals of NEPAD have declared that rice has been considered one of the major agricultural products that together constitute the hub of Africa's development, as captured in the African Agricultural Development Plan" (Daily Graphic, 29-09-2004:3).

Kufuor emphasized the development of local rice industry as one of the five priority areas in Ghana's Poverty Reduction Strategy (GNA, 28-09-.2004). Indeed, rice was one of the key intervention policies of Kufuor and hence provided extension services and credit facilities to farmers for increasing locally produced rice to ensure food security and to promote import substitution. Hence Kufuor authorized African Development Bank to provide financial support to some Ghanaian rice farmers to undertake Inland Valley Rice Project (IVRP) to increase production of good quality rice (GNA, 28-09-.2004).

An interview with Major Courage Quashigah (rtd) (Kufuor's Minister of Food and Agriculture, 29-09-2004) revealed that "the project was intended to cover 4,500 hectares and to increase the income of 9,000 smallholder rice producers; 150 traders and processors of rice and increase paddy rice production by 60,000 metric tons." He added that "rice importation and production policies therefore began to suffer a simultaneous crisis of overwhelming increase and hence it led to conflict of interest."

With regards to Kufuor's policy to boost locally produced rice, an interview with the late Quashigah revealed that "importation of rice into sub-Saharan Ghana had at the same time been growing steadily by six per cent per annum, which was presumed to be the fastest in the world and indicated that the government was committed to, and was striving to increase the local production of rice and to reduce its importation by 30 percent by the end of the year 2004, as a measure to protect the interest of smallholders rice producers."

Ironically, in December 2004 towards general elections, Kufuor and the NPP government drastically reduced the tariff on all imported rice which according to critics, was an attempt to fulfill his positive change II agenda (Daily Guide, 24-11-2004:7). The implications of the Kufuor government's decision to increase rice consumption through low tariff regime were widespread and devastating. Rice farmers interviewed at rice growing area in the Upper East and Northern regions complained sadly that "It did not only lead to exposing our feeble local rice industry to severe competition with the international market, but also led to reduction of local or domestic rice production, high prices of domestic rice as well as poor processing and packaging of domestic rice due to high cost of production coupled with low patronage."

Some critics argue that it is for this reason that when the late Mills assumed office in 2009, he decided to reverse the trend (Daily Guide, 28-09-2004). We then turn our attention to discuss Mills' rice production policy

Rice production policy of J.E. A. Mills and the National Democratic Congress (NDC)

In 2010, the Late President John Atta Mills and the NDC government also emphasized the need to increase the production and consumption of locally produced rice under the SADA project. He said this in response to the current famine spreading across the horns of Africa which had again focused on the world's attention on the massive challenges the world faces to ensure food security for the people of the planet.

According to Mills, "the world lived through a massive food crisis in 2007/2008, and is in the middle of an even worse crisis." A respondent interviewed stressed, "under such circumstances one wonders why politicians still create space for using rice as a political decoy for their personal gain and political ambitions."

Daily Guide reported that "Food Security Ghana (FSG) has been following issues on rice production and importation in Ghana for quite some time, and there is none as controversial as the issue of rice policies under the NDC's administration." An interview with Mamaa Entsua Mensah, the then Deputy Director General of the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) in Ghana (22-02-2011), revealed that "the rice industry in

Ghana has seen unprecedented increase in consumption levels over the past decade with significant proportion of consumers switching from consumption of other staples to rice." What this means, she stressed, "is that rice continues to dominate the staple diet and hence any attempt to use rice for scoring political points becomes apparent."

At the "Africa Rice Project" inception workshop organized by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), Mensah, again, has the following fact about rice in Ghana to present: "about 70% of rice consumed in Ghana is imported and these importations had been consistently high since 2001." "Despite the efforts made in local rice production, the cost of production was high and uncompetitive in the domestic market." "There is a significant quality gap between locally produced and imported rice due to cost of inputs, poor post-harvest handling and lack of access to improved processing technologies, and marketing challenges."

Data facts about rice in Ghana indicate that promises by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (MOFA), that Ghana would be self-sufficient in rice production by 2015 is just a typical example of using rice for scoring political points or gains." The reality on the ground is that the area under rice cultivation which is expected to increase from 13,292 to 26,5842 hectares with corresponding yields increasing from 1.36 metric ton (MT) per hectare to 2.04 MT/Ha unattainable. Interview with an Agro extension officer (22-09-2011) confirmed that "total production by 2015 would be about 628,602 MT while the demand by 2015 is estimated at 1.68million MT, leaving a self-sufficiency gap of more than 685 not much better than today's gap of 70%."

Some rice importers interviewed also confirmed the fact that "the domestic supply is less able to meet the increased demand for some food commodities, such as rice and poultry." To conclude, on the whole, Mills' rice production policy like Kufuor's importation policy was perceived to have reflected populist politics. According to a political scientist interviewed at the University of Ghana (21-02-2011), the politicians attitude of linking or tying rice policies to votes is often guided by the rational choice model than a mere opportunity cost. These theories are either confirmed or unconfirmed by the findings and analysis discussed.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF ISSUES

This paper presents a number of interesting but critical findings. First, the majority (96.0%) of respondents interviewed confirmed that "rice consumption in Ghana has been increasing tremendously and that it has led to increase in rice importations and that for domestic rice to be able to compete with the imported rice, farmers should improve productivity and packaging or branding."

Generally, respondents interviewed concluded that "the quest for self-sufficiency in rice production in Ghana by 2015 is highly unlikely to be reached." Indeed, these findings contradict the Government of Ghana, 2007a report which forecast that there would be sufficient rice production by 2015.

Also, finding revealed that Mills' SADA project which focuses on local rice production was a fiasco not only in terms of low yield as a result of poor implementation of the policy but also, it focused only on the Northern sector neglecting other equally important rice growing sectors such as Afram plains and Asutware to mention but a few (Osei-Asare, 2010).

This paper finds this scenario not only very interesting but also worrisome. Respondents interviewed said, "the fact is that in reality, there is no way rice produced locally could sustain the total rice needs of Ghanaians." They stressed, "moreso, Governments of Ghana have been constrained by importation cost implications to depend solely on imported rice." "Likewise, the reduction of tariffs on locally rice could not help to bridge the gap of the total rice needed by the entire Ghanaian populace."

Other findings revealed by respondents interviewed are that "rice importation and production policies under the administrations of Kufuor's NPP and Mills' NDC are not only characterized by populist politics but also rice as an important staple diet like other staple food has become the element of political exploitation. About 88.5% of the respondents interviewed concluded that "due to absence of programmatic parties, there are no credible national programmatic policies, and that social interventionist policy of one regime faces implementation challenges in another whenever power is transferred." "And hence such situation often worsens the already dilapidated social conditions."

The key issues the paper explored include; whether or not the rice policies under the administrations of Kufuor and Mills were underpinned by neopatrimonial logic; whether or not parties in Ghana are programmatic; whether or not parties in Ghana promise credible programmes and policies but often end up pursuing populist policies.

Interestingly, the responses generally confirmed that "rice policies under the administrations of Kufuor and Mills are underpinned by neopatrimonial logic and that this is explainable in terms of ingrained neopatrimonial nature of party politics." In relation to the question as to what accounts for political parties' inability to fulfill broad credible national programmes and policies; the majority of the respondent (97.0%) indicated that "credible national programmes and policies are broad and often require longer period for formulation as well as implementation." A policy expert interviewed said "unlike populist and clientelist policies which are often tied to electorate's vote, credible national programmes and policies appear to be unwise and inappropriate policies

when the politicians are targeting electorate's votes."

Furthermore, respondents interviewed indicated that "political parties in Ghana do resort to programmatic appeal in their bid to win political support, and that politicians' attitude of promising programmatic but pursuing populist politics is informed by pervasive clientelism and neopatrimonial logic". In view of this, an investigation was conducted on two factors that are likely to serve as evidence of neopatrimonial logic such as i) Political market imperfections and ii) Information and political silence of non-economic issues.

With regard to the former, the respondents said that "Ghana's political market is imperfect, which means that Ghanaian voters cannot infer credible candidate positions on issues of broad public concern." To him, "this often impacts significantly on public policy." He added, "thus, most electorate do not have strong incentives to base their electoral choices on, and therefore turn to rely on two criteria (in support of Lindberg and Morrison's argument) the past performance of the candidate and the voter's personal connection with the candidate based on the seemingly credible promise of jobs or public works which is prevalent in contemporary Ghanaian body politic".

In the case of the latter, that is, information and political silence of non-economic issues, the respondents were not too sure and so less than 5.0% responded that "citizens are often not able to predict the intention of politicians in relation to economic issues such as employment and the provision of other social benefits. To them politicians often short change the electorate when it comes to issues of job creation and non-economic issues such as provision of security and other safety nets.

An interesting finding is that the respondents interviewed said "Ghana is not only a two-party state but also polarized and it is characterized by overpoliticization of everything." To the respondents "this polarization and overpoliticization tend to limit voters' political space and credible choices." Indeed, this finding corroborated Bratton and van de Walle's (1997:231) position that "political parties in Ghana lack broadly credible policy promises and so the electorate relies on narrow promises made by politicians." To the respondents interviewed, "these politicians' promises are usually made to small groups of constituents who believe their promises (as between patrons and clients)." And that a respondent said "even when political parties cannot convey credible policy stances to voters, individual candidates sometimes can. "Often strong incentives or targeted goods are provided to those few voters to whom individual candidates can make credible promises and weak incentives or public goods are given out which benefit all voters, including even those who do not believe the candidates' promises."

Another key finding is that more than 80.5% of the respondents interviewed confirmed that "politicians in

Ghana do not see it to be more electoral beneficial in pursuing policies that are most likely to increase voter welfare (e.g. improved basic services; water, sanitation, health, governance and education)." The respondents said that, "special interests and patron-based appeals remain strongly influential in Ghana, even as the advent of competitive elections endow Ghanaian citizens with better tools to hold governments accountable for the policies they enact."

Using the Afrobarometer survey report (2008) to identify what citizens look for in politicians and evidence of the claims that politicians actually make when they campaign; it was confirmed by the interviewees that "clearly citizens usually look for the political incentives of politicians, be it past performance or how credible the present campaign message appears to be." Findings though corroborated the Afrobarometer survey conducted by Center for Democratic Development (CDD) (2008), the overwhelming majority of the respondents indicated that Ghanaians are inclined to cast their votes on the basis of "whom you know" non-evaluated-rationale such as a relative, tribe or ethnic identity, religious affiliate, old boyism, classmates or school mates etc. more than the issue of past performance or evaluated-rationale."

Another interesting finding this paper revealed that a respondent interviewed indicated that "though electoral competition in Ghana is not only less effective to deterring politicians from catering to narrow interests, but that, "It is rather difficult to establish ways to encourage them to be more attentive to broad-based, growth-promoting reforms because politicians in Ghana have internalized and institutionalized neopatrimonial logic".

In a related issue, which outcome this paper discovered so interesting is that about 88.5% of the respondents indicated that "though populist policies are not equal to credible national programmes and policies, the majority of Ghanaians are able to credibly evaluate past performance of a party with such policies that do not reflect national programmes and policies."

Using the 2008 elections for example, the respondents less confirmed "any kind of credible policies Mills pursued while in opposition that was subjected to critical analysis such that he emerged the winner." And hence this paper argues that Lindberg and Morrison's argument is inconsistent with the social realities. The majority of the respondents (97.0%) concluded that "credible national programme and policy and ideological cleavages have not shaped political competition in Ghana nearly as much as programmatic appeal, ethnic, clientelistic and regional factors."

A very contradictory and controversial finding is that about 89.0% of the respondents "believed the fact that parties in Ghana are as though programmatic but they also find the parties to neopatrimonially institutionalized – exhibit greater party discipline and at the same time resort to populist inducement." In the analysis of the logic of neopatrimonialism, the paper sets out to interrogate

what special interests were so influential in producing clientelism and also, what aspect of clientelism and special interest or influence that could become the two sides of the same coin or produce the desired outcome. The overwhelming majority (98.5%) confirmed that "it has become clear the logic of clientelism and neopatrimonialism are veiled sources of power and influence, and their source of influence often depends on citizen's demand for political incentives on one hand, and politician's ability to programme and deliver policies responsive to their demands."

In the context of desired outcome, 87.5% of the respondents said "it requires strategic thinking and planning, thus framing credible promises or policies and possessing the skills to articulate or disseminate and act politically conducive period, tackling them."

The overwhelming majority of the respondents (96.0%) believe "there is a fair amount of theorizing about choice of effort politicians make to pursue and implement different accountability mechanisms, particularly programmatic and clientelistic politics (albeit less so about the intensity of programmatic effort made by political parties)." Some respondents, not less than 64.5%, maintained "but there is a general paucity of data reporting how parties actually make such choices in democracies around the world, and how much effort occurs to deploy various democratic linkage mechanisms."

Finally, this paper compared politicians' efforts to project programmatic appeals with other appeals and established by the majority of the respondents over 80% that "politicians may employ populist politics to attract voters and establish relations of accountability and suggested the need for future avenues for the refinement of these measures". The argument that it is increasingly becoming difficult to secure a first victory in Ghana because the parties are not able to convince the electorate with their populists policies, has critically been explored and tends to be correct. About 75% of the respondents indicated that "the reason(s) being that Ghana is not just a polarized state (two party-state), block voting assumes phenomenal rise and also, it is abundantly clear that any strong member of one party may prefer to stand independently when defaulted to joining the opposition party (Brobbey, 2009). It is also clear that no matter what a politician gives to a member of opposition, it becomes extremely difficult to induce the vote." In short, "once opposition, always opposition."

Conclusion

The usage of tariffs on rice as the center of argument in this paper is therefore more appropriate in that clearly, there are differences in the policy emphasis placed on rice output. One focuses on importation and tariff reduction, increasing rice consumption and at the same time creating job for rice importers. The other focuses on

rice production and increasing consumption thereby encouraging locally produced rice and at the same time creating jobs for local rice growers. However, the point of departure is that, these policies are exclusionary or discriminatory policies. While Kufuor's policy targeted urban rice importers consumers (urban bias) Mills' policy focused on Northern local rice production (Northern rice producer-centered). Also significant is that rice policies of Kufuor and Mills appear to have the propensity to attract electorate's votes to facilitate the 50% +1 valid vote to win the presidency. In line, it is becoming a daunting task for the country to experience one touch elections due to pervasive neopatrimonialism in Ghana, and hence election outcomes tend to reflect block voting pattern making it impossible for a party to emerge one touch winner. Also evidential is that the incumbents are unable to ensure sustainable credible national programmes and policies beyond regimes. Neopatrimonialism is not only very popular but also well entrenched in Ghanaian body politic, and that, it is a very complex and contradictory phenomenon, that is, it simultaneously spurs and negates democratic rule. Besides, neopatrimonial rulers often circumvent vertical and horizontal accountability and hence tend to promote corruption.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the findings discussed, this paper makes some recommendations for policy action and also for further research as praxis. First, political education should be intensified to create awareness of neopatrimonial practices and at the same time expose the negative elements of neopatrimonial practices. Second, although neopatrimonialism has been institutionalized, it has not been illegalized. This paper recommends the need to set up an institution such as Anti-Corruption squad to deal with issues of neopatrimonial practice such that the perpetrators of neopatrimonialism would be brought to book. Third, politicians should not only be made to render accounts of every bit of their campaign messages, manifestos and promises, but also the parliament should enact laws that would enable the general public to prosecute any politician who short changes the public with vain promises.

Finally, given the complexity and contradictory nature of neopatrimonialism, further research is important to address the issue of distinguishing culturally, what is to be considered socially acceptable practice and politically what is not, bearing in mind the dichotomy between private and public decisions.

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