



Africa: History and Culture

Has been issued since 2016.
E-ISSN 2500-3771
2019. (4)1. Issued once a year

EDITORIAL BOARD

Sarfo Jacob Owusu – KAD International, Effiduase-Koforidua, Eastern Region, Ghana (Editor-in-Chief)

Asiedu Michael – KAD International, Effiduase-Koforidua, Eastern Region, Ghana

Cudjoe Josephine – KAD International, Effiduase-Koforidua, Eastern Region, Ghana

Egan Victor – Culture Bridge Australia Consulting (CBAC), Perth, Western Australia

Ofori Stella – Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation

Anakwah Nkansah – University of Ghana, Ghana

Wandusim Michael Fuseini – University of Goettingen, Germany

Doe Patience Fakornam – University of Cape Coast, Ghana

Kugbey Nuworza – University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa

Atefoe Ethel Akpene – University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ghana

Melanie C. Schlatter – Well Woman Clinic, Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Journal is indexed by: CrossRef, OAJI

All manuscripts are peer reviewed by experts in the respective field. Authors of the manuscripts bear responsibility for their content, credibility and reliability.

Editorial board doesn't expect the manuscripts' authors to always agree with its opinion.

Postal Address: 1367/4, Stara Vajnorska str., Bratislava – Nove Mesto, Slovakia, 831 04

Release date 20.12.19.
Format 21 × 29,7/4.

Website: <http://ejournal48.com/>
E-mail: sarfojo@yahoo.com

Headset Georgia.

Founder and Editor: Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o.

Order № AHC-5.

© Africa: History and Culture, 2019

Africa: History and Culture

2019

Is. **1**

CONTENTS

Editorial

2020 Open Call for Special Issues: Editor-in-Chief's Note J. Owusu Sarfo	3
---	---

Articles and Statements

"Hey! Who is that Dandy?": High Fashion, Lower Class of La Sape in Congo S. Lin	4
Origin and Trajectory of National Youth Service Programme in Africa: An Exploratory Review K. Oyedele Lamidi	12
Political Party Vigilantism and Violence in Ghana: A Study of the Perceptions of Electorates in the Cape Coast Metropolis B. Incoom, E. Kwame Tham-Agyekum	23
<i>Azadirachta indica</i> (Neem Tree) for Furniture Production in Ghana: A Historical Review J. Lawer Narh	33
Gaps and Opportunities for Labour Force Participation in Ghana: A Position Paper C. Tawiah Narh	37

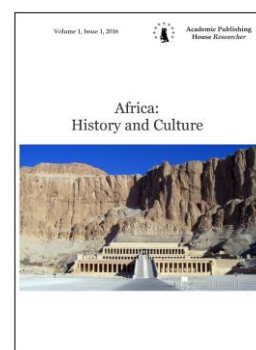
Copyright © 2019 by Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o.



Published in the Slovak Republic
Africa: History and Culture
Has been issued since 2016.
E-ISSN: 2500-3771
2019, 4(1): 3

DOI: 10.13187/ahc.2019.1.3

www.ejournal48.com



Editorial

2020 Open Call for Special Issues: Editor-in-Chief's Note

Jacob Owusu Sarfo ^{a, b, c}

^a All Nations University College, Ghana

^b University of Cape Coast, Ghana

^c International Network Center for Fundamental and Applied Research, Washington, USA

Africa: History and Culture (AHAC), had been issued since 2016 as an electronic scientific journal by the Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o., Slovak Republic. Over the years, we have carved a consistent brand as a standard multidisciplinary scientific journal.

Our core goal of offering Open Access publishing with free publishing and subscription rights to all our authors and readers respectively is to promote the development of Africa through research. As a multidisciplinary journal, we have maintained a submission-acceptance rate of 45 % with a rigorous peer review system.

In the year 2020, the Editorial Team of AHAC will like to announce our 2020 Open Call for Special Issues. Themes/topics for proposals must denote a scope that is important and critical for present African development.

Furthermore, the assessment of relevance and novelty will be carefully employed by peer reviewers to select the best proposals before April 01, 2020.

Outline for the proposal should include, but not limited to:

1. complete names, affiliations, and addresses [including emails] of the guest editor[s];
2. maximum of 8,500 words [including tables, figures, and references];
3. timetable;
4. 3 - 10 potential reviewers.

All completed proposals should be sent as a single PDF document to the Editor-in-Chief of AHAC [[✉ sarfojo@yahoo.com](mailto:sarfojo@yahoo.com)].

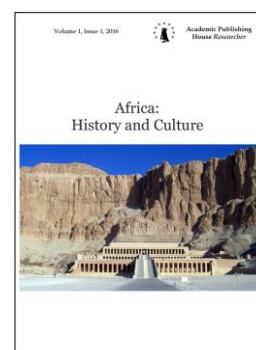
Thank you and hoping to receive your wonderful proposal.

Copyright © 2019 by Academic Publishing House Researcher s.r.o.



Published in the Slovak Republic
Africa: History and Culture
Has been issued since 2016.
E-ISSN: 2500-3771
2019, 4(1): 4-11

DOI: 10.13187/ahc.2019.1.4

www.ejournal48.com

Articles and Statements

“Hey! Who is that Dandy?”: High Fashion, Lower Class of La Sape in Congo

Shuan Lin ^{a, *}^a National Changhua University of Education, Taiwan

Abstract

Vestments transmit a sense of identity, status, and occasion. The vested body thus provides an ideal medium for investigating changing identities at the intersection of consumption and social status. This paper examines the vested body in the *la Sape* movement in Congo, Central Africa, by applying the model of ‘conspicuous consumption’ put forward by Thorstein Veblen. In so doing, the model of ‘conspicuous consumption’ illuminates how *la Sape* is more than an appropriation of western fashion, but rather a medium by which fashion is invested as a site for identity transformation in order to distinguish itself from the rest of the society. The analysis focuses particularly the development of this appropriation of western clothes from the pre-colonial era to the 1970s with the intention of illustrating the proliferation of *la Sape* with the expanding popularity of Congolese music at its fullest magnitude, and the complex consumption on clothing.

Keywords: Congo, Conspicuous Consumption, *la Sape*, Papa Wemba, Vested Body, Vestments.

1. Introduction

“I saved up to buy these shoes. It took me almost two years. If I hadn’t bought this pair, I’d have bought a plot of land,” he said proudly, adding that it’s the designer logo that adds to his “dignity” and “self-esteem.” *“I had to buy them,”* he said.

“Congo Dandies”, RT

Amidst the euphoria, shock rapidly devoured the concert hall in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, on April 24th, 2016, as singer Papa Wemba, died after his collapse on stage. Known for his Congolese rumba, soukous and ndombolo, Wemba’s sudden death is a great loss not only to the music industry but also to the African subculture. Wemba pioneered and popularized the ‘La Sape’ Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes (The Society of Ambiance-Makers and Elegant People) look and style through his musical group Viva La Musica. There are two Congos (central Africa): Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC or Congo-Kinshasa), formerly a Belgian colony, and Republic of the Congo (Congo-Brazzaville), formerly a French colony. Both gained independence in 1960. For the purpose of this paper, Congo will be utilized without distinction.

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: shuanbox@gmail.com (S. Lin)

In Congo, 'la Sape' has often been known as a transnational movement which not only appropriates fashions of colonizers but translates them in Africa. One theory about this is that la Sape utilizes the vested body as a site invested with visible resistance against the imperial power, whilst elevating one's social status. Vestments thus convey identity, status and sense of occasion. According to Pierre Bourdieu's notion of 'signs of distinction', "fashion offers one of the most favorable terrains and which is the motor of cultural life as a perpetual movement of overtaking and outflanking." (Bourdieu, 1984: 101). Drawing from this, the vested body discloses a space of signifiers that are both indicative and visible in the signification-an ideal medium for investigating changing identities at the intersection of consumption and social status.

This paper examines the vested body in la Sape movement from pre-to postcolonial Congo by applying the model of 'conspicuous consumption' put forward by Thorstein Veblen. In so doing, the model of 'conspicuous consumption' sheds light on how la Sape is more than an appropriation of western fashion, but rather a medium by which fashion is invested as a site for identity transformation in order to distinguish itself from the rest of the society. Thus la Sape conveys a lifestyle that transcends social conditions. This analysis focuses particularly on the development of this appropriation of western clothes from the pre-colonial era to the 1970s with the intention of illustrating the proliferation of la Sape with the expanding popularity of Congolese music at its fullest magnitude, and the complex consumption on clothing.

2. Conspicuous Consumption and Vestments in Pre-Colonial Congo

What motivates one to consume and put on specific clothes? Thorstein Veblen's 'conspicuous consumption' is applied in this study for its analogy of the practice of consumption in the Congolese society and the movement of la Sape. Written a century ago, the Norwegian-American economist and sociologist, Thorstein Veblen writes in his *Theory of the Leisure Class* (1899), despite considerable criticisms, develops an evolutionary framework of interpreting consumption patterns. This term was introduced by Veblen to describe members of the upper class in the 19th century who applied their wealth as a means of publicly flaunting their social power and prestige. In other words, people spend money on products or properties in order to give an indication of their wealth. For Veblen, this manner of consumption provides an important factor in determining consumer behavior, for all social classes (Trigg, 2001). People desire prestige and status, and this is enriched by the display of wealth. He distinguishes two major motives for consuming conspicuous goods: *invidious comparison* and *pecuniary emulation* (Bagwell, Bernheim, 1996).

Invidious comparison occurs when members of the higher class consume conspicuously to consolidate their superior position from the members of the lower class. Individuals who imitate the consumption patterns of people who are posited at the higher strata of the hierarchy so that they are thought of as members of the higher class is referred to as the pecuniary emulation. "The result is that the members of each stratum accept as their ideal of decency the scheme of life in vogue in the next higher stratum, and bend their energies to live up to that ideal" (Veblen, 1899: 84). The act of emulation extends to even the poorest are subject to immense pressures to engage in conspicuous consumption. "Very much of squalor and discomfort will be endured before the last trinket or the last pretence of pecuniary decency is put away" (Veblen, 1899: 85). This quest for status through consumption is an ongoing process, for when the product which confers status is acquired by many; it loses its functionality of conspicuous consumption. Under such circumstances, people are obligated to acquire new consumption products in order to perpetuate their *difference* from others. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of 'social distinction' was influenced by Veblen's model, provides further insight into the importance of generating a difference:

Each condition is defined, inseparably, by its relational properties which depend in their turn on its position within the system of conditions which in this way is also a system of differences, of differential positions, that is by everything that distinguishes it (from that which it is not) and especially that to which it is opposed: Social identity is defined and affirmed in a field of difference (Bourdieu, 1984: 191).

In this sense, consumption is definitive in the practice of social difference. Veblen further observes that the exhibiting of luxury possessions had occurred across societies and epochs. In order to secure esteem and prestige, one flaunts possessions, and not merely possessing wealth and power. Veblen states that "the wealth or power must be put in evidence, for esteem is awarded only on evidence. And not only does the evidence of wealth serve to impress one's importance on

others and to keep their sense of his importance alive and alert, but it is of scarcely less use in building up and preserving one's self-complacency" (Veblen, 1899: 19). Along this line of thought, G.W. Belk points out in "Third World Consumer Culture" that in developing countries the motivation to gain status from acquisition and consumption of goods are "often attracted to and indulge in aspects of conspicuous consumption before they have secured adequate food, clothing and shelter" (Belk, 1988: 104). Thus, consumption is immediately conspicuous as soon as the product is seen by others. Though Veblen proposed this model in depicting the consumption of the 'leisure class' in the late 18th to the 19th century, the concept of social emulation may be applied in analyzing the practice of consumption in Congo in the time span from pre-colonial to the early post-colonial period. The model serves to direct a reading of a strategic way of consolidating social positions through consumption. I argue that Veblen's conspicuous consumption resonates with the strategic vestimentary codes attributed to the movement of *la Sape* in Congo.

A long history of traffic in cloth and clothing can be traced back to Congo. Researches have demonstrated that clothing plays a vital role in the practices of social differentiation in Congo since the pre-colonial days. Jan Vansina notes in his study of the 'people of the forest' the etymological connections between wealth and leadership. He observes that the "greatest differences in standards of living between people were seen in their personal appearance, in clothing and jewelry, thus the wealthy and the chiefs could show who they were" (Vansina, 1982: 307). Powerful men put on animal furs, copper jewelry, and animal claws to visibly solidify their status. According to Phyllis M. Martin's "Leisure and Society in Colonial Brazzaville", "the presentation of self in the outward display was an important aspect of pre-colonial society and it was a tradition transferred and transformed in the urban area" (Martin, 1995: 155). Wealthy elders could manipulate power through the circulation of costly vestments, which they distributed aptly to dependents who lacked the means to acquire them.

With the arrival of Europeans in Congo, rare and exotic items equally were powerful signifiers for underlining status and distinction. Documented by a French administrative stationed at a post in Brazzaville, he observed that for the powerful individuals "it is necessary to give them something that no one else has, old clothes, especially bright colors, lace or braided coats, hats and helmets" (Vidrovitch, 1989: 401). More observations illustrate this practice of utilizing European products for further strengthening distinction of social position:

But since this kingdom received the Christian faith, the nobles of the court have begun to dress according to the Portuguese fashion, wearing cloaks, capes, scarlet tabards, and silk robes, everyone according to his means. They also wear hoods and capes, velvet and leather flippers, buskins, and rapiers at their sides. Those not rich enough to imitate the Portuguese, retain their former dress (Pigafetta, 1970: 109).

Those situated in the higher strata of the society began vesting Western clothes in order to emulate the whites, whilst those not wealthy enough could only scrape up used clothes. Into the colonial experience, many Congolese had already formed a firm knowledge of the symbolic importance of vestments and the association of style and power. Apparently, there prevailed a distinct sense of 'politics of costume' (Picton, Mack, 1979). According to Martin this consumption and captivation of imported clothes by the indigenous populations was in a "purposeful manner derived from their pre-existing cultural perceptions" (Martin, 1995: 405). Anyone with access to cash could procure clothes and the widespread availability of these vestments heightened the discourse charged with meaning and social differentiation, as exemplified by the *La Sape* movement.

3. *La Sape* in Congo

Black dandy originates from the 18th century in England, when the slaves were lavishly dressed by their masters as a way for the British elite to impress and consolidate their social status (Miller, 2009). These slaves in turn became 'conspicuous items' to be possessed and flaunted. This black dandyism affected identity formation in a surging cosmopolitan commodity culture. As a result, this provided a site for appropriation and resistance to the status that had imposed on them. The African continent also saw its own modern dandyism. The historical origins of modern dandyism '*la Sape*' movement in Congo is much debated, as Gondola in "Dream and Drama" argues that Justin-Daniel Gandoulou's (1989) assumption of *La Sape* emerged during the post WWII years is inaccurate, "The *Sape* was made visible during the war years with the emergence of social clubs

whose inception is linked to the dawn of bar-dance halls in Brazzaville and Kinshasa, and which would serve as the stage for the acting out of the *Sape*" (Gondola, 1999: 26). Nevertheless, few would contest that the colonial influences are inextricably linked to its emergence.

The French word 'sape' designates dress and its verb 'se saper' means to dress fashionably. It first appeared in 1926 in the French lexicon to depict the fashion style that characterized the Parisian socialites of the Roaring Twenties. The French imperialism through the 'mission civilatrice' sought to educate not only the primitive minds, but also the 'primitive bodies'. It is documented that rather than monetary payment, secondhand clothes were utilized as payment of the colonizers to the houseboys. Around 1910, houseboys and servants were the first to imitate their white masters and this act of emulation was encouraged due to its capability of reflecting the masters' social refinement (Bouteiller, 1903). In "Dream and Drama: The Search for Elegance among Congolese Youth", Didier Gondola contends that "some masters did not hesitate to give their used clothing to other houseboys, who showed off their clothes as much to enhance their master's reputation as to increase their own social status in the eyes of other African city dwellers" (Gondola, 1999: 26). In this context, donning the attires handed down by the colonial masters, the black 'body' is invested with significations which are both political and cultural. Thus, the secondhand vestments disclose a space of negotiation between the colonizer and the colonized. At the same time, visibility of the body enclosed in western garments translates for the local people a climb in the social ladder. This phenomenon was in full swing in the 1910s as Baron Johan de Witte's account illustrates:

Today, the locals in the region of Brazzaville dress up too much, and, on Sunday, those that have several pairs of pants, several cardigans, put these clothes on one layer over the other, to flaunt their wealth. Many pride themselves on following Parisian fashion and, having known that not long ago Europeans joked about the blacks' passion for the top hat, so inappropriate for the tropical climate and completing in a sometimes comic manner an outfit which was more than scanty, most of them have given up and now sport elegant panama hats. (De Witte, 1913: 164)

With the expansion of colonial economy migrants from other African nations, particularly from West Africa, began infiltrating the Congolese capital during the 20s and the 30s. These West Africans brought with them clerical qualifications and were hired by private companies to fill in the supplementary positions for which the Congolese could not maneuver (Gondola, 1999). In addition to their superior work expertise the 'Bapopo', as they became known, imported music and the latest European fashion to the central African country. Bapopos "became models to the Congolese elite to combat ingrained charges of inferiority leveled at them by the French and the Belgians" (Gondola, 1999: 159). The colonizers' used attires became an empty signifier as the refined elegance of the West Africans engendered an appellation which was more invested with signification. By the same token, the Congolese houseboys and servants turned to spend their meager wage consuming the latest fad from Paris. As a new group of black Congolese, educated, began to assimilate the colonizers' dress and lifestyle, a black bourgeois began to be formed and became known as the *evolues* (Edgerton, 2002).

These new developments in Congo also broadened and augmented black consciousness and the growth of anti-colonial efforts. Andre Matswa, a Congolese activist advocated equal rights for all the citizens in Congo. During his stay in Paris, he intermingled with other black activists from the Caribbean, other African countries, the US and several liberal French. Instead of the primitiveness linked with the naked black uncivilized body, Matswa's appropriation of the white man's fashioned vestments served as a resistance. The mimicking of the black body in European fashion translates a sameness which disrupts the already-known body for the colonizer and thus transforms into an untranslatable subject. Gondola affirms that "the use of high fashion as a positive identity marker, which is quintessentially what la Sape is about, epitomized their quest for modernity and emancipation" (Gondola, 1999: 161).

Thus far, in the precolonial Congo society vestments were attributed with symbolic power and status, and continued to be utilized as such during the colonial period. Following Veblen's model, dress codes reflect social hierarchies. When the houseboys and servants discarded the used clothes in pursuit of the latest fashion, they began to invest in individual tastes. Under colonial rule, individuals who possess income could afford to buy apparels and this augmented the discourse of appropriate vestment and laden it with meaning at the site of social status and differentiation.

By emulating Western styles of clothing, Congolese houseboys intended to elevate their social status and value in the gaze of the employers. In so speaking, the moment of adopting the Western style of clothing established a rejection and a challenge of partially assuming the appearance of the other. Gabrielle and Joseph Vassal noted down this shift of consumption in the 1920s that the servants “can be half dying of hunger but would go to buy clothes as soon as they are paid” (Vassal, Vassal, 1931: 153). In Ariel Dorfman’s “The Empire’s Old Clothes”, this is best exemplified by the Babar character under analysis. Dorfman states that “no sooner has Babar lost his horizontal nakedness and seen his clothed twin in a mirror than he becomes aware of his stature, his skin, his clothes” (Dorfman, 1996: 18).

Whilst Veblen’s conspicuous consumption provides an applicable model for interpreting vestimentary codes attributed in the Congolese society, the ethnic elements also invest the vestments a space laden with intricate meanings. Originally formed with Pan-African ideals and decolonization discourse, Matswa’s political project was adopted by the Congolese elites consisting mainly of ethnic Bakongo and Balaris. They implemented the anticolonial views in their *la Sape* movement and transformed it predominantly a Bakongo/Balari movement invested with political ideologies. Dressing, especially dressing aesthetically, became not merely consolidating a social superiority but rather, a resistance both emulating the colonizer’s lexicon and its propensity for fashion display. Additionally, the appropriation of Western fashion constitutes a form of resistance through a counter-hegemonic culture. In this culture, they contend their identity and compete for status according to their own systems of values. Through this process, those who are part of the system which excluded them are excluded. Subsequently, this counter-hegemonic culture generates a class of its own.

With the development of fashion display and music, 1940s and 50s saw the mushrooming of nightclubs and bars in the capital cities of Congo: Kinshasa and Brazzaville. The growing popularity of Congolese rumba in these cultural spaces provided a platform for the musicians to display their fashionable clothes to a wider and youthful (mainly working or lower middle class and high school drop-outs) audience. In the late 1930s and early 1940s in the Congos, musicians developed a music known as rumba, based on West and Central African, and Caribbean and South American rhythms. Competition for distinction was equally prevalent between various clubs, as J. Friedman asserts in “The Political Economy of Elegance: An African Cult of Beauty”, “identification with a Parisian life style was part of a strategy of hierarchical distinctions in which different clubs competed with one another for status expressed entirely in the realm of clothing” (Friedman, 1957: 126). Furthermore, according to Gondola, “most recording studio owners also owned local clothing boutiques and gave clothes to popular musicians in lieu of royalty payments for their compositions” (Friedman, 1957: 164). Consequently, this practice accumulated clientele from both the music fans and aspiring dandies to the boutiques.

4. Papa Wemba and La Sape

La Sape flourished as a colonial resistance through vestimentary codes, and along with the rise of style of music, the movement transcended to its fullest magnitude. As Congolese rumba thrived in the Congo capitals, it was difficult to disassociate music culture and *la Sape*. In this sense, the rumba music reinforced the performative aspect of vestment. Subsequently, rumba music combined with European fashion popularized *la Sape*. On the other hand, Michela Wrong attributes the set up of Western films on projectors to the initiation of *la Sape*, “The Belgians would send buses into what were the indigenous quarters, set up projectors, and screen movies for the entire neighborhood. The Three Musketeers, with their swashbuckling costumes, and the sharp outfits worn by mobsters in the black-and-white thrillers of the 1940s and 1950s, seemed the epitome of Western cool” (Wrong, 1999: 24).

In 1960 Congo (Congo-Kinshasa and Congo-Brazzaville) gained independence amidst social and ethnic tensions. But these strains led to a declining economy and an ascending unemployment rate, and thereby, prompted many young Congolese to migrate to the European continent. The 1970s, under President Mobutu’s rule, marked a definite turn of popularizing *la Sape* movement. On 27th October 1971, Mobutu began deploying his project of ‘Authenticité’, in which supposedly traditional African practices and values were favored over western ones. ‘Authenticité’ touched all aspects of life in Zaire: from the expulsion of foreigners and their possessions redistributed to Mobutu’s allies to the renaming of cities and people. Congo was renamed as ‘Zaire’,

and under his command, all colonial Christian names and monuments was to be totally removed. In addition to these new standards, Mobutu decreed a ban on Western-styled clothing in favor of the more authentic traditional attire. The project 'abacost', derived from the French *a bas le costume* 'down with the suit', generated defiance from the people. This defiance combined with the failing economy triggered flocks of fans in pursuit of la Sape movement.

One of the most prominent advocates of la Sape at that time was Papa Wemba. Known as "le pape de la sape", Wemba flaunted his extravagant clothing in his numerous performances on stage: three-quarter-length trousers, suspenders, Jean Gaultiers. According to his manager, Sacre Marpeza, "Wemba knows how to show his body to advantage. He dresses himself expensively. Ungaro clothes, Weston shoes, hair close-cropped and parted, several other creations see to it that the young take him for a model and adopt 100 %" (Stewart, 2000: 308). Fans began emulating Wemba's style of dress. In many of his music videos Wemba and his band Viva La Musica are dressed up in the latest fashion trend from Europe. What strike the audience at first glance are the ghetto settings in the backdrop of a flamboyant attired group of singers in some clips. One of his songs "Matebu", for instance, depicts the dream of going to Paris to consume and possess expensive *griffes* (expensive designer labels):

At Roissy Charles-de-Gaulle,
My love, darling,
On that day, I want you to know,
That day, chérie,
This griffe, it's Torrente,
This griffe, it's Mezo-Mezo,
This griffe, it's Valentino Uomo (Argenti, 2007).

La Sape for Papa Wemba is a movement against poverty and with the appropriation of the colonial style of dress provides a tool to resist Mobutu's dictatorship (Forme de rebellion anti-pauvreté et anti-déprime, la SAPE est aussi une façon de lutter contre la dictature de l'abacost, version locale du costume trois-pièces, et uniforme quasi officiel des hommes sous le régime de Mobutu). In a 1979 interview, Wemba asserted that "the sapeur cult promotes high standards of personal cleanliness, hygiene and smart dress, to a whole generation of youth across Zaire, well groomed, well shaven, well perfumed" (Gondola, 1999: 164). Wemba also vocalized that "white people invented the clothes, but Africans make an art of it" (Tsioulcas, 2016). Utilizing his vestments, music and lyrics Wemba urged Africans to reject Western gaze and to use elegance to assert their own identity. The visual effect intertwined with music lyric/performance constituted a counter-culture which defied the political dominance, and at the same time transformed the colonizer's fashion akin to local aesthetic. Aside from establishing identities with difference, vestments became simply coded with prestige and distinction. La Sape thus enable the sapeurs to determine who is the 'Other' and reconstruct a social terrain that is autonomous. This is illustrated distinctly in MacGaffey and Bazenguissa-Ganga's *Congo-Paris* and is quoted in depth here:

The display of these clothes conforms to specific practices, including the "dance of designer labels" and the issuing of "challenges". The first entails showing off the labels of the clothes one is wearing by means of gestures. The second occurs when an argument arises between two sapeurs and their friends put an end to it by proposing that the two protagonists present themselves the next day at an appointed place, superbly dressed. These friends (also well dressed) make up the jury, which passes judgement on which of the two is better turned out, pronouncing on the merit of his clothes, according to price, quality, etc. and deciding whose are the best. The challenge is thus taken up in a symbolic conflict in which the weapons are clothes. (MacGaffey, Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000: 140)

From 1980s onwards, the desire to acquire designer clothes motivated young people to migrate to Europe. This transnational mobility engendered further convoluted translations of identities through the vestimentary codes, which will not be discussed in the current paper. Clustering the analysis above, it is then appropriate that one interrogates the problems posed behind the dressed body, in particular the one appropriated of Western fashion. Whilst the motivation of la Sape was to appropriate Western fashion in order to subvert the image colonizers attributed to the naked bodies, the *griffes* were and are incapable of reversing the chaotic situation in their nation and the sufferings of the majority. As Veblen's model illuminates, conspicuous consumption is an ongoing process, the desire to consume, to exhibit and to compete only

intensifies vestments as fetishized goods. The sapeurs within the cult are only incited to place garments above all things, as is exemplified in the following interview of a sapeur, “stories of significant financial troubles are often hidden beneath the fine fabrics of the French and Italian suits they wear. To afford the price tag, the “*dandies*” have to save, borrow, or even steal money, they admit. But dressing smartly is truly an addiction, they say. “*These are weapons, they kill,*” the man told RTD, pointing at piles of designer accessories.” Moreover, these conspicuous haute couture vestments amidst vast poverty only aggrandizes the incongruity with the surroundings and in turn highlights the dirt, the ghetto, the malnourished children-the stereotypical images the West attribute to the African continent. Furthermore, the black body under the *griffes* does not completely disappear in the vestimentary codes of the Western language.

5. Conclusion

Throughout this study, I have demonstrated dress as a space for the investment and power, which existed in pre-colonial, colonial and early post-colonial times. Through the codes of vestments and the visibility of outward display, identities become not the other, neither the same, rather an alternate identity. This alternate identity, in time formed a class for itself. Vestments disclose a site for appropriation, negotiation and resistance, rendering that simple ‘cloth’ an intricate and powerful signifier. The sapeurs, by acquiring vestments as a means of subversive weapon, and asserting their positions in society, did not differ from the tradition.

The essence of displaying and consolidating status conforms the model of conspicuous consumption proffered by Veblen. As Achille Mbembe observes that “the people also want to be honored, to shine and to take part in celebrations... in their desire for a certain majesty, the masses join in the madness and clothes themselves in cheap imitations of power to reproduce its epistemology” (Mbembe, 1996: 33). In a radio interview, one young man acknowledged this long line of tradition with the enchantment of fine garments, “we are born like that. My father was like that, my grandfather also. We can only be like them.” Notwithstanding the fact that la Sape effectively utilized the dressed body to disclose discursive interpretation of identity, it also raises the concerns about phenomenon that the black body is still enclosed in Western vestimentary codes.

Whilst the present day of ‘la Sape’ has developed into a cult of its own, with divergent groups and exclusive styles, the current paper solely traces the trajectory the movement has taken since pre-colonial to its proliferation in the early 1970s in Congo. Further researches on present day la Sape (or Parisien for the new generation of the sapeurs in Congo/Paris) can be investigated and shed supplementary lights on the intricacies in which dress codes are translated through alternate identities.

6. Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

- Argenti, 2008 – Argenti, N. (2008). The intestines of the State: Youth, violence, and belated histories in the Cameroon Grassfields. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bagwell, Bernheim, 1996 – Bagwell, L.S., Bernheim, B.D. (1996). Veblen effects in a theory of conspicuous consumption. *The American Economic Review*: 349-373.
- Belk, 1988 – Belk, G.W. (1988). Third world consumer culture marketing and development: Toward broader dimensions. Greenwich, CT: Jai Press.
- Bourdieu, 1984 – Bourdieu, P. (1984). Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste. London: Routledge.
- De Witte, 1913 – De Witte, J. (1913). Les deux Congos. Paris: Plon.
- Dorfman, 1996 – Dorfman, A. (1996). Empire’s old clothes. London: Penguin Books.
- Edgerton, 2002 – Edgerton, R.B. (2002). The troubled heart of Africa: A history of the Congo. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Friedman, 1957 – Friedman, J. (1957). The political economy of elegance: An African cult of beauty. A theory of the consumption function. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Gandoulou, 1989 – Gandoulou, J.-D. (1989). Dandies à Bacongo: Le Culte de l'élégance dans la Société Congolaise Contemporaine. Paris: l'Harmattan.

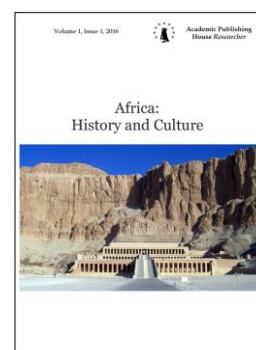
- [Gondola, 1999](#) – *Gondola, C.D.* (1999). Dream and drama: the search for elegance among Congolese youth. *African Studies Review*. 42(1): 23-48.
- [MacGaffey, Bazenguissa-Ganga, 2000](#) – *MacGaffey, J., Bazenguissa-Ganga, R.* (2000). Congo-Paris: Transnational traders on the margins of the law. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- [Martin, 1995](#) – *Martin, P.M.* (1995). Dressing well. Leisure and society in Colonial Brazzaville. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 154-172.
- [Mbembe, 1992](#) – *Mbembe, A.* (1992). Provisional notes on the postcolony. *Africa*. 62(1): 3-37.
- [Miller, 2009](#) – *Miller, M.L.* (2009). Slaves to fashion: Black dandyism and the styling of black diasporic identity. Durham: Duke University Press.
- [Picton, Mack, 1979](#) – *Picton, J., Mack, J.* (1979). African textiles: Looms, weaving and design. London: British Museum Publications.
- [Pigafetta, 1970](#) – *Pigafetta, F.* (1970). A Report of the Kingdom of Congo and of the Surrounding Countries. Drawn out of the writings and discourses of the Portuguese Duarte Lopez. London: Cass.
- [Stewart, 2003](#) – *Stewart, G.* (2003). Rumba on the river: A history of the popular music of the two Congos. London: Verso.
- [Trigg, 2001](#) – *Trigg, A.B.* (2001). Veblen, Bourdieu, and conspicuous consumption. *Journal of Economic Issues*. 35(1): 99-115.
- [Tsioulcas, 2016](#) – *Tsioulcas, A.* (2016). Remembering African singer and style icon Papa Wemba. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.npr.org/sections/therecord/2016/04/25/475583946/remembering-african-singer-and-style-icon-papa-wemba>
- [Vansina, 1982](#) – *Vansina, J.* (1982). Towards a history of lost corners in the world. *Economic History Review*. 35(2): 165-178.
- [Vassal, Vassal, 1931](#) – *Vassal, G., Vassal, J.* (1931). Français, Belges et Portugais en Afrique. Paris: Pierre Roger.
- [Veblen, 1899](#) – *Veblen, T.* (1899). The Theory of the Leisure Class. NY: Macmillan.
- [Vidrovitch, 1989](#) – *Vidrovitch, Coquery* (1989). Brazza et la prise de possession du Congo. Paris, 209-210.
- [Wrong, 1999](#) – *Wrong, M.* (1999). A question of style. *Transition*. (80): 18-31.



Published in the Slovak Republic
Africa: History and Culture
Has been issued since 2016.
E-ISSN: 2500-3771
2019, 4(1): 12-22

DOI: 10.13187/ahc.2019.1.12

www.ejournal48.com



Origin and Trajectory of National Youth Service Programme in Africa: An Exploratory Review

Kazeem Oyedele Lamidi ^{a, *}

^a Department of Local Government Studies, Obafemi Awolowo University, Nigeria

Abstract

This paper explored the origin and trajectory of the National Youth Service Programme in Africa with a view to understanding its visions as well as intended benefits. It attempted to conceptualise the National Youth Service using the four most commonly found programme models of National Youth Service in a bid to clarifying the dimensional intents of the scheme across countries in Africa. This paper also depicted the trajectory by discussing the growing attention to National Youth Service in Sub-Saharan Africa; re-envisioned and emerging programmes in the continent; National Youth Service programme goals and the focus on youth employability in Africa; as well as, understanding the scale of National Youth Service in Africa vis-à-vis its institutional arrangement and access to funding. Secondary data were fittingly utilized for this paper. It, however, provided a synopsis of the current trends of the National Youth Service Programme in Africa. It also concluded that National Youth Service Programme in respective African countries must continue to exhibit the vision, the integrity and the commitment which have taken the scheme from its humble beginnings to the echelon of being an important national institution in the development of state-building across nations in Africa.

Keywords: Emerging Programmes in Africa, National Youth Service, Regional Development, Voluntary Service Schemes.

1. Introduction

In many African states, the human endowment is a conglomeration of different ethnic groups (Asiabaka, 2002). It has an estimated population (World Bank, 2005) with dynamic youth below 30 years of age, constituting up to 80 % of the population and of a similar percentage of the labour force (Adesope, 2007; Asiabaka, 2002). Hence, the importance of youth in development at any level is without a doubt. With reference to the Global Conference on National Youth Service Report, the benefit of the youth service scheme cannot be undermined in the face of its potential developmental drive in the life of a nation-state. However, the outcomes/results of the programme depend on structure, the input of the youths themselves, service attitude towards scheme, observation, and understanding of the youth in service. It was also revealed that the evaluation of Youth programmes in countries where the scheme recorded success on the value of service rendered by participants equates to, or seems greater than the cost of the Scheme. Also, the scheme has reposed experiences and benefits on the participants, such as opportunities for career assessment, self-esteem and increased consciousness of the needs of others (Okafor, Essien, 1994).

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: akandekande@gmail.com (K.O. Lamidi)

In spite of these explicated virtues of the programme, there seem to be some indications of ineffectiveness in social peace, rural transformation and development in key spheres of the economy; thereby leading to their opinion for an outright cancellation of the programme owing to its high cost of governance in African countries. It is therefore important to put the programme in perspectives with the aim of ensuring its consistent relevance to the constantly changing needs of the society; hence, this paper.

2. Towards Conceptualising National Youth Service Programme

According to the National Youth Development Agency, National Youth Service is a service programme which mainly facilitates continuing and effective ways of reconstructing society by developing the capacities and capabilities of the youth through community service and learning. This concept is central to the development process in any society. As described by Kingston (2015: 87), “National Youth Service is a platform for empowering youths through core Values; steering participants toward national service; and facilitating career development through exposure to specific career options, as well as assisting in the improvement of academic qualifications”.

More elaborately, National Youth Service, as explained by Marenin (1990) and Innovations in Civic Participation (ICP) (2010), is a public programme instituted by government to imbibe a culture of service by assisting youth to contribute constructively in nation-building; social unity; understanding their role in preferment of civic awareness, loyalty and national building; developing the need skills, expertise and knowledge of youth to make the adulthood feasible; enabling their experience for employability, and further academic learning opportunities; harnessing unexploited human resources and actualizing the delivery of the nation’s development objectives especially to remote communities. Remarkably, this description lends credence to the cardinal objectives of the National Youth Service Scheme in Nigeria. As rightly observed by Israel and Nogueira-Sanca (2011), National Youth Service can be exemplified in every province and in most countries of the world. The magnitude and latitude of such programme differ widely, depending upon variables such as their structural context, the financing, and the expected outcomes of their sponsoring agencies. National Youth Service is explicated by their populations and their intended effects.

ICP (2010) identified the four (4) programme models of National Youth Service:

a. In-School Service Learning for Secondary School Students - this model is tied to teaching exercise in schools with the intent to meet the educational needs of the communities. It is a model that can be said to be mandatory across districts and counties so as to optimize human and capital development. Surprisingly, this model is expected to be put in place in all African countries. However, contrary to the case, as it is seen to be most feasible in Europe and America. A good example is found in primary schools in New York; and it is, in recent time, being emulated Asia and Latin America.

b. Mandatory Community Service for University Graduates - this is career development-oriented for the youth participants upon the completion of their academic programme at the Universities and other tertiary institutions. It encourages the spirit of commitment to community building. The process aims at harnessing the acquired knowledge of the graduate participants to support community-based projects. The model of mandatory community service is of two-fold benefits: it, on one hand, fosters development through human resources; on the other hand, participants gain an increased understanding of the societal value and heighten their chances of getting employment due to service experiences garnered during the course of the scheme. A common feat of the model is that it is usually coordinated by a government framework. This model of national youth service is development-driven. It is a populist agenda which is, most often, being put in place by countries that are just coming out of wars or crises in Africa. A good case is that of Nigeria. The establishment of NYSC in Nigeria came three years after the civil war of 1967-1970. This was not different from that of Ghana and Somalia.

c. National Youth Service (Population-Wide) - This model emphasizes getting some educated youths across the country to assist in the actualization of pre-established criteria. It is more often than not, a mandatory or supportive initiative by the government. This, in a way, provides room for youth engagement in community service, sometimes with a stipend to garner their momentum in the course of the programme. Its activities mainly centers focus on the provision of social services

such as healthcare, teaching and emergency management (ICP, 2010). This is a common model for most institutionalised youth service programmes across the Africa continent.

d. *Service Programme for Out-Of-School Unemployed Youth* – These programmes, at first, train and empower the youth with needed skills and techniques to carry out development services to rural communities; thus providing the easy access to livelihood opportunities or more formal education and vocational training (ICP, 2010). The model appears to be a new focus of youth civic engagement by sub-units of governments across Africa Countries. State governments of some federations in Africa have organized youth service programme targeted at those who are out of school and not employed. This model seems attractive to harsh economic situations. It can also be addressed as social welfare strategy.

National Youth Service Programme in Africa: Its Origin and Trajectory

As an emerging number of third-world countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America achieved independence, an organization of youth service programme became incumbent in a bid to support developmental drive across key sectors of their economies. Susan Stroud, from Innovations for Civic Participation, has provided a detailed discourse about youth service programme in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, on which this section is based (Kaye, 2003; ICP, 2010). In Africa, the issue of national youth service came to the frontline during the period of colonial independence, especially 1960s and 1970s. Still, at present, numerous programmes persist with momentous changes since the beginning, as it is currently in Kenya, Ghana, Nigeria, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. While, others have been withdrawn, just like Botswana and Tanzania (Progressive Policy Institute, 2005).

The main theme of most African national youth service schemes precipitates on the mobilization of youth for national development. This is with a view to providing youth with opportunities to be active and economically viable through investing their skills, energy and time. Service programmes in Africa provide young people with opportunities to become actively involved in the process of nation-building. These youth participants are, in some clans, called Volunteers. On the shores of Africa, one of the significant benefits of these programmes is that it provides an avenue for disenchanted youth to make a possible impact to their communal environment, influence the policies' directions, civic value engagement I of their nation-states, most times with the hope to empower the less fortunate members of their communities (Berman, 2006).

In many places, the programmes have also assisted the downtrodden to address the basic needs that could not be met themselves due to the lack of economic wherewithal. Civic responsiveness was one of the prominent rationale(s) for the introduction of youth service programmes across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Specifically, in this continent, the coordinating institution(s) of youth service schemes vary from one country to another. In most Islamised nations, such as Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestine, Tunisia, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, for example, Non-Governmental Organisations and International agencies such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and tertiary institutions work in partnership with the national government but taking a major lead in delivering youth service programme. In countries of the Middle East, such as Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Bahrain, youth service initiatives are, in most cases, sponsored by the national government, with complementary roles played by civil groups, academic communities, and international agencies.

Just like other countries, the policy context of youth scheme is often facilitated by youth civic participation (Kaye, 2003; Young, 2004; Berman, 2006; ICP, 2010; USAID, 2011). While an overview of the current changes in the MENA regions such as youth-led revolution and other youth movements is beyond the space of this study. It is, however, important to note that the youth dimension to civic engagement and service in the MENA is taking a rapid shift to reformation and societal restructuring as an essential part of the youth civic engagement processes. Examples of these youth-led revolutions are abounded, as discussed in a 2010 report by Innovations in Civic Participation entitled Youth Civic Participation in Action. This includes Alashanek ya Balady Association, an Egyptian youth-led Community Service Organization established in 2005 with family-based development, changing social stereotypes and governance inclusion (ICP, 2010).

In Jordan, the community-based Jordan Youth Innovative Forum consisted of more than 1,500 volunteers, with the aim to facilitate greater youth involvement and incorporation into the

development process in the national dialogue. In Kuwait, international agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund and United Nations Children's Fund, have organized a series of symposiums on socio-economic issues for youth entrepreneurship. In the same vein, the same trend could be pinpointed in Lebanon, where the Department of Social Affairs recruited youth to engage in the local development drive, with the support of local groups (ICP, 2010). In the Western part of Africa, the dynamics of youth service programme appear to be slightly different from that of the Northern part of Africa. The establishment of youth service scheme could be dated back to the early 60s after the liberation from colonial rule. In many instances, the programmes were used to attract agile youth with military orientations into the nation-building processes (Perold et al., 2007). Some literature acclaimed that there was a strong political purpose behind the organizational agenda, part of which was to bring about the reconciliation of the defected spheres of the national economic life. While, on the negative instance, Lestimes (2010) exposed that the formation of the youth programmes in some countries was structured towards resisting social critics and political opponents of government actions and policies.

Over the years, some National Youth programmes have been operating on similar objectives for social restructuring. While instances have been cited in some countries who have reinvented the usefulness of the programmes to some other vital sectors of the economy. Sherraden (2001) claimed that a reasonable number of such programmes have been put in place within the last decade. In most cases, the rationale behind the re-direction of the youth scheme revolves around government intent, concern and public benefits specifically on the ever-expanding youth population in most West African countries. Other programmes have resisted the political frustrations, while some have experienced changes owing to the changes in social, political and economic spheres (Billig, 2006; Sherraden, 2001).

A survey of existing literature gives a detailed insight of the outline of National Youth Service country and regional programmes vis-à-vis the launching, re-launching and closing up of the programmes, in some African countries. For instance, as presented in www.icicp.org, see details: 1. Tanzania National Youth Service 1963/2012 Original programme was established in 1963 but closed in 1994 due to a lack of funds (Balile, 2012). A new iteration of its programme was launched in 2012; 2. Zambia National Service 1963/2005 Originally established a programme in 1963 but closed in the 80s. A new programme was launched in 2005; 3. Kenya Kenya National Youth Service 1964; 4. Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) 1971/2013 Original programme was closed in 1993 due to the politicisation of the group. In 2013 the president announced the re- launch of the programme; 5. Ghana National Service Scheme 1973; 6. Nigeria National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) 1973; 7. Botswana Tirelo Setshaba 1980 Disbanded in 2000 for economic reasons; 8. The Gambia National Youth Service Scheme 1996; 9. Senegal Senegalese National Civic Service 1997; 10. Namibia National Youth Service 1999; 11. Zimbabwe National Youth Service 2001; 12. South Africa National Youth Service 2004; 13. Burkina Faso National Volunteer Programme of Burkina Faso 2005 14. Liberia National Youth Volunteer Service Programme 2007; 15. Cote d'Ivoire National Civic Service Programme 2007; 16. Niger National Volunteer Programme 2007 Disbanded in 2011 due to a lack of funds; 17. Mali National Center for Promotion of Volunteering 2009; 18. Lesotho National Youth Volunteer Corps Project (LNYVCP) 2010, and there was a Lesotho Youth Service (LYS) in the 1970s and 1980s that was disbanded; 19. ECOWAS Youth Volunteer Programme 2010; 20. Togo Promotion Programme of National Volunteering in Togo 2011; 21. AU The African Youth Volunteer Corps 2011; 22. Cape Verde National Programme of Volunteering (PNV) of Cape Verde 2012 *Ministerio de Juventude, Emprego e Desenvolvimento dos Recursos Humanos* (2013); and, 23. Rwanda *Urugerero* 2013, *Rwembeho* and *Mbonyinshuti* [2013] (Balile, 2012; ICP, 2010; Lestimes, 2010; Obadare, 2005; Rankopo n.d.; Tibiri, 2013; United Nations, 2010).

Longest Standing National Youth Service Programmes in the Continent

The identified long-standing National Youth Service programmes are Nigeria, Ghana, and Kenya. This becomes evident in the number of years in which the programmes have been in existence in the three (3) respective countries, with an aggregate total of 150 years (Kenya – 54, Nigeria – 48 and Ghana – 48). The establishment of the Kenya National Youth Service was in 1964. The programme has, at one time to the other, oscillated between being a voluntary and compulsory programme over the period of its fifty- year existence. In 2014, Kenya's Senate passed a law to

make the service scheme to be compulsory for secondary school graduate. This is to engender an increase in the participants as against the low rates experience. The legislation was however facilitated by the need for vocational skills in the labour market. Just like in other African countries, this programme has stimulated in- depth training and compulsory service (Boniface, 2013).

Both Ghana and Nigeria had started their national programmes in the same year 1973. Though, the NYSC in Nigeria had the programme set up with intention of promoting social unity, ethnic integration and structural development by the skillful university graduates after the end of her civil war in 1970 (ICP, 2010). Currently, the scheme is tending towards the development of skills for self-employment (ICP, 2010). The Ghana National Service Scheme (NSS), on the other hand, is, since inception, instituted for youth and national development. Similarly, the Ghana NSS aims the programme to develop the most pressing sectors by the educated Ghanaians (ICP, 2010). Nevertheless, growing attention has been noticeable on National Youth Service in Africa from the mid-twentieth century. This is evident in the incessant increase in the number of youth service programme across the Gambia and Senegal on the African landscape. The Gambia established its programme to improve moral value system with development orientation for entrepreneurial traits. Almost with a similar objective, Senegal began a national civic service. In the late twentieth century, Namibia followed suit (Shah, 2003). Furthermore, in the early 21st Century, of the National Youth service programmes were established by Zimbabwe and South Africa. In 2001, Zimbabwe's programme was instituted for the social integration of youth from civic and professional life with a high emphasis on entrepreneurial skills development. In 2004, the version of National Youth service programme can be likened as an anti-apartheid struggle. The programme focus aims at countering the apartheid legacies that excluded many African youths the mainstream economy, especially an adequate education (International Labour Organization, ILO, 2007).

New, Re-envisioned and Emerging Programmes in the Continent in the 21st Century

In this century, at least, the launching of a new programme has become a tradition in each year within the continent with the exception of 2006 and 2008. In 2005, Burkina Faso began her programme called National Volunteer Programme with the mission of improving youth's employability. Also, Zambia re-launched, having closed its earlier, the programme though this time around to only accommodate the secondary school graduates who are yet to get admission into universities. The programme also targets at eliminating the issue of street living by the youths. The focus of the programme was however redirected in the year 2012 to facilitate youth skills development (Anon, 2012).

In 2007, after the ten (10) years horrifying civil war, Liberia launched the National Youth Volunteer Service Programme to provide a platform for the youths to make an impact on national economic development. In the same year, Cote d'Ivoire set up a National Youth Service Programme for rehabilitation purpose to re-integrate former rebels and fighters into viable economic sectors of the economy. Also in 2007, Niger started a National Volunteer Programme with dual missions of human resources development and poverty reduction. The programme was discontinued in 2011 owing to a lack of finance. However, it was reported that Niger is currently considering re-launching a national volunteer center (Tibiri, 2013). In 2009, Mali instituted a scheme which is voluntarily spirited; which is called a National Center for Promotion of Volunteering with the broad objective to promote the orientation of youth volunteering and civic values and increase the youth employability. In 2010, Lesotho re-started an envisioned National Youth Volunteer Corps Project owing to the closure of its first Youth Service which was launched in the 1970s; but it ended in 1980s. The newly established programme is geared towards the mobilization of young people to support the government's development aims (UN Volunteers, 2010).

In 2011, Togo started the promotion Programme of National Volunteering in Togo to improve civic engagement; and contribute its quota to the youth employability (Anon, 2013a). In 2012, the National Programme of Volunteering of Cape Verde was established with the sole aim of encouraging the inclusion of young, women and most vulnerable in the socio-economic development processes of the country". Also, it was noted that Tanzania in 2012 had a new iteration of national service for secondary school graduates as a tool for entrenching social unity (Balile, 2012). In 2013, Rwanda launched a new programme in her local parlance, called

Urugerero. This is with the purpose of instilling a sense of self-sustenance and patriotism amongst youth participants. This idea was derived from an ancient practice of individuals leaving their immediate families and wards for state and community assignments (Anon, 2013b; Nsanzimana, 2013). In addition, ten countries across the continent are, in recent times, developing National Youth Service programmes. For example, Burundi was about to launch a National Volunteer Programme, aiming at addressing the crisis of youth unemployment with the support of UNDP/UN Volunteers (Galtieri, 2013).

More remarkably, the International agency began a partnership effort with some African countries in the 21st Century. For instance, UN Volunteers was set up in Mozambique in order to camp issues on poverty and strengthening civil society groups. Also, there was a collaborative effort between the UN Volunteers and the Government of Sierra Leone for the purpose of job creation for the unemployed youths. This was affirmed during a course of Interview with Dr Ernest Bai Koroma (Anon, 2013d). Furthermore, Sudan orchestrated her National youth programme towards the reduction of youth unemployment (Wudu, 2012). The programme has a time-line of one-year for high school graduates, focusing on skills development. This was noted to be a complementary task of Defence Ministry of the country. This programme had been ratified by the Legislative house, having sent a team to understudy the Ghana National Service. The government of Uganda also followed the same suit by understudying the various National youth programmes across the countries in the Continent (Nambi, 2013).

The trajectory in Africa is almost similar. Just the way it is in other continents, Malawi had earlier established the National youth programme in 1971 but was forced to closure in 1993 due to the insinuation of the scheme as a private army by then-dictator Kamuzu Hastings Banda (Lestimes, 2010). While re-launching the programme in the 21st Century, President Joyce Banda stated that she anticipated that the programme would tend to galvanize meaningful participation of young people in Malawi's socio-economic transition" (Anon, 2013c).

The Government of Chad and the Democratic Republic of Congo have engaged in discussions with UN Volunteers about establishing a programme (Galtieri, 2013). Somalia had a very good example of agitation for the launching of National Youth Service so as to bring about youth participation at the community level as well as the acquisition of needed human resources skills into the labour market. In all respects, a multi-task stakeholders conference was held on the ADB's Human Capital Development Strategy attended by participants from the seven IGAD member states (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan and Uganda) to work toward revising National Youth Service schemes to "instil a sense of purpose in life and patriotism amongst the youth" (See, www.icip.org).

Regional Voluntary Service Schemes and National Youth Service Programme Goals in Africa

The identified regional blocs in Africa swiftly embrace the establishment of the National Youth Service Programme as a veritable tool for development in key sectors of the economy. A careful review of other works shows that it is seen as a platform for the achievement of communal relations, peacebuilding and regional integration (World Bank, 2010). This is noticeable in the establishment of the African Youth Volunteer Corps. At the regional stratum, the eastern part of Africa is setting the pace on the establishment of East Africa Youth Peace Corps. This was borne out of the speech of Raila Odinga amidst other sectoral luminaries. This, in the end, gave birth to Africa Conference on Volunteer Action for Peace and Development (<http://acvapd.org/>). In total, forty-nine (49) countries have established the National Youth Service Programme. From the analysis, 13 countries have discontinued the youth service programmes; out of which 7 countries are strategising for the re-establishment of the youth service programmes in their respective countries.

The design and structure of National Youth Service programmes in Africa are mostly occasioned by the socio-economic needs of the young people in the respective countries. This reflected the various visions and missions behind the establishment of youth service programmes across the continent of Africa. A common feature among the countries with active youth programme is the commitment to the development of their youth, enhancement of youth employability and provision of economic opportunities. This is reflected in their stated goals and objectives. For instance, the youth service programme in the following countries such as Namibia,

Senegal, South Africa, Mali, Cape Verde, Ghana, Kenya, and Lesotho tended towards youth employability. A good example of youth service programme with the main motive of youth skills development abounds in Zimbabwe and Nigeria (Obadare, 2005). The governments of Gambia, Zambia and Burkina Faso had a dual purpose of youth entrepreneurship and employability (Ashford, 2007). For example, Burkina Faso targets supporting young people to find a job or establish a business on their own. In Zambia, the youth service programme aimed at equipping youth with needed skills for entrepreneurship and employment. These common traits, youth employability, youth development and economic opportunities, underscore the prospects for National Youth Service to support youth to improve their entrepreneurial skills and proficiencies as well as other forms of capital (e.g. social and financial).

The scale and Institutional Arrangement of National Youth Service Programmes

A report on some surveyed literature revealed the National Youth Service Programmes were difficult and inconsistent (Israel, Nogueira-Sanca, 2011). Hence, it was discerned that most of the countries organized the programme on an annual basis. Data from Burkina Faso showed that the National youth service programme of the country had impacted on an approximate of 4,000 participants since its founding in 2008. While data from Nigeria and Liberia revealed huge participants with an estimate of thousands of youth beneficiaries on a yearly basis (Israel, Nogueira-Sanca, 2011). From the available data, it was observed that the number of youth participants ranges 26, as evident in Mali, to as high as 150, 000 youth participants in Nigeria. On record, it was Ghana was seen as the second country with the highest number of youth participants on the Continent, with 80, 000. South Africa was rated third on the number of the country with a high level of youth participants. It is important to stress that available data did not provide a breakdown analysis on the gender of the participants; thus it was difficult to approximate annual participation rates according to gender. The dearth of data hinders the quantitative analysis of the youth service programme vis-à-vis its contribution to youth development, employability, economic opportunities and community development efforts in the continent of Africa.

It was noted that the majority of the National Youth Service Programmes are managed by the relevant Ministry in charge of youth and social development. Examples are however cited in some countries in which the office of the President takes charge of the control of the youth service programme. For instance, the Prime Minister is in charge of the youth service programme in Cote d'Ivoire. Of course, this is taking a slight difference from the presidential control. In another way, there is also an example of Inter-ministerial control in Zambia, in which the Ministry of Defence coordinates their National youth service in partnership with the Ministry of Youth and Sport.

Access to Funding

The main sources of funding for National Youth Service programmes in Africa are from the federation account. However, bilateral relations could be discerned on the financing issues. Operations of the youth service programmes in Africa are capital-intensive. Spending indicators of the programmes show that the operating costs range from thousands of US Dollars to millions of US dollars on an annual basis. From the available data, The Ghana NSS has the largest annual budget ranging from US \$ 113-115 million (See, www.icicp.org). On the second rating, Kenya was spending about US \$ 80 million. While Nigeria had a budget of approximately US \$ 32 million on the third level. Thus, it becomes astonishing that the number of youth participants in Kenya is far less than that of Ghana and Nigeria. This implies that the beneficiaries of the youth service programme in Kenya enjoy a good package from the coordinating institutions. Furthermore, the government was the sole sponsor of the National Youth Service Programme in Zambia; while many other countries have diversified their funding pool by exploring various financial sources. Supports from families and social groups are however observed in Senegal and Zimbabwe towards the programme. For example, the youth participants in Senegal are posted to places where their relatives and family members are based so as to draw needed support and logistics for the success of the programme. In Zimbabwe, the emergency costs of the programme are borne by the parents or guardians, as well as corporate entities.

Also, it is important to put on record that Zimbabwe is not the only country to draw on private resources. Examples abound in countries where the government claims the sole funding of the youth service programme. For instance, Gambia and Nigeria have both, at one time or the

other, partnered with financial institutions and other regulatory agencies to support key sectors of the economy. Currently, Nigeria is partnering with its agencies, such as NAFDAC, NDLEA, NCC, NHIS among other corporate entities. More notably, the Bank of Agriculture and Bank of Industry has made provisions for small grants with a view to promoting entrepreneurship (Toju, 2012). Specifically, Gambia has been collaborating with local and international agencies on the provision of financial assistance for corps members who are willing to start a business venture. Also, Ghana and South Africa also partnered with the private sector. In addition to the dual sectoral support, Ghana has a number of income-generating business set-ups that range from catering to borehole drilling to bottling water to the sale of agricultural products from NSS-operated farms. Similarly, Namibia generates revenue from the sale of farm produce in their youth service scheme. Similar features of the above-mentioned programmes could be comprehensively discerned in Kenya. The scheme, however, enjoys financial support from foreign countries (Israel, Nogueira-Sanca, 2011).

Programme Duration and Current Trends in African National Youth Service Programme

There is a fixed duration for all surveyed programmes in this study. Time schedules of the programme in Africa are within the period of 24 months (two years), with a majority of the programme ranging from 12-18 months. A good example of programme flexibility could be obtained in Nigeria and Zambia. Most of the service projects are scheduled for 12 months. While most youth service programmes in Africa extends beyond 12 months due to its multi-task nature.

Most youth service programmes in Africa have age criterion for the youth participants. Most of the countries start the minimum age of the participants at 18 years of age; and there are exceptions in Namibia, Gambia, and Zambia where they allow more younger participants. On the other hand, the upper age limit in most countries ranges between 18-35 years old. For example, the upper age limit in most West African countries oscillates between 30-35 years. Explicitly, Mali, Nigeria, the Gambia and Zambia set the upper age limit at 30 years; and Cote d'Ivoire, Namibia, Senegal, South Africa and Zimbabwe have theirs at 35 years. In contrary to the above, Burkina Faso has no specified upper age limit; while Kenya does not enrol youth participants above 22 years. The programme in Cape Verde has no starting age or upper age limit, with special reference youth and women.

Furthermore, the qualification standard differs across the countries in Africa. According to a survey by the United Nations in 2010, most countries have set university graduation as a qualification standard. For example, participants in the programme are expected to enrol upon graduation from the Universities in Liberia, Lesotho, Ghana, and Nigeria. Kenya, on the other hand, places a premium on secondary school graduates. In Namibia, there is a need for formal school certification before participants could be given service opportunities on technical trades. For example, Burkina Faso and Senegal only observed the trajectory of the educational levels of participants. In Burkina Faso, many participants have, at least two years, post-secondary education (Burkina Faso Programme Verification Form 2013). In Senegal, the programme had a history of secondary school graduates involvement; but, in recent times, there has been increasing participation of first and second degrees certificate holders in the youth service programme.

Some countries employed the quota system as a strategy to ensure diverse coverage representation. For example in the Gambia, the quota system is used to spread the involvement of participants across the regions of the country. This provides an avenue for equal selection of young people across all ethnic divides. Few countries provide preferences for young people from exposed socio- economic backgrounds. Considering the vulnerability level in Zambia, young people see the youth service programme as an avenue through which they can acquire skills and courses of their choice. The programme was mainly targeted at vulnerable young people. In additional dimension, the Kenya Programme creates a special reference for orphans and youth from the disabled background. A special case is noticeable in South-Africa in which 'school drop-out' and youth in conflict are put on rehabilitation scheme under the youth service programme in the country. The current studies provided understanding on the scale of National Youth Service in Africa and explained the institutional arrangement of National Youth Service which is coordinated by the relevant Youth Ministry in their countries, but with a slightly different approach in some countries

wherein the Ministry of Defence, Office of the President or Prime Minister is in charge of the programme (Israel, Nogueira-Sanca, 2011).

On the issue of programme funding, literature revealed that the primary source of funding for the National Youth Service programme is national government coffers; while some countries have partnered private institutions and some depend solely on them. Furthermore, the duration of National Youth Service programme varies between 12-24 months; and those programmes remain either mandatory or compulsory most especially with a specific age range of 18-35 years for the scheme participants, just as what is obtainable in NYSC Scheme of Nigeria (Balile, 2012; ICP, 2010; Lestimes, 2010; Rankopo n.d.; Tibiri, 2013; UN 2010).

Conclusion

In conclusion, although the National Youth Service Programme has surely come to stay, there is no doubt that it faces a decade of tremendous promises and of daunting challenges (Udende, Salau, 2013). On its lies the civic hope of national unity, of patriotism, and of a generation of Africans unstained by the evils of tribalism, religious bigotry, and indiscipline. The extent to which the Youth Scheme achieves its objectives will be determined by how it remains faithful to its original mandate while adapting itself too prevailing realities. Its fortunes will depend, not only on the resources made available to it, but also on the imaginative use of these resources, its ability to raise additional revenues and significant roles of youth in development. In the final analysis, the organizers of the National Youth Service Programme in respective African countries must continue to exhibit the vision, the integrity and the commitment which have taken the scheme from its humble beginnings to the echelon of being an important national institution in the development of state-building across nations in Africa.

References

- Adesope, 2007 – Adesope, O.M. (2007). Agricultural youth organization: Introductory concept (2nd ed.). Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press.
- Africa Conference..., 2012 – Africa Conference on Volunteer Action for Peace and Development (2012). [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://acvdpd.org/> (accessed: 1 August 2012).
- Anon, 2012 – Anon (2012). ZNS mandatory skills training to start with 2013 Grade 12 school leavers. *Lusaka Times*. 29 October. [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.lusakatimes.com/2012/10/29/zns-mandatory-skills-training-start-2013-grade-12-school-leavers/> (accessed: 28 October 2013).
- Anon, 2013a – Anon (2013). 750 take oath to be PROVONAT national volunteers in Togo. United Nations Volunteers. Retrieved on 20 March 2013 [Electronic resource]. URL: www.unv.org/en/newsresources/news/doc/750takeoathto.html
- Anon, 2013b – Anon (2013). Cabinet Approves Bills of Acts of Armed Forces. National Service for 2013. Sudan Vision. 20 June. [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://news.sudanvisiondaily.com/details.html?rsnpid=223446> (accessed: 8 June 2013).
- Anon, 2013b – Anon (2013). GNSS to Deploy 84,000 Personnel This Year. AllAfrica.com. 8 August. [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201308081251.html> (accessed: 20 September 2013).
- Anon, 2013c – Anon (2013). Malawi government to introduce National Youth Service Program. *BanthuTimes*. [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://allafrica.com/stories/201306210910.html> (accessed 14 August 2013).
- Anon, 2013d – Anon (2013). Sierra Leone News: Government to develop National Youth Service president. Awoko. 13 August. [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://awoko.org/2013/08/14/sierraleonewsgovernmenttodevelopnationallyouthservicepresident/> (accessed: 14 August, 2013).
- Ashford, 2007 – Ashford, L.S. (2007). Africa's youthful population: Risk or opportunity? Washington: Population Reference Bureau.
- Asiabaka, 2002 – Asiabaka, C.C. (2002). Agricultural extension. A handbook for development practitioners. Omoku, Rivers State: Molsyem United Services.
- Balile, 2012 – Balile, D. (2012). Tanzania set to revive national service program. In *Sabahi*, 21 Jun. Retrieved on 15 January 2013 [Electronic resource]. URL: www.sabahionline.com/en_GB/articles/hoa/articles/features/2012/06/21/feature02.

Berman, 2006 – Berman, S. (2006). Service learning: A guide to planning, implementing, and assessing student projects (2nd ed.). [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.servicelearning.org/library/resource/6945>

Billig, 2006 – Billig, S.H. (2006). Lessons from research on teaching and learning: Service-learning as effective instruction. Peru: Shelley Press.

Boniface, 2013 – Boniface, B. (2013). Kenya makes national youth service compulsory. TesfaNews. 24 July. Retrieved on 30 July 2013. [Electronic resource]. URL: www.tesfanews.net/kenyamakesnationalyouthservicecompulsory/

Innovations in Civic Participation, 2010 – Innovations in Civic Participation. (2010). Youth civic participation in action: Meeting community development needs worldwide [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.icicp.org/ht/d/sp/i/1276/pid/1276>

Israel, Nogueira-Sanca, 2011 – Israel, R., Nogueira-Sanca, S. (2011). Youth service programs: A study of promising models in international development. Egypt: Education Development Center, Inc.

Kaye, 2003 – Kaye, C.B. (2003). Civic responsibility, academic curriculum, & social action (2nd ed.). Johannesburg: Global Service Institute and Volunteer and Service Enquiry Southern Africa.

Kingston, 2015 – Kingston, E. (2015). The effects of national service in Africa, with a focus on Nigeria. A paper presented at International Symposium on Civic Service: Impacts and Inquiry, held at George Warren Brown School of Social Work, Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, September 24-26 2003.

Lestimes, 2010 – Lestimes (2010). Build consensus on youth corps. In Lesotho Times. 28 April. Retrieved on 21 April 2013. [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://lestimes.com/?p=3559>

Marenin, 1990 – Marenin, O. (1990). Implementing deployment policies in the national youth service corps of Nigeria. *Comparative Political Studies*. 22(4): 397-436.

Obadare, 2005 – Obadare, E. (2005). Statism, youth and civic imagination: A critical study of the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) Programme in Nigeria. CSD Report 05-18. London: Center for Social Development Global Service Institute.

Okafor, Essien, 1994 – Okafor, A.D., Essien, E.S. (Eds.). (1994). Second National Youth Service Global Conference: Interim report and summary working papers. Lagos: Gabumo Press.

Perold et al., 2007 – Perold, H., Patel, L., Catephina, S., Mohammed, S. (Eds.) (2007). Youth enquiry service in the 21st century. St. Louis, Missouri: GSI.

Progressive Policy Institute, 2005 – Progressive Policy Institute. (2005). An international perspective on national service. [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.ppionline.org>

Rankopo n.d. – Rankopo, M. (n.d.). The rise and fall of Tirelo Setshaba (Botswana's Youth Community Service): A personal reflection. Retrieved on 21 September 2013. [Electronic resource]. URL: www.voesa.org.za/focus/Vol1_no2/The_Rise_and_Fall_of_Tirelo.pdf

Shah, 2003 – Shah, S. (2003). Youths network and governance. *Commonwealth of Youths and Development*. 1(21): 108-127.

Sherraden, 2001 – Sherraden, M. (2001). Civic service: Issues, outlook, institution building (CSD Perspective). St Louis: Washington University, Center for Social Development.

Tibiri, 2013 – Tibiri, S. (2013). Programme National de volontariat dans Niger. Thursday 24 April 2013.

Toju, 2012 – Toju, E. (2012). CBN organizes competition for corporers. In Daily Times NG. [Electronic resource]. URL: www.dailytimes.com.ng/article/cbnorganisescompetitioncorporers (accessed: 21 March 2013).

Udende, Salau, 2013 – Udende, P., Salau, A.A. (2013). National Youth Service Corps Scheme and the Quest for National Unity and Development: A Public Relations Perspective. Ilorin: Department of Mass Communication, University of Ilorin.

UN Volunteers, 2010 – UN Volunteers. (2010). Cheering on Lesotho's development volunteers. In UN Volunteers News. Retrieved on 20 April 2013. [Electronic resource]. URL: www.unv.org/en/newsresources/news/doc/cheeringonlesothosdevelopment.html

United Nations, 2010 – United Nations (2010). World youths report – Youths and climate change. New York: UN Press.

United States Agency for International Development, 2011 – United States Agency for International Development. (2011). USAID World AIDS Day Report. Geneva: UNAIDS Secretariat.

[World Bank, 2005](#) – World Bank (2010). *Nigeria: Country brief*. [Electronic resource]. URL: www.google.com/ng/search?q=population+08+nigeria Downloaded on March 7, 2012.

[World Bank, 2010](#) – World Bank (2010). Governance and development. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

[Wudu, 2012](#) – Wudu, W. (2012). Government to establish national youth service program. *Gurtong*. [Electronic resource]. URL: www.gurtong.net/ECM/Editorial/tabid/124/ctl/ArticleView/mid/519/articleId/7523/categoryId/117/GovernmenttoEstablishNationalYouthServiceProgram.aspx (accessed: 12 March 2013).

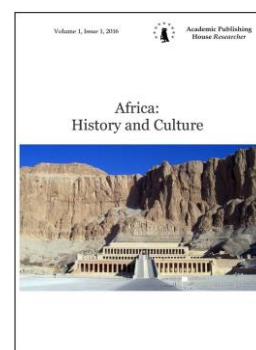
[Young, 2004](#) – Young, K. (2004). Methods for effective youth governance. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.



Published in the Slovak Republic
Africa: History and Culture
Has been issued since 2016.
E-ISSN: 2500-3771
2019, 4(1): 23-32

DOI: 10.13187/ahc.2019.1.23

www.ejournal48.com



Political Party Vigilantism and Violence in Ghana: A Study of the Perceptions of Electorates in the Cape Coast Metropolis

Benedicta Incoom ^a, Enoch Kwame Tham-Agyekum ^{b, *}

^a School of Development Studies, University of Cape Coast, Ghana

^b Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension, University of Cape Coast, Ghana

Abstract

The views of electorates in the Cape Coast Metropolis were solicited on political party vigilantism and electoral violence in Ghana. The descriptive survey method was used to select 200 electorates via the snowball sampling technique. A questionnaire was designed to collect the data and analysed using descriptive statistics. The main findings of the research indicate that the electorates do not have any knowledge of vigilante groups in their constituency. However, they knew about vigilante groups in other parts of the country. The greatest cause of vigilantism in Ghana according to the study is the quest for political power. The greatest effect found of political vigilantism in Ghana is death and injuries. Political party vigilantism activities are dominated by young men and it is spearheaded by party executives. However, they engage in campaign activities before the election, protect ballot boxes during elections, and are employed if their party wins. Their activities affect voter turn-out during elections. The majority of the electorates would not consider being members of a political party vigilante group for financial gain neither do they know how political party vigilante groups are funded. Electorates asserted that political party vigilante groups should be disbanded and that they would not vote for a party that sponsors and supports vigilantism.

Keywords: electorates, party, perceptions, political, vigilantism, violence.

1. Introduction

The etymology of the word 'vigilante' is of Spanish origin, which means 'watchman' or 'guard', but its Latin root is 'vigil', which means, 'awake' or 'observant'. Rosenbaum and Sederberg (2016) defined political vigilantism as an organised effort outside legitimate channels to suppress or eradicate any threats to the status quo. In support of Rosenbaum and Sederberg, Amankwah (2017) described political vigilantism as an instance where organised armed or unarmed groups are deployed as private forces to safeguard the electoral prosperity of political parties. As stated by Johnston (1996), vigilante acts occur when people have taken the law into their own hands.

In many developing democracies, including Ghana, political activism and particularly, vigilantism, is commonly a violent display of brute-force to protect the interest of a group that one belongs to as argued by Rosenbaum and Sederberg (2016). Bob-Milliar's studies on party youth activists and electoral violence in Ghana brought to fore, what the author perceived as low-intensity electoral violence by youths affiliated with political parties in Ghana (Bob-Milliar, 2012, 2014). In several Sub-Sahara African countries, electoral mobilisation and campaigning as part of political

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: donsprakels@gmail.com (E.K. Tham-Agyekum)

activism are undertaken by party “foot soldiers”. These youthful party “foot soldiers” have certain characteristics as described by Bob-Milliar as being mostly men between the ages of 18 and 35, generally unemployed or underemployed, and uneducated or with only basic formal education. Most are zealous sympathisers of a particular candidate but some are card-bearing members of a political party (Bob-Milliar, 2014). Again the author stated that foot soldiers undertake various tasks for their political parties and or candidates, which includes but not limited to, attending rallies, taking part in anti-government demonstrations, or helping a party and or candidate during and after elections. The vigilante individuals usually have biological and physical features that enable them to undertake such security functions; popularly called ‘macho men’. They are often only known by a few party executives (Amankwah, 2017).

Ghana has two major political parties; the New Patriotic Party (NPP) and the National Democratic Congress (NDC). The activities of these political party activists from are often based on the notion of reciprocity and the provision of personalised goods. Similarly, these party activists operate within a clientelism environment where there is the notion of the party in government using state power and authority to dispense patronage (Bob-Milliar, 2014). Those who are easily recruited into these groups variously believe that public office holders (patrons) are wealthy and control massive resources. Consequently, they expect the political elite to share the state resources with them once they are in government. In expectation, they work beyond the call of duty to win and retain power for their political elite. They, thus, feel entitled to jobs and all the resources conferred by power. This category of political activists, therefore, resort to all means to forcibly capture state resources, property, and opportunities, especially when there is a feeling of delay on the part of their patrons in meeting the needs of their clients (vigilante groups) within the framework of patron-client relations (Gyampo et al., 2017).

The phenomenon of political party vigilante groups and their activities have been an aberration in Ghana’s politics, especially in the Fourth Republic. Over the years, the level of violence that has characterised the activities of party vigilante groups during each phase of the electoral cycle has increased, especially since the 2000s. The 2016 Presidential and General Elections of Members of Parliament were without exception. The immediate post-election phase also witnessed some incidents around the political transition, nearly marring the almost smooth process. Unfortunately, the manifestations of political party vigilante groups have continued from the transition and into the governing period (Coalition of Domestic Election Observers, 2017). Political party vigilantes employ tactics such as harassing and beating-up anyone perceived to be obstructing their interests. Lately, they have resorted to illegal acts; causing a disturbance during elections, confiscation of both private and state property, forcible eviction and the ejection of state officials from their apartments and offices, physical assault of former government appointees, and other human rights abuses. Their illegal acts, especially, during elections have filled Ghana’s body politic with tension and bitterness. Gyampo states that the potential of these groups and their patrons to lead Ghana on the path of chaos is beginning to dawn on Ghanaians – and, in fact, on non-Ghanaians who have an equal stake in the peace and stability of Ghana (Gyampo et al., 2017). This situation violates human rights because citizens must be totally free from violence of any kind (Buur, 2008). Political party vigilante groups pose a great danger to the country’s electoral politics and democratic development (Paalo, 2017).

Over the years, the level of violence that has characterised the activities of party vigilante groups during each phase of the electoral cycle has increased, especially since the 2000s. The 2016 General Elections – Presidential and Parliamentary elections were without exception. The immediate post-2016 election phase also witnessed some incidents around the political transition, nearly marring the almost smooth process. Unfortunately, the manifestations of political party vigilante groups have continued from the transition and into the governing period. The potential of vigilantism to destroy the peaceful democratic culture of the nation and especially in the run-up to the 2020 elections is very high.

Although literature abounds in the area of vigilantism, few studies have been conducted on vigilantism in the Cape Coast Metropolis. By conducting this study, this research seeks to examine the views of electorates in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Area on political party vigilantism and violence in Ghana.

2. Research Questions

- i. What is the perception of electorates on the incidences of political party vigilantism in Ghana?
- ii. What are the reasons why vigilante groups become violent during elections?
- iii. To what extent does political party vigilantism influence outcomes of elections?

3. Method

Design

Cohen et al. (2007) stated that research design is governed by the notion of “fitness” for purpose and therefore the purpose of the research determines the methodology and the design of the research hence there was the need to employ in this study the quantitative research. The method was used in describing and understanding vigilantism and political violence in the community under study so as to gain an insider perspective of the respondents’ social reality (De Vos et al., 2011). The descriptive survey method was utilised.

Instrument

For the purpose of this study, the researcher used a questionnaire to collect primary data from the field. The study used descriptive statistics for data presentation and interpretation of the analysis (Babbie, 2005; Creswell, 2009). As a result, for the field data, the Statistical Package for Social Science software version 20 was used to capture data.

Population

The research project was undertaken in the Cape Coast Metropolis. It covered areas such as Ola, UCC, Abura, Pedu, and Kotokuraba. Cape Coast is bounded on the south by the Gulf of Guinea, West by Komenda Edina Eguafo/Abem Municipal Assembly, East by Abura Asebu Kwamankese District and North by the Twifo Hemang Lower Denkyira District. The population of the Metropolis stands at 169,894 with 82,810 males and 87,084 females (Ghana Statistical Service, 2010).

Sampling

The snow-ball sampling technique which is a non-probability sampling was employed in this study. Non-probability is a sampling technique where the samples are gathered in a process that does not give all the individuals in the population an equal chance of being selected (Unrau et al., 2007). According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002), sampling technique or strategy guides the researcher as to the choices of what to observe or whom to interview. They assert that an intelligent sampling strategy enables researchers to make systematic contact with communication phenomena with a minimum of wasted effort. This is because electorates prefer to hide their identity when it comes to party affiliations. The first respondent was one Assemblyman who was a resident of the Ola Community. He was located and was asked to help to locate other electorates. The step was repeated until the needed sample size was found.

Sample

Bless et al. (2006) stated that population is all the people, events, case records or other sampling units with which the research problem is concerned. Also, Ngulube (2005) further adds that it is important for the researcher to carefully and completely define the population before collecting samples hence there is the need for the study to define its population. However, the population for this research was all electorates in the Cape Coast Metropolis of which 200 electorates were selected (see Table 1). Out of this total, 50 % are males and 50 % females to ensure a gender balance. The age range of electorates is between the ages of 18 years and 60 years. Sampling is the process of selecting participants for a research project. In terms of the marital status of the respondents, 45 % were single. For family size, the majority of the electorates (48 %) had a family size of 5 persons. Also, the level of education of the respondents showed a majority of them had basic education (36 %). In terms of occupation, educational workers dominated the distribution with 34 %.

Table 1. Bio-Data of Respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percent
Sex of Respondents		
Male	100	50.0
Female	100	50.0
Age of Respondents		
18-25 years	72	36.0
29-39 years	96	48.0
40-50 years	12	6.0
51 and above	20	10.0
Marital Status		
Single	90	45.0
Married	54	27.0
Separated	36	18.0
Widowed	20	10.0
Family Size		
1	41	20.5
2	30	15.0
3	13	6.5
4	21	10.5
5	95	47.5
Level of Education		
Basic	71	35.5
Secondary	60	30.0
Tertiary	69	34.5
Occupation		
Informal Work Sector	68	34.0
Construction Worker	12	6.0
Public Service	29	14.5
Educational Worker	33	16.5
Civil Service	19	9.5
None	39	19.5

4. Results and Discussion

Definition of Political Party Vigilantism in Ghana

According to the respondents, vigilantism is an instance where organised members of a party take the law into their own hands to protect the ballot box, party members or advance their selfish interests. Other definitions include; “a group of party supporters take the law into their own hands, hide behind party colours and perpetuate violence in the name of shielding their own”, “it is the use of grassroots macho guys to forcibly take over government properties with the intent of support from their ruling party”, “it is a situation where leaders of political parties use individual persons to win elections through any dubious means”, “they are groups within political parties that perform violent acts during election times and afterward and are recruited and trained by the parties themselves”. From the definitions, it could be said that the study participants understood vigilantes to be persons or group of persons who use violence to intimidate their opponents, they are formed by political parties, they are armed, they use illegal means to protect their political interest and they help political parties to win power. The perception of the respondents on the definition of vigilantism is consistent with the definition by Rosenbaum and Sederberg (2016) who defined vigilantism as an organised effort outside legitimate channels to suppress or eradicate any threats to the status quo.

Knowledge and Personal Experience of Vigilante Groups

As shown in Table 2, about 77 % of the respondents indicated that they did not have knowledge of vigilante groups in their constituency while 23 % claimed they knew of vigilantes in the constituency. However, when asked about the names, they only mentioned names of groups that were outside their constituency; Azoka Boys and Delta Force. It may seem that these two groups are very popular among people in the country, to the extent that people perceive that they may even be present in their communities. The implication is that in the Cape Coast Metropolis, there may not be any known vigilante group there as at the time this research was being carried out.

Approximately 70 % of the respondents indicated that they had knowledge of vigilante groups in other parts of Ghana. The examples they gave included groups such as Invisible Forces, Azorka Boys in Tamale, Bolga Bulldogs in Bolgatanga, Delta Force in Kumasi and the Hawks. The majority of the respondents (73 %) have not had any personal experience of political vigilante groups. A further explanation showed that most of those who had had personal experiences of political vigilante groups had it through attacks and assaults during an election outside their constituency. Another experience was an open confrontation between thugs who attacked the community's public toilet demanding that the managers should hand over to them because there was a change of government.

Table 2. Knowledge and Personal Experience of Vigilante Groups

Responses	Constituency		Other Parts of Ghana		Personal Experience	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Yes	92	23.3	106	70.0	93	26.7
No	108	76.7	94	30.0	107	73.3
Total	200	100.0	200	100.0	200	100.0

Causes of Vigilantism in Ghana

According to the respondents in Table 3, the greatest cause of vigilantism in Ghana is the quest for political power (12.5 %). The other causes are as follows; unemployment (12 %), retaliation (11.5 %), absence of trust in the security system (11 %), protection of votes (11 %), corruption (11 %), poor educational system (10.5 %), poor enforcement of laws (10.5 %) and drug trade (10 %). The findings from the study of Straus and Taylor (2012) confirm the results found in this study. They also claimed that electoral violence is primarily the result of incumbents manipulating the electoral procedure to maintain power. This means that the mechanisms that help to explain the occurrence of contentious politics within a polity are linked to changes in political opportunities. Oduro (2012) also asserted that electoral violence is largely due to the reluctance of the security services to investigate and prosecute crimes caused by vigilantism. This has caused a series of unresolved chaos and confusion resulting in mistrust in the security systems. Illiteracy and unemployment are also cited by some authors as key causes of vigilantism (Agbibo, 2018; Musa et al., 2017).

Table 3. Causes of Vigilantism in Ghana

Causes	Frequency	Percent
Poor educational system	21	10.5
Quest for political power	25	12.5
Drug trade	20	10.0
Poor enforcement of laws	21	10.5
Unemployment	24	12.0
Retaliation	23	11.5
Absence of trust in the security system	22	11.0
Protection of votes	22	11.0
Corruption	22	11.0
Total	200	100.0

Effects of political vigilantism in Ghana

According to the respondents, the greatest effect of political vigilantism is death and injuries (12.5 %). The other effects are as follows; leads to fear and chaos (12 %), delays development (12 %), break-in morality (11 %), instability and insecurity (10.5 %), promotes discomfort (11 %), and destruction and loss of properties (11 %). According to Levine (2011), acts of vigilantism reinforce mistrust, hatred and tensions in society such that it spreads a cycle of violence and a culture of fear. Buur (2009) noted that vigilantism disrupts the democratic process which further delays development in the country.

Table 4. Effects of Political Vigilantism in Ghana

Effects	Frequency	Percent
Break-in morality	22	11.0
Infringement on rights of the citizenry	20	10.0
Instability and insecurity in the country	21	10.5
Promotes discomfort in society	22	11.0
Leads to fear and chaos	24	12.0
Leads to civil unrest in the country	20	10.0
Death and injuries	25	12.5
Delays development in society	24	12.0
Destruction and loss of properties	22	11.0
Total	200	100.0

Perception of Electorates on Vigilantism in Ghana

The respondents were asked about their perceptions concerning vigilantism in Ghana (see Table 5). The statement with the highest rank was the fact that political party vigilantism activities are dominated by young men (Mean = 3.90) while the least rating was given to the fact that political party vigilantism complements the activities of the security services (Mean = 1.00). Historical evidence as given by Gyampo et al., (2017) shows that political party vigilantism began as youth activism in politics, and in addition, they have been engaged before, during, and after elections.

Table 5. Perception of Electorates on Vigilantism in Ghana

Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.
Political party vigilantism activities are dominated by young men	3.90	1.03
Political party vigilantism threatens the political stability of Ghana	3.80	1.42
Political party vigilantism is founded mainly within the NPP	3.07	1.34
Political party vigilantism is founded mainly within the NDC	3.00	1.44
Political party vigilantism contributes to the electoral success of political parties in Ghana	2.93	1.70
Political party vigilantism occurs in all regions	2.63	1.50
People join vigilante groups mainly for financial gain	1.80	1.27
Political party vigilantism activities are always violent	1.63	0.81
Political party vigilantism activities are dominated by young women	1.07	0.25
Political party vigilantism complements the activities of the security services	1.00	0.00

Organisation of Political Party Vigilante Groups

Concerning how political party vigilante groups are organised, most of the respondents (20 %) indicated that they are organised by party executives. The rest are as follows; party sympathisers (18 %), youth organisers (17.5 %), prominent people in society (17 %), and flag bearers (13 %). Amankwah (2017) gives credence to the fact that vigilante individuals are usually known and championed by party executives.

Table 6. Organisation of Political Party Vigilante Groups

Organisation	Frequency	Percent
Party sympathisers	36	18.0
Party executives	40	20.0
No idea	29	14.5
Flag bearers	26	13.0
Prominent people in society	34	17.0
Youth organisers	35	17.5
Total	200	100.0

Role of Vigilante Groups in the Political Party Structure

From the results, it could be said that vigilante groups do not play any role in the structure of political parties (17 %). It is clear from the results that political vigilante groups are not officially recognised by the political parties. This confirms the assertion that they are informal groups who engage in illegal activities by helping their patrons to gain political power (Agbibo, 2018; Musa et al., 2017; Rosenbaum, Sederberg, 2016).

Table 7. Role of Vigilante Groups in the Political Party Structure

Roles	Frequency	Percent
They do not play any role in Ghanaian politics	34	17.0
Provide money to community members	15	7.5
Secure political victories for their parties	20	10.0
Cause chaos in places that are not their strongholds	19	9.5
Protect the ballot boxes	24	12.0
They make the party visible to the community	16	8.0
They protect party executives	15	7.5
They protect the party members	10	5.0
They provide backup for the security in the party	13	6.5
Serve as assassins to the ambitions of political leaders.	23	11.5
Ensure security	11	5.5
Total	200	100.0

Role in Elections

In terms of the role of vigilantes before elections, majority of the respondents (29.5 %) indicated that they engage in campaigns and keep-fit activities. In terms of the role of vigilantes during elections, majority of the respondents (33 %) indicated that they protect the ballot boxes. In terms of the role of vigilantes after elections, majority of the respondents (38 %) indicated that they are employed if their party wins. The result is an admission by the respondents that political party vigilantism occurs before, during and after elections. The blame was squarely placed at the doorsteps of the two major political parties in Ghana; NDC and NPP.

Table 8. Role in Elections

Roles	Before		During		After	
	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	Per.
Campaign and keep-fit activities	59	29.5	-	-	-	-
Internal security operatives for the party	21	10.5	-	-	-	-
Go on errands	25	12.5	-	-	-	-
Prevent dissenters from exposing the party	11	5.5	-	-	-	-
Protect the party executives wherever they go	8	4.0	-	-	-	-
Destabilise primaries and rallies of their oppositions	35	17.5	-	-	-	-

Trained on polling stations operations	41	20.5	-	-	-	-
Protect the ballot boxes	-	-	66	33.0	-	-
Monitor elections at the polling stations	-	-	14	7.0	-	-
Torment opponents	-	-	41	20.5	-	-
Do all the dirty works in the party	-	-	32	16.0	-	-
Encourage party supporters to vote without fear	-	-	32	16.0	-	-
Mobilise voters	-	-	15	15.5	-	-
After elections, they are not recognized	-	-	-	-	62	31.0
Chase civil servants out of their offices	-	-	-	-	13	6.5
Cause confusion if electoral results do not favour them	-	-	-	-	4	2.0
Scramble for positions if their party wins	-	-	-	-	33	16.5
Jubilation after elections	-	-	-	-	12	6.0
They are employed if their party wins	-	-	-	-	76	38.0

Political Party Vigilantism and Outcome of Elections in Ghana

The activities of vigilante groups based on some knowledge the respondents have about them include the following (see Figure 1); monitor events at the polling centers (16 %), mobilise electorates (31 %), cause fear and panic in voting area (40 %), safeguard ballot boxes (7%) and give money and incentives to voters (6 %). Straus and Taylor (2012) confirmed that vigilante groups engage in activities that influence electoral fortunes before, during and after election day. According to results, the majority of the respondents (63.3 %) perceived that the activities of political party vigilantes affect voter turn-out during elections while 36.7 % of the respondents perceive that the activities of political party vigilantes do not affect voter turn-out during elections. The reasons include the fact that if people go out to vote, they may meet violence and end up getting injured and as such, eligible voters would prefer to stay away from polling centres to avoid possible harm to them.

Furthermore, about 164 of the respondents indicated that they would not consider being members of a political party vigilante group for financial gain while 36 of them indicated that they would consider joining a political party vigilante group for financial gain. When asked about the disbanding of political party vigilante groups, 187 of them indicated that they should be disbanded while 13 of them indicated that they should not be disbanded. Those who suggested its disbandment are of the view that vigilantism of any kind destabilizes the country, they are not legitimate and not recognized by the laws of the land, their activities are getting out of hand and not good for national integration, they are a threat to the country's democracy, they are not serving any purpose in the country and they disturb peace in society.

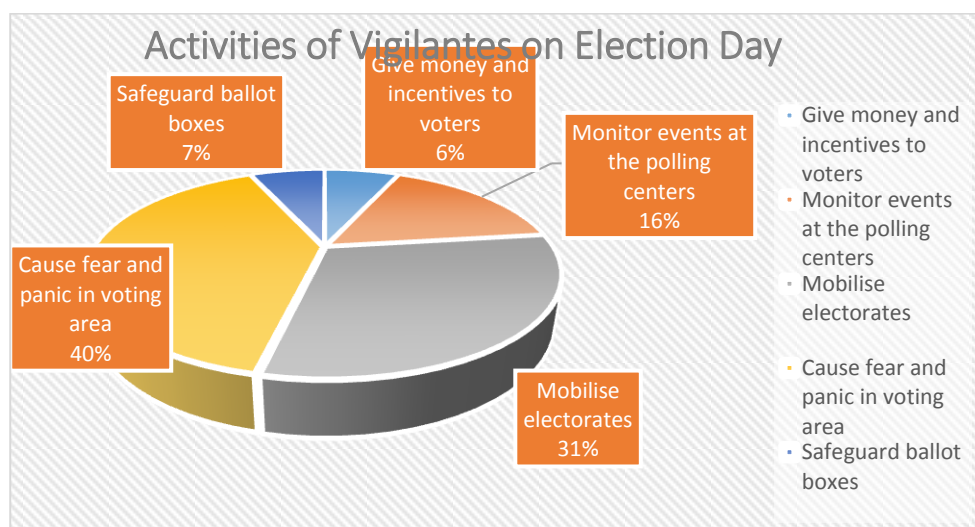


Fig. 1. Activities of Vigilantes on Election Day

Additional Issues in Political Party Vigilante Groups in Ghana

About 191 of the respondents indicated that they would not vote for a party that sponsors and supports vigilantism while 9 of them indicated that they would vote for a party that sponsors and supports vigilantism. Those who indicated that they would vote for such parties indicated that all political parties have such groups so it does not matter. Those who claimed that they would not vote for such parties indicated the following reasons; they cannot vote for a political party that does not use the state provided security forces, such groups fuel conflicts, they tend to be derailed by their echoed promises and assurances given by their patrons and they create confusion and chaos.

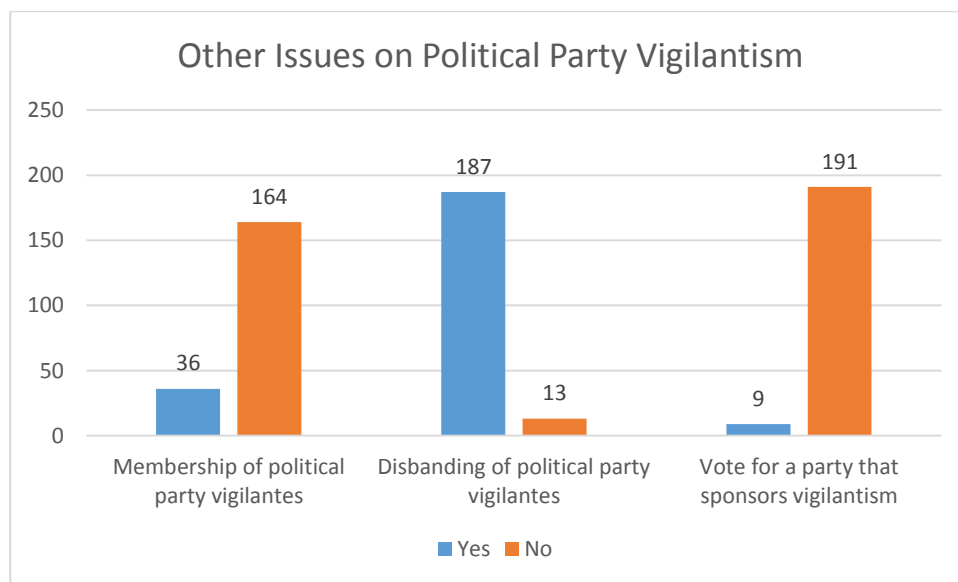


Fig. 2. Other Issues on Political Party Vigilante Groups

5. Conclusion

The electorates do not have any knowledge of vigilante groups in their constituency. However, they knew about vigilante groups in other parts of the country. Very few had had personal experiences of political vigilante groups and it was through attacks and assaults during an election conducted in other Constituencies. The greatest cause of vigilantism in Ghana is the quest for political power. The greatest effect of political vigilantism in Ghana is destruction, injuries, and death.

Political party vigilantism activities are dominated by young men and it is spearheaded by party executives. Vigilante groups do not play any role in the structure of political parties. However, they engage in the campaign and keep-fit activities before an election, protect ballot boxes during elections and are employed if their party wins after elections. Their activities affect voter turn-out during elections.

The majority of the electorates would not consider being members of a political party vigilante group for financial gain, and they do not know how political party vigilante groups are funded. Electorates asserted that political party vigilante groups should be disbanded and that they would not vote for a party that sponsors and supports vigilantism.

6. Recommendations

Considering the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

Since the existence of political party vigilante groups is illegal, the Government should ban these groups immediately as a matter of national security.

The leaderships of both the NPP and the NDC who are largely responsible for the emergence of these groups should own up to their responsibilities and work together with the nation's security to disband all politically affiliated vigilante groups.

7. Conflicts of interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

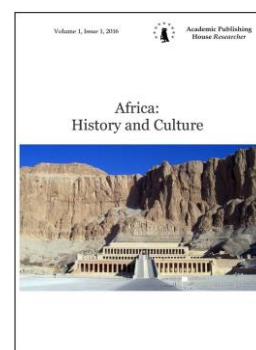
- Agbiboa, 2018** – Agbiboa, D.E. (2018). National heroes or coming anarchy? Vigilant youth and the “war on terror” in Nigeria. *Critical Studies on Terrorism*. 11(2): 272-294.
- Amankwah, 2017** – Amankwah, O.G. (2017). Political vigilantism: The road map from Gold Coast to Ghana. [Electronic resource]. URL: [www.myjoyonline](http://www.myjoyonline.com) (date of access: 21.07.19).
- Babbie, 2005** – Babbie, E. (2005). The basics of social research. California: Thomson Wadsworth.
- Bless et al., 2006** – Bless, C., Higson-Smith, C., Kagee, A. (2006). Fundamentals of social research methods: An African perspective (4th ed.). Cape Town. South Africa: Juta.
- Bob-Milliar, 2012** – Bob-Milliar, G.M. (2012). Party factions and power blocs in Ghana: A case study of power politics in the National Democratic Congress. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. 50(4): 573-601.
- Bob-Milliar, 2014** – Bob-Milliar, G.M. (2014). Party youth activists and low-intensity electoral violence in Ghana: A qualitative study of party foot soldiers' activism. *African Studies Quarterly*. 15(1): 442-460.
- Buur, 2009** – Buur, L. (2009). The Horror of the Mob: The violence of imagination in South Africa. *Critique of Anthropology*. 29(1): 27-46.
- Coalition of Domestic Election Observers, 2017** – Coalition of Domestic Election Observers. (2017). The menace of political party vigilantism in Ghana. [Electronic resource]. URL: http://www.codeoghana.org/assets/downloadables/The%20Menace%20of%20Political%20Party%20Vigilantism_Reflections%20from%20Takoradi.pdf
- Cohen et al., 2007** – Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research Methods in Education* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge Falmer.
- Creswell, 2009** – Creswell, J.W. (2009). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (3rd ed.). New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- De Vos et al., 2011** – De Vos, A.S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C.B., Delport, C.S.L. (2011). Research at grassroots for the social sciences and human service professions (4th ed.). Pretoria: JL Van Schaik Publishers.
- Ghana Statistical Service, 2010** – Ghana Statistical Service. 2010 Population and Housing Census. Accra, Ghana: Ghana Statistical Service, 2010.
- Gyampo et al., 2017** – Gyampo, R.E., Graham, E., Asare, B.E. (2017). Political vigilantism and democratic governance in Ghana's Fourth Republic. *African Review*. 44(2): 112-135.
- Johnston, 1996** – Johnston, L. (1996). What is vigilantism? *The British Journal of Criminology*. 36(2): 220-236.
- Lindlof, Taylor, 2002** – Lindlof, R.T., Taylor, B.C. (2002). Qualitative communication research methods (2nd ed.). London: Sage Publications.
- Musa et al., 2017** – Musa, A., Abdullahi, D., Baba, Y.T. (2017). Youth unemployment and violent mobilization in Kebbi State. *International Journal of Social and Administrative Sciences*. 2(1): 1-7.
- Oduro, 2012** – Oduro, F. (2012). Preventing Electoral Violence: Lessons from Ghana. In Dorina Bekoe (Ed.). *Voting in fear: Electoral violence in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Paalo, 2017** – Paalo, S.A. (2017). Political party youth wings and political violence in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Case of Ghana. *International Journal of Peace and Development Studies*. 8(1): 1-14.
- Rosenbaum, Sederberg, 2016** – Rosenbaum, J., Sederberg, H.P.C. (Eds.) (2016). Vigilante politics. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, USA.
- Straus, Taylor, 2012** – Straus, S., Taylor, C. (2012). Democratization and electoral violence in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1990–2008. In Dorina Bekoe (Ed.). *Voting in fear: Electoral violence in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.
- Unrau et al., 2007** – Unrau, Y.A., Gabor, P.A., Grinnell, R.M. (2007). Evaluation in social work: The art and science of practice. London. Oxford University Press.



Published in the Slovak Republic
Africa: History and Culture
Has been issued since 2016.
E-ISSN: 2500-3771
2019, 4(1): 33-36

DOI: 10.13187/ahc.2019.1.33

www.ejournal48.com



***Azadirachta indica* (Neem Tree) for Furniture Production in Ghana: A Historical Review**

John Lawer Narh ^{a, b, *}

^a Tema Technical Institute, Ghana

^b Accra Technical University, Ghana

Abstract

Wood as a raw material is essential for economic growth. As the global population increases, it is predicted that the percentage of wood required for human use will triple by 2050. In Ghana, many of our traditional wood species are overexploited and threatened to extinction. Nonetheless, the utilization of other lesser-used and lesser-known wood species needs to be looked at urgently to increase the wood resource base for furniture production. This paper reviewed the historical trends of commercial wood production in Ghana and the possibility of increasing the use of lesser-used species like *Azadirachta indica* (Neem). Notably, neem has been proven as a good substitute for the dwindling species like Odum, Mahogany, Asanfena, Emeri, and Kyenkyen due to its unique properties. Neem is a fast-growing tree and can shed some or all of its leaves and still flourish. Aside from its use for furniture production, Neem is known for its medicinal and agricultural benefits.

Keywords: *Azadirachta indica* (Neem Tree), Furniture, Ghana, Review.

1. Introduction

Commercial wood production is essential for national and global development. Nonetheless, as the world increases in population, global wood needs are estimated to triple by 2050 to meet the growing need. Thus, the decreasing supply of most commercial wood as raw material inspires the forest products industry to look for other wood species which have similar or greater commercial values but are not currently utilized by the forest products industry (Midgley et al., 2017). There is limited knowledge about the properties of a large proportion of timber-grade wood species. The utilization of lesser utilized timber species as a replacement for the primary commercial wood species has been a matter of discussion for some time now. This is in the light of many efforts by research institutions such as the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana to stop or minimize the extinction of some of the durable timber species due to overexploitation (Hansen, Lund, 2017; Kansanga et al., 2019).

Successful promotion and utilization of lesser-used species (LUS) will yield a relief and reduce demand on the few primary species. But the efficient utilization of the lesser-used wood species depends on knowledge of their physical and mechanical properties (Antwi-Boasiako et al., 2017; Chowdhury et al., 2017; Lumor et al., 2017). It is expected that the efficient utilization of the LUS would improve the sustainability of the tropical timber resources and reduce negative environmental impacts such as a reduction in biodiversity and desertification (Chowdhury et al.,

* Corresponding author

E-mail address: johnlawer1973@gmail.com (J.L. Narh)

2017). Lesser utilized species can be used as substitutes for well-known species which are gradually becoming extinct. An example is Dahoma (*Piptadeniastrum africanum*) which was regarded as the most promising alternative to Odum. Currently, it is successfully being used as a substitute for Odum (*Milicia excelsa*) (Ewudzie et al., 2018).

2. History and Use of *Azadirachta indica* in Ghana

Ghana has considerable wealth in tropical hardwood species. There are about 680 different species of trees in the forest reserves of Ghana (Amissah et al., 2018). Approximately 420 of these trees species obtain timber size and therefore, are of potential economic value. About 126 of them occur in sufficient volumes to be considered exploitable as the raw material base for the timber industries. However, about 90 % of the country's wood exports are covered by 10 species, and only 4 species contribute roughly 60 % of the total production. The lesser-used-species (LUS) occur in abundance in the forest, but increased harvesting must be on a sustainable basis to ensure continued harvesting potential (Antwi-Boasiako et al., 2017; Ewudzie et al., 2018; Nanang, 2010).



Fig. 1. *Azadirachta indica* (neem tree)

Photo credit: balthierbrezoianu via <https://imgbin.com/png/yiGUk1r2/neem-tree-photograph-png>

Azadirachta indica (neem tree) is an evergreen tree widely distributed in the tropical forest in Ghana and belongs to the family Meliaceae (Mahogany) (see Figure 1). It is a fast-growing tree that reaches a height of 35-40 metres (115-131ft). It can shed some or all of its leaves and still flourish. The tree is described as a hardwood (pored timber) because it bears flowers, its seeds are encased in fruit, it has broad leaves and branches. *Azadirachta indica* is thought to have originated from Assam and Myanmar where it is common throughout the central dry zone and the Siwalik hills (Bharadwaj, Seth, 2017). However, the exact origin is uncertain and some authors suggest it is native to the dry forest of south and south-east Asia, including Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia (Ahmed, Grainge, 1985).

In the 19th century, neem tree was introduced by Indian immigrants to the Caribbean (i.e. Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica and Barbados), to South America and the South Pacific (NRC, 1992). The cultivation of neem tree spread to Africa in the 1920s when it was introduced to Ghana, Nigeria and Sudan, and the species is now well established in more than 30 countries. Neem tree can grow in tropical and subtropical regions with semi-arid to humid climates. It will typically experience a mean annual rainfall of 450-1200 mm, mean temperatures of 25-35°C and grow at altitudes up to 800 metres above sea level. The species is drought-tolerant and thrives in many of the drier areas of the world. There is, therefore, considerable interest in neem tree as a means to prevent the spread of deserts and ameliorate desert environments, e.g. in Saudi Arabia (Ahmed, Grainge, 1985) and sub-Saharan Africa (National Research Council, 1992). Many of these trees are used for the production of firewood and charcoal, but other potential uses remain under-exploited.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in neem tree in Ghana for crop protection, both in the field and storage (Partey et al., 2018). GTZ, through the Goethe Institute in Accra,

has held two conferences, the first in 1998 ('the potential of the neem tree in Ghana') and the second in 1999 ('Commercialization of neem in Ghana'). These conferences have succeeded in promoting awareness of neem to a number of institutions within Ghana and have also helped to network the activities of these institutions. As a result of the conference in 1998, three working groups were set up within Ghana: 'Neem as a pesticide,' 'Neem as a cosmetic' and 'Neem for afforestation'. Over the years, there are millions of neem trees growing in Ghana, especially in the coastal and interior savannahs (Nanang et al., 1997).

3. Potential use of *Azadirachta indica* for Furniture Production in Ghana

Most dealers in Ghana's wood industry have relied mainly on traditional wood species such as Mahogany, Asanfena, Emeri, Kyenkyen, and others for furniture production (Boampong et al., 2015). Thus making these wood species over-exploited and threatened to extinction. Promoting LUS will release the pressure on the few primary timber species. This can help keep timber industries in business in the face of economic extensions of primary species (Chowdhury et al., 2017; Lumor et al., 2017). The utilization of other LUS needs to be looked at as urgently as a possibility of increasing the wood resource base in the country. A successful expansion of the resource base is dependent on adequate knowledge of the properties of LUS (Antwi-Boasiako et al., 2017).

Practically, wood is required to resist loads whenever it is used. It is therefore expedient to examine its behaviour when subjected to many forces or stresses before it can be recommended for use. And therefore mechanical tests and other tests such as extractive content, cell-wall thickness are conducted or designed almost exclusively to obtain data from predicting the performance of the wood material in use (Chowdhury et al., 2017). Also, as prices of the traditional timber increase, and quality and quantities decline, manufacturers and producers have little option other than to pay attention to the lesser-known species which were previously ignored, in order to remain in business (Boampong et al., 2015; Lumor et al., 2017).

Studies decades ago showed that neem wood is aromatic; it is not very lustrous but is easily sawn. It seasons well in open stack placed undercover when it is sawn still wet. It can be worked with both by hand and by machines (Koul et al., 1990; Thengane et al., 1995). Neem timber is durable even in extended exposed conditions and it is not attacked by insects. In addition, it is resistant to termites and woodworms. It has low shrinkage. The wood is moderately heavy, stable and resembles mahogany. The working quality is like that of oak but has straight grains (Antwi-Boasiako et al., 2017; Hummel et al., 2016). These are factors that can lead to their use in furniture production. This species has been left unutilized due to lack of knowledge on its properties such as glue holding power, finishing characteristics, density, modulus of rupture modulus of elasticity and others. It is therefore urgent to assess properties such as moisture content, basic density, compression parallel to the grain, modulus of elasticity, modulus of rupture and shear parallel to the grain of the neem wood to ascertain its possible utilization potentials. There is little hope for the future of the Ghanaian timber trade if diversification of market species is not encouraged to accommodate lesser-known species and to serve as a means for sustainable management of the tropical forest of Ghana (Boampong et al., 2015; Hummel et al., 2016).

4. Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

- Ahmed, Grainge, 1985 – Ahmed, S., Grainge, M. (1985). The use of indigenous plant resources in rural development: Potential of the neem tree. *International Journal of Development Technology*. 3: 123-130.
- Amissah et al., 2018 – Amissah, L., Mohren, G.M., Kyereh, B., Agyeman, V.K., Poorter, L. (2018). Rainfall seasonality and drought performance shape the distribution of tropical tree species in Ghana. *Ecology and Evolution*. 8(16): 8582-8597.
- Antwi-Boasiako et al., 2017 – Antwi-Boasiako, C., Boadu, K.B., Frimpong-Mensah, K. (2017). Termite resistance of *Klainedoxa gabonensis* (kruma), a tropical lesser-utilised-species for commercial utilisation. *International Wood Products Journal*. 8(2): 120-126.

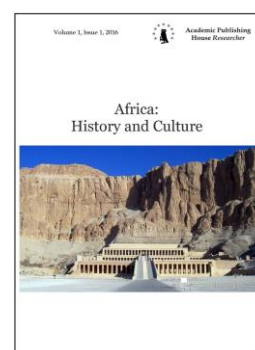
- [Bharadwaj, Seth, 2017](#) – Bharadwaj, J., Seth, M.K. (2017). Medicinal plant resources of bilaspur, Hamirpur and Una districts of Himachal Pradesh: An ethnobotanical enumeration. *Journal of Medicinal Plants Studies*. 5(5): 99-110.
- [Boampong et al., 2015](#) – Boampong, E., Effah, B., Antwi, K., Asamoah, J.N., Asante, A.B. (2015). Factors influencing the choice of timber for furniture and joinery production in Ghana. *European Journal of Engineering and Technology*. 3(5): 48-59.
- [Chowdhury et al., 2017](#) – Chowdhury, P., Hossain, M. K., Hossain, M.A., Dutta, S., Ray, T.K. (2017). Status, wood properties and probable uses of lesser used species recorded from Sitapahar Reserve Forest of Bangladesh. *Indian Forester*. 143(12): 1241-1248.
- [Ewudzie et al., 2018](#) – Ewudzie, J., Gemadzie, J., Adjarko, H. (2018). Exploring the utilization of lesser-known species for furniture production. *Open Access Library Journal*. 5: e4916.
- [Hansen, Lund, 2017](#) – Hansen, C.P., Lund, J.F. (2017). Imagined forestry: the history of the scientific management of Ghana's High Forest Zone. *Environment and History*. 23(1): 3-38.
- [Hummel et al., 2016](#) – Hummel, H.E., Langner, S.S., Hein, D.F., Sanguanpong, U., Schmutterer, H. (2016). Unusually versatile plant genus *Azadirachta* with many useful and so far incompletely exploited properties for agriculture, medicine and industry. *Acta Fytotechnica et Zootechnica*. 18(5): 1269-1275.
- [Kansanga et al., 2019](#) – Kansanga, M., Atuoye, K., Luginaah, I. (2019). Same problem, conflicting 'truths': Rethinking the missing links in forest degradation narrativization in Ghana. *African Geographical Review*. 38(4): 283-295.
- [Koul et al., 1990](#) – Koul, O., Isman, M.B., Ketkar, C.M. (1990). Properties and uses of neem, *Azadirachta indica*. *Canadian Journal of Botany*. 68(1): 1-11.
- [Lumor et al., 2017](#) – Lumor, R.K., Ankrah, J.S., Bawa, S., Dadzie, E.A., Osei, O. (2017). Rehabilitation of timber bridges in Ghana with case studies of the Kaase Modular Timber Bridge. *Engineering failure analysis*. 82: 514-524.
- [Midgley et al., 2017](#) – Midgley, S.J., Stevens, P.R., Arnold, R.J. (2017). Hidden assets: Asia's smallholder wood resources and their contribution to supply chains of commercial wood. *Australian Forestry*. 80(1): 10-25.
- [Nanang et al., 1997](#) – Nanang, D.M., Day, R.J., Amaligo, J.N. (1997). Growth and yield of neem (*Azadirachta indica* A. Juss.) plantations in Northern Ghana. *The Commonwealth Forestry Review*: 103-106.
- [Nanang, 2010](#) – Nanang, D.M. (2010). Analysis of export demand for Ghana's timber products: A multivariate co-integration approach. *Journal of forest economics*. 16(1): 47-61.
- [National Research Council, 1992](#) – National Research Council. (1992). *Neem: A tree for solving global problems*. Report of an Adhoc panel of the Board on Science and Technology for International Development National Academy Press, Washington, DC.
- [Partey et al., 2018](#) – Partey, S.T., Thevathasan, N.V., Zougmore, R.B., Preziosi, R.F. (2018). Improving maize production through nitrogen supply from ten rarely-used organic resources in Ghana. *Agroforestry Systems*. 92(2): 375-387.
- [Thengane et al., 1995](#) – Thengane, S., Joshi, M., Mascarenhas, A.F. (1995). Somatic embryogenesis in neem (*Azadirachta indica*). *Somatic embryogenesis in woody plants* (pp. 357-374). Dordrecht: Springer.



Published in the Slovak Republic
Africa: History and Culture
Has been issued since 2016.
E-ISSN: 2500-3771
2019, 4(1): 37-40

DOI: 10.13187/ahc.2019.1.37

www.ejournal48.com



Gaps and Opportunities for Labour Force Participation in Ghana: A Position Paper

Christopher Tawiah Narh ^{a, *}

^a Ghanata Senior High School, Ghana

Abstract

Labour force participation is an important component of a national and global development. As global populations keep increasing, it is important to explore the scope of Ghana's labour force participation. In this paper, I briefly reviewed literature and other secondary evidence for gaps and opportunities for labour force participation. Though Ghana's population has been increasing continuously like many countries worldwide, little is known about the impact of the rise in the number of people within the working age population. Ultimately, accurate information and empirical evidence are needed to support research, policy and practice in Ghana. It is therefore, useful to study and understand the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the labour force in Ghana, and how these characteristics influence labour force participation, so as to guide government and other relevant bodies in designing and implementing policies to address the needs of this key segment of the population.

Keywords: Ghana, gaps, labour force participation, position paper.

1. Introduction

The term labour force refers to the total number of people who are of working age (15 years and older), and who are either employed or unemployed but are actively searching for employment (Ghana Statistical Service, GSS, 2013). Labour force participation describes whether a person is in the labour force or not. The participation rate measures the ratio between the labour force and the entire working-age population. The labour force participation rate plays a very vital role in determining socio-economic growth and development of a nation (Atasoy, 2017; Cai, 2018). This is so because human beings use their energy, skills and knowledge to mobilize and accumulate capital, exploit natural resources and put in place all other relevant measures to ensure productivity, hence the development of a country (Choudhry, Elhorst, 2018).

Furthermore, labour force participation rate shows the supply of labour in the economy and the composition of the human resources of the country. It also has a strong effect on poverty reduction (Choudhry, Elhorst, 2018). These mean that one vital way of ensuring the effective development of a nation and the improvement in the standard of living of the citizens is to improve labour force participation. Labour force participation can be improved if appropriate policies are formulated and implemented to develop and utilize effectively, the nation's human resource.

Analysis of labour force participation is helpful in determining the productive capacity of a nation. It also helps in determining employment policy and policy formulation for human resource development. Regarding policy formulation for human resource development, for instance, it would guide government on investment in human capital in areas such as education, skill

* Corresponding author

E-mail address: narhchristopher@gmail.com (C.T. Narh)

development and job training to render the labour force more employable and also to raise the productivity of those employed, which in turn increases their earnings (Ennis, Walton-Roberts, 2018; Verick, 2017).

2. Ghana's Population and Labour Force Participation

Ghana's population has been increasing continuously. For instance, in 1984, the Ghana Statistical Service reported a total population of 12,296,081, after the nationwide census. The figure rose to 18,912,079 in the year 2000 and further increased to 24,658,823 in the 2010 census (GSS, 2013). One critical issue concerning this increasing population is the fact that the continuous increase in the overall population has been corresponding with a rise in the number of people within the working age population as well (GSS, 2013).

For instance, in the 1984 census, a total of 55 % of the people were in the working age population (15 years and above). Then in the 2000 census, the proportion rose to a total of 58.7 %. Then again, in the 2010 census, it increased to 61.7 % (GSS, 2013). This trend should reflect in an increase in the size of the labour force. However, this has not been the case. Though the proportion of the working age population has been increasing since 1984, the proportion in the labour force has been declining over the period; from 82.5 % in 1984 to 74.7 % in 2000 and then to 71.1 % in 2010 (GSS, 2013). This declining trend in labour force participation could be attributed partly, to certain socio-economic and demographic factors.

For instance, research shows that some demographic and socio-economic factors influence labour force participation. Some of them include sex, level of education, marital status, place of residence (Basu, 2017; Ennis, Walton-Roberts, 2018; Horne et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2017). These factors can influence labour force participation either negatively or positively. These same factors can have a bearing on the fate of those who participate in the labour force, thus whether they get employed, unemployed, underemployed and the sector and industry in which they are employed in Ghana.

3. Gaps and Opportunities For Labour Force Participation in Ghana

An effective labour participation is undoubtedly a significant factor which influences economic growth and development of a country (Lahoti, Swaminathan, 2016). It plays a critical role in the production of goods and services which influence the overall development of a country. Since the labour force engages in economic activities to bring about the production of goods and services. Thus, it implies that the extent of development of a country would depend on the size and characteristics of the labour force, the proportion of the labour force that engages in economic activities and the various economic activities that the people engage in (Atasoy, 2017; Horne et al., 2017; Jenkins, 2017). But the Ghanaian labour force, as elsewhere in the world, is made up of people with various demographic and socio-economic characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, level of education, place of residence, and region of residence (Basu, 2017; Ennis, Walton-Roberts, 2018; GSS, 2013). These characteristics can influence either positively or negatively, the participation of the people in the labour force (Rahmah, Idris, 2012; Shi, 2019).

For instance, men most often participate in the labour force more than women, though women normally form the majority of the population in most countries. In Ghana for example, the population is composed of 48.8 % males and 51.2 % females as at 2010. Also, when women are in the labour force, they often work in the informal sector, as self employed, often without employees, especially in Sub-Saharan African countries like Ghana (GSS, 2013). Taking level of education as another example, it is generally observed that labour force participation increases with level of education. Thus, people who are more educated engage in the labour force more than those who have little or no education. For instance a study by Yakubu (2010) in South Africa indicates that female labour force participation generally increases with level of education. The result also shows that the highest proportions of females in the labour force are single or never married. A similar research conducted by Faridi et al. (2009) in Pakistan, reveals that males with higher education participated more in the labour force than their counterparts with low level of education. Sackey (2005) found that both primary and post-primary schooling levels exert significant positive impact on women's labour market participation in Ghana.

The main problem with labour force participation in Ghana is that, the nation's population has seen consistent increase over the years (as manifested in the various population censuses),

coming along with persistent increase in the working-age population. However, while the working-age population increased persistently, labour force participation of this demographic group on the contrary, reduced persistently, which should not be the case, under normal circumstances (GSS, 2013). Additionally, estimates from the International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2014) show that as at 2013, the labour force participation rate in Ghana was 69 %. The ILO's estimates indicate low labour force participation in many countries, especially, developed nations (64 % in Netherlands, 66 % in Norway, 63 % in United States 60 % in Germany, 65 % in Australia; probably due to population ageing). However, Ghana's participation rate of 69 % is still low as compared to the rate of some other Sub-Saharan African countries such as Tanzania, with labour force participation rate of 89 % Malawi, with 83 %, Senegal, with 77 % and Burkina Faso, with participation rate of 83 % (World Bank, 2015). It is also low as compared to other countries outside Africa, such as Vietnam with 77 %, Bolivia with 73 %, United Arab Emirates with 80 % and Thailand with 72 % (World Bank, 2015).

Low labour force participation in any nation, as in the case of Ghana, can have negative effects on individuals as well as the nation. At the individual level, it can lead to high dependency on the employed people in the labour force, poverty on the disadvantaged group (Chomik et al., 2016; Choudhry et al., 2016; Choudhry, Elhorst, 2018). Poverty would further lead to conditions such as depression (Joshi et al., 2017), deterioration of family relationships such as spouse conflict, child-parent conflict (Frasquilho et al., 2016; Maitoza, 2019). At the national level, the situation would lead to loss of tax revenue, loss of vital human capital, political instability (Nicholas et al., 2013), and an increase in crime rate (Nordin, Almén, 2017; Owusu et al., 2016). There is therefore, the need to conduct comprehensive research on the factors that determine labour force participation in Ghana in order to find strategies to mitigate the problem of low participation and its associated problems (Owusu et al., 2016).

Furthermore, very little research has been conducted on this in Ghana, mostly focused on only female labour force participation. For instance, Sackey (2005) studied the effects of education on female labour force participation in Ghana. Also, Baah-Boatenga et al. (2013) studied the effect of fertility and education on female labour force participation in Ghana. Consequently, there is a need to provide more comprehensive information on the correlates of labour force participation which considers both the male and female populations in the country. Accurate findings would help to provide useful recommendations that can guide policies on human resource development and labour force participation in Ghana.

4. Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

References

- Atasoy, 2017 – Atasoy, B.S. (2017). Female labour force participation in Turkey: The role of traditionalism. *The European Journal of Development Research*. 29(4): 675-706.
- Baah-Boateng et al., 2013 – Baah-Boatenga, W., Nketiah-Amponsah, E., Frempong, R. (2013). The effect of fertility and education on female labour force participation in Ghana. *Ghanaian Journal of Economics*. 1(1): 119-137.
- Basu, 2017 – Basu, S. (2017). Intermarriage and the labour-force participation of immigrants: differences by gender. *Applied Economics Letters*. 24(21): 1597-1604.
- Cai, 2018 – Cai, L. (2018). State dependence of labour force participation of married Australian women: Is there heterogeneity? *International Journal of Manpower*. 39(2): 269-282.
- Chomik et al., 2016 – Chomik, R., McDonald, P., Piggott, J. (2016). Population ageing in Asia and the Pacific: Dependency metrics for policy. *The Journal of the Economics of Ageing*. 8: 5-18.
- Choudhry et al., 2016 – Choudhry, M.T., Marelli, E., Signorelli, M. (2016). Age dependency and labour productivity divergence. *Applied Economics*. 48(50): 4823-4845.
- Choudhry, Elhorst, 2018 – Choudhry, M.T., Elhorst, P. (2018). Female labour force participation and economic development. *International Journal of Manpower*. 39(7): 896-912.
- Ennis, Walton-Roberts, 2018 – Ennis, C.A., Walton-Roberts, M. (2018). Labour market regulation as global social policy: The case of nursing labour markets in Oman. *Global Social Policy*. 18(2): 169-188.

Faridi et al., 2009 – Faridi, M.Z., Chaudhry, I.S., Anwar, M. (2009). The socio-economic and demographic determinants of women work participation in Pakistan: Evidence from Bahawalpur District. *South Asian Studies*. 24(2): 351-367.

Frasquilho et al., 2016 – Frasilho, D., de Matos, M. G., Gaspar, T., de Almeida, J.C. (2016). Young people's well-being and the economic crisis: How does parental unemployment and family wealth affect the downturn experience? *Children and Youth Services Review*. 69: 219-222.

Ghana Statistical Service, 2013 – Ghana Statistical Service (2013). 2010 population and housing census national analytical report. Accra, Ghana: Ghana Statistical Service.

Horne et al., 2017 – Horne, R., Kühn, S., Yoon, S. (2017). Assessing the factors driving gender gaps in the labour market. *World Employment and Social Outlook*. 2: 21-31.

International Labour Organisation, 2014 – International Labour Organisation. (2014). Key Indicators of the labour market, 8th ed. (KILM 1). Geneva: International Labour Office.

Jenkins, 2017 – Jenkins, S. (2017). Gender, place and the labour market. Routledge.

Joshi et al., 2017 – Joshi, S., Mooney, S.J., Rundle, A.G., Quinn, J.W., Beard, J.R., Cerdá, M. (2017). Pathways from neighborhood poverty to depression among older adults. *Health & Place*. 43: 138-143.

Lahoti, Swaminathan, 2016 – Lahoti, R., Swaminathan, H. (2016). Economic development and women's labor force participation in India. *Feminist Economics*. 22(2): 168-195.

Maitoza, 2019 – Maitoza, R. (2019). Family challenges created by unemployment. *Journal of Family Social Work*. 22(2): 187-205.

Nicholas et al., 2013 – Nicholas, A., Mitchell, J., Lindner, S. (2013). Consequences of long term unemployment. Research Report. Washington, D.C.: The Urban Institute.

Nordin, Almén, 2017 – Nordin, M., Almén, D. (2017). Long-term unemployment and violent crime. *Empirical Economics*. 52(1): 1-29.

Owusu et al., 2016 – Owusu, G., Oteng-Ababio, M., Owusu, A.Y., Wrigley-Asante, C. (2016). Can poor neighbourhoods be correlated with crime? Evidence from urban Ghana. *Ghana Journal of Geography*. 8(1): 11-31.

Rahmah, Idris, 2012 – Rahmah, I., Idris, J. (2012). Gender wage differentials and discrimination in Malaysian labour market. *World Applied Sciences Journal*. 19(5): 719-728.

Sackey, 2005 – Sackey, H.A. (2005). Female labour force participation in Ghana: The effects of education. *AERC Research Paper 150*. Nairobi, Kenya: African Economic Review Consortium.

Shi, 2019 – Shi, Q. (2019). Compositions of the labour force: Is Beijing different from London? *Habitat International*. 8: 33-42.

Verick, 2017 – Verick, S.S. (2017). Employment policy to promote the participation of women in the Indian labour force. In *Employment Policy in Emerging Economies* (pp. 119-136). Routledge.

World Bank, 2015 – World Bank (2015). Labour force participation rate, Total (% of total population age 15+, modelled ILO estimates). Washington, D. C.: World Bank.

Yakubu, 2010 – Yakubu, Y.A. (2010). Factors influencing female labor force participation in South Africa in 2008. *The African Statistical Journal*. 11: 85-104.