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Urbanization in Africa: Integrating multiculturalism in urban development in Uganda

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This paper demonstrates the need to integrate multiculturalism in urban development in Uganda with some policy proposals on how multiculturalism can be integrated into urban development. Through a qualitative research in Arua city in Uganda, findings showed that the city like other cities in Uganda is a culturally diverse city and minority ethnic groups or tribes are at the risk of exclusion if multiculturalism is not integrated into planning and development. Internal migration is the major contributor to cultural diversity. However, the inter-state migration of Africans has a significant contribution to urban cultural diversity. To enhance multiculturalism, this paper presents the following policy proposals: the review of the existing policies and the formulation of inclusive policies that allow minorities to participate in governance. The inclusion of multiculturalism in the development plan, ensuring a non-discriminatory business environment that accelerates the ease of starting and doing business. The active involvement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), improving the living conditions in slums where majority of the migrants dwell, the use of various languages and the intensification of multiculturalism awareness campaigns in urban areas.

Key words: Multiculturalism, cultural diversity, inclusive urban development, Sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda.

INTRODUCTION

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) is a very ethnically diverse region whose urban population has steadily increased in the past decades. By the year 2030, most people in Africa will be urban dwellers. Parekh (2005) emphasized that "Cultural diversity is an inescapable fact of modern life." Across the globe, people of different ethnic and or racial differences live together in cities (Fincher et al., 2014). The challenge at hand for SSA is to develop culturally inclusive cities in contemporary times. UN-HABITAT defined an inclusive city as "a place where everyone, regardless of their economic means, gender, race, ethnicity or religion, is enabled and empowered to fully participate in the social, economic and political opportunities that cities have to offer" (Habitat, 2002). This paper focuses on cultural diversity as an element of an inclusive city. In the cities, the enhancement of multiculturalism can be a way of harmonizing cultural diversity. Multiculturalism refers to accepting and supporting different ethnic or cultural groups to promote social, economic, political, and cultural inclusion in

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society. The concept of multiculturalism has become widely integrated into urban planning and development in developed countries (De Vita and Oppido, 2016; Germain, 2002). Multiculturalism ensures equitable distribution of resources and participation in development because empirical research indicates that in culturally diverse communities, certain groups have advantages compared to others (Marc, 2009; Presbey, 2003; Seekings, 2010). However, in SSA, despite the vast ethnic and cultural diversity, the integration of multiculturalism in urban development has not been considered as an important aspect. Germain (2002) emphasized that cities should include planning for cultural diversity as part of Sustainable development. Therefore, contemporary urban development must take into account multiculturalism (Burayidi, 2000; Burstein and Grenier, 2000; De Vita and Oppido, 2016; Qadeer, 1997; Sandercock and Kliger, 1998; Sandercock and Bridgman, 1999).

CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND URBANIZATION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Ethnic diversity is a significant characteristic of the local modes of belonging in SSA. There are hundreds of languages spoken and tribes, the ethnic groups are used to identify people (Easterly and Levine, 1995; Edel, 1965; Fearon, 2003; Nasong'o, 2016). Compared to other regions, Sub-Saharan Africa is the most ethnically divided as it accounts for 43% of the world's ethnic groups. Except for countries like Rwanda and Burundi, most of the countries in SSA are ethnically fragmented, for example, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria, Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, Ghana, etc. (Fearon, 2003; Nasong'o, 2016). However, previous studies on ethnically fragmented communities have discussed the disadvantage of ethnic diversity as being "unhealthy competition," which affects public service delivery, perpetuates corruption, favoritism, nepotism, and undermines the policies in place (Alesina et al., 2003; Berman et al., 2004; Easterly and Levine, 1995; Marc, 2009; Presbey, 2003). Therefore, ethnic diversity directly leads to social exclusion (De Vita and Oppido, 2016; Fearon, 2003). To promote social inclusion and mutual coexistence, actors must make it a priority to integrate the concept of multiculturalism into the development of the country.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the urban planners and researchers have emphasized urban infrastructure and housing problems as significant challenges to inclusive cities in the region (Cartwright et al., 2018; Manirakiza, 2014; Poulsen, 2010; Titz and Chiotha, 2019). In urban development, the integration of multiculturalism is given less attention in the planning and development of the cities. Since projections show that more than 50% of Africans will be living in urban areas by 2030, yet the region is witnessing increased internal migration, especially to urban areas. It is necessary to integrate multiculturalism in urban development in the world's most ethnically diverse region.

URBANIZATION IN UGANDA AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

A report by Cities Alliance (2016) stated that Uganda is urbanizing at a 6 % rate and the dominance of Kampala, the largest city, was decreasing due to the development of emerging or secondary towns like Arua, Gulu, Jinja, Mbarara, etc. Indeed, on 01st-July -2020, the government of Uganda granted city status to Arua, Gulu, Jinja, Mbarara, Mbale, Fort Portal, Masaka, Soroti, and Lira. Other soon-to-be cities include Hoima, Entebbe, Iganga, etc. These cities do not match the quality and area coverage of cosmopolitan cities such as Lagos, Abuja, Johannesburg, Cape Town, Nairobi, Kinshasa, etc., which are some of the largest cities in the region of Sub-Saharan Africa. However, the growth of secondary cities and soon-to-be cities vividly shows that Uganda is urbanizing quickly. The urban population in Uganda has increased from 1 million in 1980, 3 million in 2002, 7.4 million in 2014, to an estimated 9.4 million in 2017 (UBOS, 2018). Like other countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, most Ugandans live in rural areas. However, as the urban population increases, the rural population has declined from 84.6% in 2005/2006 to 75.5% in 2016/2017. In the same period, the urban population increased from 15.4% in 2005/2006 to 24.5% in 2016/2017 (UBOS, 2016/2017). This increase in the urban population is evidence of increasing urbanization in the country.

Uganda is a heterogeneous country with several ethnic groups that speak different languages like the Bantu (most prominent ethnic group), Sudanic and Nilotic languages (Edel, 1965). The Uganda Constitution (1995) recognized 56 indigenous communities while the Constitution (Amendment) Act 2005 recognized other local communities; the Aliba, Aringa, Banyabutumbi, Banyaruguru, Barundi, Gimara, Ngikutio, Reli, and Shana. This recognition means that Uganda has 65 recognized indigenous communities, making Uganda one of Africa's most ethnically fragmented countries (Fearon, 2003) due to the relatively small area that the country covers. Although Uganda is very ethnically diverse, which means more cultural diversity, urban development and planning have not embraced multiculturalism. Similarly, as a country, the minorities' values and cultural diversity have been ignored, thus threatening minority tribes (Baker, 2001). The enhancement and integration of multiculturalism in development programs is the only way of binding the ethnically diverse country. It is upon this background that this research was carried out to answer the question:

How can people from different cultural groups, tribes,

and nationalities mutually live and work in Uganda's cities?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To answer this question, we decided to conduct a qualitative exploratory research in one of Uganda's emerging cities (Arua city); the city is in the North-Western part of Uganda, known as the West Nile sub-region in Uganda. Arua became a fully recognized city on the 01st -July-2020; Arua is a small city but unique because of its strategic location, located 15km from the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo and 75km from South Sudan. This location makes Arua city a crucial regional city for Uganda, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The majority of residents in Arua city belong to the Lugbara tribe. Still, it is worth mentioning that the influx of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda has contributed to cultural diversity in Arua city due to its location as a city near the border of South Sudan (Tol et al., 2018). Additionally, many people from different tribes in Uganda are residents of the Arua, such as the Acholi, Baganda, Iteso, Langi, etc. Data was collected through semi-structured in-depth individual interviews and 30 participants were interviewed during the data collection period (January 2020). Through the help of a social worker working with a Non-Government Organization in Arua city, the participants for the study were identified. Of the 30 participants, 10 participants belonged to the Lugbara tribe – the majority tribe in Arua city, then 10 were participants belonging to other Ugandan tribes such as the Baganda, Aringa, Langi, etc. The last set of 10 participants included non-Ugandan nationals such as the South Sudanese, Congolese, Ethiopians, and Rwandese. The reason for using in-depth individual interviews was to have a broader understanding of how the city residents perceived living in a multicultural city and the challenges they encountered. An administrator of Arua city council was interviewed; this was a key informant interview. This interview was to understand ethnic diversity in Arua and to understand the role the government and other partners are playing in the city to promote inclusive development in a culturally diverse urban environment.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

The outstanding research limitation to this study was the limited number of previous studies in this area of study, especially studies focusing on Uganda. Multiculturalism and urban development have widely been discussed and researched in developed countries or major cities worldwide. In Sub-Saharan Africa, except for South Africa, there is little focus on multiculturalism in urban development despite the region being the most ethnically diverse region in the world. Great ethnic diversity directly translates into urban cultural diversity, which makes it vital to discuss multiculturalism given that Sub-Saharan African countries are urbanizing at a fast rate. The rapidly expanding cities attract people of different cultures to live and work together in a multicultural urban environment. Therefore, due to the limited number of previous studies on multiculturalism and urban development in Sub-Saharan Africa and Uganda, there was not much literature.

RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE/CONTRIBUTION

This research is significant and contributes to the general understanding of multiculturalism in urban development in Uganda, given that little research has been conducted in the area of study. Uganda is a culturally diverse country that is urbanizing fast; it is necessary to integrate multiculturalism in urban development to create inclusive cities. The research also broadens the concept of inclusive cities in Uganda by suggesting that inclusive cities have to incorporate multiculturalism in planning and development. From the research findings, the policymakers can consider integrating multiculturalism in urban development as this paper draws attention to the subject matter. Therefore, policies can be designed from the proposals stipulated in this paper, which is a policy contribution. In the discussion section, policy proposals that can help to promote and enhance multiculturalism in Ugandan cities are delineated.

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

The findings presented are from the data collected from Arua city, one of the major cities in Uganda. Other cities in Uganda include Kampala (capital city), Mbale, Jinja, Mbarara, Fort Portal, Masaka, Soroti and Lira. There are also several soon-to-be cities (municipalities) and smaller towns (town councils). In terms of cultural diversity, the cultural diversity in Arua city exists in other cities. Persons belonging to different tribes or ethnic groups and cultures live together in various cities and towns in Uganda. Therefore, the findings from Arua city can be used to draw policies that apply to other cities. However, the cultures and common languages that are spoken in each city may differ because Uganda is a very ethnically fragmented country (the constitution recognizes 65 different tribes/local communities in Uganda). Typically, a city attracts residents from nearby neighboring districts and beyond, which results into the migration of persons who speak other languages or are from different tribes and cultures. These migrants, together with the natives or locals, come together to live in a multicultural urban environment. Three major themes emerged through the coding and analysis of the data. These include the awareness of cultural diversity, migration as a contributor to cultural diversity, and the policy proposals to enhance multiculturalism in cities in Uganda. Under the policy proposals, specific policy proposals that can promote and improve multiculturalism in urban development are presented.

Awareness of cultural diversity

The residents of Arua city and the city administration are both aware of cultural diversity in the city that emanates from the cultural diversity of the residents. The 30 participants were each able to identify an average of eleven tribes or groups of persons of other nationalities living in Arua. Besides the Lugbara, who doubles as the majority and natives of Arua, the other most identified migrant tribes that appeared several times in the participants' responses include the Alur, Acholi, Baganda, Langi, respectively. While for the non-Ugandans, the most identified included the South Sudanese, Congolese, Indians, and Ethiopians, respectively. A participant of Congolese origin (Democratic Republic of Congo), for example, identified several tribes (migrants and natives)

and foreign nationals living in Arua. She elaborated that:

*"Arua is very culturally diverse due to several persons from different tribes within Uganda and foreign nationals like me living and working here. Arua consists of the Lugbara, Baganda, Banyankole, Bagishu, Kakwa, Iteso, Langi, Acholi, Madi, Kabu, Alur, Gimara, Dinkas (South Sudanese), Congolese, Indians, Rwandese, Kenyans, and others. We all live and work in this city" (*Participant #23).

The city administrator also highlighted the kind of cultural diversity or ethnic diversity among the residents of Arua city. He explained that:

"Arua is a cosmopolitan city; its diversity stretches even beyond the Ugandan borders. From the international perspective, we have many Congolese, and this is because we are just 9km away from the border with the Democratic Republic of Congo. We also host several South Sudanese because of the influx of South Sudanese refugees and because the border with South Sudan is not far. Internally, I would say almost all tribes of Uganda listed in the constitution are here; the Baganda, Banyankole, Acholi, Iteso, Kakwa, Alur, Jopadhola, almost every tribe in Uganda is here. In summary, if we look at the national perspective, the biggest ethnic groups here who originally are not natives of Arua are the Luo ethnic group who consist of the Langi, Alur, and Acholi tribes. Followed by the Bantu ethnic group, consisting of tribes like the Baganda, Basoga, Banyankole, Bagishu, etc. However, for the non-Ugandans, the majority are the Congolese and South Sudanese nationals."

Migration is the driver to cultural diversity

Cities and emerging cities are pulling persons of different cultures, tribes, and ethnic backgrounds to live in the same urban area. In Arua city; the city administrator noted that:

"*…internally, I would say almost all tribes of Uganda listed in the constitution are here; the Baganda, Banyankole, Acholi, Iteso, Kakwa, Alur, Jopadhola, almost every tribe in Uganda is here in Arua city".*

Uganda is a relatively small country (236,040 square kilometers). However, the Constitution of Uganda (2005) recognizes 65 indigenous communities. These indigenous communities have different cultures and languages. Internal migration within Uganda (both rural-urban migration and urban-urban migration) facilitates the growth of multicultural urban areas like Arua city. In Arua city, there is a considerable presence of Africans from other countries; these include the Nigerians, Ethiopians, Kenyans, Somalis, Rwandese, Congolese from the Democratic Republic of Congo, South Sudanese, etc.

The presence of many Africans living in Arua from other countries signifies inter-state migration within Africa. Indeed, Africa's cities are attracting persons within the national boundaries and those from neighboring countries and beyond.

Policy proposals to promote and enhance multiculturalism in ugandan cities

The policy proposals identified include the review of existing policies and the formulation of inclusive policies, non-discriminatory trading policies and encouraging investments by the migrants, the involvement of Civil Society Organizations, improving livelihoods of slum dwellers, the use of language as a unifying factor, and the use of awareness campaigns.

Review of existing policies and the formulation of inclusive policies

A review of existing urban policies is a foundation to formulating inclusive policies that ensure multiculturalism and the mutual coexistence of persons from different cultures. Policies that ensure the active participation of minorities, migrants, and foreigners in decision-making facilitate the integration of persons of different cultures into the urban areas. To foster multiculturalism, the views and representation of the various groups of residents are essential (Leikkilä et al., 2013). In the interview with the administrator of Arua city, the administrator elaborated that:

"….. Participation in leadership and governance by the minority tribes or those who have migrated here is lacking. The direction Arua is taking, it should be an inclusive city, and we can only achieve this through involving the various ethnic groups and tribes resident here in the planning and budgeting process. I think it is high time we recognized the need to allow persons of diverse cultural backgrounds in this city to present their needs to understand their issues clearly. There is a need for affirmative action to ensure that persons belonging to minority ethnic groups are represented in the leadership of Arua".

The central government, in consultation with the city authorities, needs to formulate policies or undertake necessary policy amendments to ensure that the policies that involve the governance of the cities are reformed. The active involvement of persons belonging to minority tribes in a particular town or city in the politics and administration ensures that persons from different cultural backgrounds are represented. In the interviews, the participants who belonged to the majority tribe (Lugbara) expressed concern about the lack of political representation of persons belonging to the minority tribes/

migrant tribes or ethnic groups resident in Arua. Participants #3 and #9 narrated that:

"The minority tribes and migrants are segregated when it comes to participating in politics; the majority tribe does not support them to take on big political positions in Arua" (Participant #3).
"It is hard for persons from the minority tribes and migrant groups to contest for a political position in Arua because they will not get the support they need; those from the majority tribes hardly vote for them" (Participant #9).

Affirmative action for people belonging to minority or migrants groups in the city can be a foundation for promoting a culturally inclusive city. Such an action can start with lower-level representation so that different ethnic groups or cultural groups feel represented.

Non-discriminatory trading policies and encouraging investment by migrants

Small and medium-sized enterprises are a common feature of African cities, unlike in developed countries or highly industrialized economies where there are several industries, factories, and businesses operating on a large scale. Informal sector and informal employment mainly characterized by self-employment comprise a significant share of business enterprises in cities in SSA. Fields (2013) described self-employment in developing countries as 'a norm' because self-employment is a substantial employer in developing countries such as those in SSA. The informal sector employs most workers (Bezu and Holden, 2014; Sommers, 2010). Sommer (2010) emphasized that two-thirds of urban dwellers in African cities earn a living from the informal sector. The informal sector comprises self-employment (self-employed employers or own-account workers) in which metropolitan dwellers operate small-scale enterprises. Therefore, policies targeting these workers affect their livelihoods. In Arua city, there was a high level of satisfaction among the research participants. The participants commended the city council for being non-discriminatory and transparent in the issuing of business licenses. The city council also encouraged persons from different tribes, ethnic groups, and foreigners to engage in business or start-up businesses through radio talk shows and other mediums of communication. The city administrator in the interview explained that:

"….as the city council, our policies are non-discriminatory, especially when it comes to issuing trading licenses. We charge standard fares without discrimination against people of different ethnic groups, including foreigners".

Non-discriminatory trading policies or policies that favor

the establishment of businesses are essential for self-employed workers. In Arua, the city council allows persons from different areas to sell their goods by the roadsides of some streets, such as the road to Ediofe. The administrator stated that this was allowed to ensure that even persons from other places could take advantage of the initiative. This arrangement is permitted from Friday evening to Sunday evening. Some of the participants interviewed were operating businesses as own-account workers or self-employed workers in Arua city, especially those from other parts of Uganda who had migrated to Arua city. Participant #5 cherished the fact that he had learned business skills from migrants. He narrated that:

"I am a Lugbara by tribe, and this is our city, but I have learned a lot from the Baganda migrants who live and work in Arua. I have learned some business skills from them because the Baganda are so business-minded, unlike the Lugbara".

The city administrator interviewed similarly noted that the non-locals of Arua have changed the mindset of the locals. He said that:

"the Lugbara thought small businesses like manicure, hawking and vending around places like the hospital were for only Baganda men, but they are now involved."

Upon such a background, it is, therefore, necessary to ease the process of issuing and obtaining licenses for all city dwellers to achieve inclusion and a sense of belonging for the business operators or self-employed migrants who operate within the city. Additional assistance to facilitate the establishment of businesses should be available and accessible by the migrants from other places.

Involvement of civil society organizations or non-government organizations

In the interviews, there was little mention of what Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and cultural institutions are doing to embrace diversity and to encourage persons of different ethnic groups to live together. However, the role that civil society plays in promoting multiculturalism cannot be underestimated. The participants, including the key informant interviewed, emphasized the need for the civil society to increase involvement in promoting and sensitizing people to live in a multicultural environment. In Arua, only three NGOs, two are community-based organizations, were reported to be calling upon people of different tribes, ethnicities, and non-Ugandans to live and work as people belonging to the same city. Cultural leaders and cultural institutions have a role in integrating people of diverse cultures to live

together. In Arua, the Lugbara cultural leader (the leader of the majority tribe) has an envoy to the Alur cultural institution (Alur are one of the tribes in Arua). This form of cooperation between cultural leaders is necessary for creating a city where persons of different cultures and ethnic groups work and live together with minimal confrontation between the various cultural groups. A multi-stakeholder involvement of the local communities, NGOs, institutions, and the state is essential in ensuring that urban diversity facilitates building equity in the metropolitan area (De Vita and Oppido, 2016). In summary, civil society organizations' involvement in diffusing cultural differences among urban dwellers is significant in inclusive urban development. Cultural integration through intercultural activities such as sports galas, artistic music festivals is essential. Throughout the interview sessions, the interviewees demonstrated the need for intercultural activities organized by the city council and other organizations as means that would promote inter-cultural interactions and the establishment of a multicultural city that can thrive as an inclusive city.

Improving livelihoods of slum dwellers

It is common for minority ethnic groups, both natives and migrants, to live in the town or city suburbs. In Arua's slums, those belonging to minority ethnic groups and migrant groups mainly live in the outskirts of the town (suburbs). In Africa's slums, social services like health care facilities, schools, and roads are either lacking or in a poor state (Arimah and Branch, 2011; Mutisya and Yarime, 2011; Pieterse, 2011). Those belonging to minority ethnic tribes and migrants we interviewed during the study resided in the slums of Arua city, where they complained of the lack of health centers, schools, and poor road networks in their neighborhoods. Inadequate social services cause a feeling of social exclusion from the urban area by the slum dwellers. Improving social services delivery and housing in the slums by authorities can be a foundation for inclusive urban development and a platform for integration of minority ethnic groups and migrants which subsequently strengthens multiculturalism in the metropolitan area.

Language(s) as a unifying factor

Except for a few African countries like Kenya and Tanzania that have been able to unite their citizens through using a common local language- Swahili; several African countries rely on mainly English, French, and Arabic as languages that connect people. It is typical in Africa for a single country to have several languages spoken. Language is fundamental in communication and integration in the urban environment. In the interviews in Arua, even the majority tribe who are the Lugbara pointed

out language barrier as one of the common problems experienced by the minority tribes/migrant tribes and foreigners even in access to government social services like health care. Those belonging to tribes that migrated to Arua city face language difficulty in communication, mainly if they cannot express themselves in English. The city council and other government offices have to be at the frontline of ensuring that at least messages are translated into other languages. Translators should be available in places like hospitals for persons whose languages make up a portion of the languages spoken in the city, especially for those migrant groups whose population projections are growing in the city. In Uganda, several languages have similarities; for example, a person who can speak Luganda can understand a high percentage of Lusoga or Lugwere languages; this means that an interpreter can be able to interpret several languages. In Uganda, there is a broad classification of languages based on ethnic groups such as the Bantu and Luo ethnic groups.

Multiculturalism awareness campaigns

As already discussed, the urban residents and the city administrators are aware of cultural diversity. However, awareness of cultural diversity does not mean awareness of multiculturalism. In Arua city, the city authority administrator delineated the need for campaigns to educate and sensitize the city residents on living in a multicultural environment to build a city where all residents have a sense of belonging. It is the responsibility of the city authority and other non-state actors such as the Non-Government organizations, cultural leaders, and religious leaders to participate in awareness campaigns using several channels such as radios, social media platforms, religious and cultural festivals or ceremonies, etc. These campaigns can translate the awareness of cultural diversity into multiculturalism awareness among the city dwellers.

Conclusion

The presence of several tribes or ethnic groups and immigrants of African origin moving across borders makes it inevitable to discuss urbanization and inclusive cities without involving cultural diversity. With the rapid urbanization rate in Sub-Saharan Africa, cities and municipalities will continue pulling together persons belonging to different tribes or ethnic groups and nationalities. The state and non-state actors must take multiculturalism into consideration in the planning and development of inclusive cities. Uganda currently hosts over one million refugees, mainly from South Sudan majority of them prefer to settle in urban areas such as Kampala, Arua, Masaka, etc. There is also rapid

urbanization in Uganda fuelled by rural-urban migration of the youths who prefer urban areas rather than rural areas. Since Uganda has several different tribes, the development of culturally diverse cities is inevitable. Policymakers and urban planners need to integrate the concept of multiculturalism in urban development in Uganda's cities to promote inclusive urban development and the mutual coexistence of persons from different cultural backgrounds. In the development of inclusive cities, it is vital to broaden the concept of inclusive cities from the narrow approach that focuses on infrastructure and social services such as roads, electricity, and water to include the enhancement of multiculturalism. Urban cultural diversity is an inescapable fact due to the ethnic fragmentation of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the building of cities while considering multiculturalism is an essential aspect of urban development in Uganda.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should compare cities within Uganda to develop a coherent national strategy for integration of multiculturalism in urban development in Uganda and to design a tailored made policy approach.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors have not declared any conflict of interest.

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