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Table of Contents

Editorial Note 4

Special Section: IAPSS Academic Convention 2018

Articles

Social Media and Crowdsourced Election Monitoring: Prospects for Election Transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa / *Francisca Sassetti* 7

Innovative social work practices by Islamic grassroots organizations in Switzerland / *Baptiste Brodard* 40

Articles

Contesting the digital world order: China's national role strategy in changing the norms of global internet governance / *Andrew Devine* 61

Exploring the Roles Metanarratives Play in the Dynamics of Conflict Recurrence in Madagascar: 1947-2016 / *Velomahanina Tahinjanahary Razakamaharavo* 80

Editorial Note

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Academic publishing sees a dynamic development with increasing focus on accessible online materials and author-friendly submission guidelines. While *IAPSS Politikon* operates with limited resources, the journal has taken steps over the past months in these directions as well. Firstly, we are pleased to introduced the new Open Journal System website of the journal, which is now accessible at https://politikon.iapss.org along with the journal's archives as well as the call for papers & new submission guidelines. The Editorial Board encourages all authors to use the new guidelines available at https://politikon.iapss.org/index.php/politikon/about/submissions for future submissions.[1] Secondly, the license agreement with the authors has been modified to reflect the transformation into an unrestricted open access model: embargo times on posting the files with the articles have been removed although we still encourage all authors to refer to the version of their publication that is freely accessible on the journal's website so that the readership of the piece is reflected in the statistics. Thirdly, the journal implemented a pilot webinar on the topic of 'Predatory Publishing, Open Access, and the Philosophy of *IAPSS Politikon*' to provide an additional resource to prospective authors and the wider audience on the situation of the journal in contemporary academic publishing in the social sciences, and reiterate some useful strategies to avoid falling victim to predatory publishing. The webinar recognises the complications inherent in the concept (Eriksson and Hegelsson, 2017), especially due to the fact that many publishers faking the peer review process seek other than direct financial benefits from the authors through article processing charges (see Kobey et al., 2018; Mcleod and Savage, 2016). That is why it provides a broader conceptualization to direct attention to a set of problems inherent in publishing that only pretends to meet academic standards, including the implications on the erosion of the credibility of fact-based expertise and the rise of 'pseudo-science'. The recording of the webinar is available at https://youtu.be/jdsLRCgDjKg and the slides at https://bit.ly/politikonpilotwebinar.

This issue contains four research papers, including one that, for the first time in the journal's history, presents more extensive supplementary material in the form of an online appendix that allows for an in-depth insight into the method of data collection and analysis. The issue opens with a special section with two articles presented at the 2018 IAPSS Academic Convention (Head of Convention: Jennifer Yi). Katsiaryna Lozka who served as Panels Coordinator for this Convention and helped coordinate the Special Section, summarises their contribution:

[1] Manuscripts adhering to the old submission guidelines will be accepted for consideration until December 15, 2019.

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This special section brings together selected papers presented at the 2018 IAPSS Academic Convention held in Singapore on November 19-23. Through a series of panels, workshops and roundtables with the ASEF diplomats, around 100 students convened to discuss the topic "Rethinking Development: Innovative Policies for Social and Economic Advancement". The selected articles explore the complex issues of social inclusion from the bottom up and the impact of technological advancements on vertical accountability in hybrid regimes. Francisca Sassetti examines the effect of crowdsourced elections monitoring on transparency and quality of the electoral process. The article analyses electoral campaigns in Nigeria from 2003 to 2015, put into a broader context of elections in Sab-Saharan Africa. The author finds that crowdsourcing techniques have a causal effect on electoral transparency by encouraging a more peaceful and democratic electoral process. The second article of the section by Baptiste Brodard analyses the impact of the initiatives promoted by Islamic grassroots organisations in Switzerland. Based on the findings of the field studies, the author argues that social participation of Islamic organisations can have a positive value by rethinking and redefining social work practices. The article further contends that these organisations extend the provision of social welfare services to non-Muslim population of Switzerland and find support from several local authorities.

Katsiaryna Lozka (College of Europe in Bruges)

The issue then continues with two timely articles which stress the importance of framing for structuring political choices and individual and collective visions about oneself. Andrew Devine scrutinises the policy of one of the world's most influential non-democratic political regimes in the field of internet governance. In particular, he identifies China's approach to promotion of its preferred norm of internet governance known as cyber sovereignty, and examines the frames the Chinese government employs during the World Internet Conference to win support for the norm among other governments. Using a combination of frames, this form of global internet governance is being advanced especially towards developing countries in opposition to the currently prevailing 'multistakeholder model', backed by the United States and the European Union. Velomahanina Tahinjanahary Razakamaharavo shifts the attention to framing at the domestic level, using an innovative methodology to determine how grand narratives she calls 'metanarratives' shaped the dynamics of domestic conflicts in Madagascar. Collecting an impressive pool of data from various sources (including newspapers, traditional songs, videos and, importantly, interviews with respondents knowledgeable about local discourses), she codes these data for the purpose of conducting a qualitative comparative analysis of conditions for different dimensions of conflicts. This method is supplemented by a qualitative explorative analysis of the metanarratives discovering

the capacity of metanarratives to shape identities and in turn increase or reduce conflicts. The resulting study provides valuable insights into the recent political development of Madagascar, among others.

In the end, the Editorial Board also extends its welcome to two new members: Karla Drpić (King's College London) and Emmanuelle Rousseau (University of Montreal), both former Editorial Assistants for the journal. That welcome comes with a farewell as well: Senior Editor Justinas Lingevičius who has been with the journal since December 2016 has decided to step down from the Editorial Board after serving more than one full two-year term. The Editorial Board thanks Justinas for his important intellectual contribution and wishes him all the best in his further academic endeavours and beyond.

Max Steuer
Editor-in-Chief

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Social Media and Crowdsourced Election Monitoring: Prospects for Election Transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa

Francisca Sassetti[1]

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Francisca Machado Nunes Sassetti, 24, from Lisbon (Portugal), is a master student at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), specializing in democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 2015, she obtained a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from the Institute of Social and Political Sciences of the University of Lisbon, from which she won the award for Best Undergraduate Student. She is currently a visiting research assistant at the United Nations University Computing Society (UNUCS), working on a project on how technology can be used to identify victims of forced labour and human trafficking. Her interests include democracy and democratization, information communication technologies for development, elections, African politics, human rights, and public opinion. E-mail: franciscasassetti@hotmail.com.

Abstract

With the rise of social media in Sub-Saharan Africa, citizen-led organizations in countries such as Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana have embraced crowdsourcing for domestic election monitoring, at a time when holding competitive elections has proven insufficient to ensure democratic elections. Yet, while existing literature focuses on the contrast between crowdsourcing and traditional monitoring, the effects of crowdsourced election monitoring on the transparency and quality of elections remain unaddressed. This paper makes a comparative analysis of elections in Nigeria from 2003-2015, framed within Sub-Saharan Africa, supported by a dataset of election monitoring deployments. Findings show that, in Nigerian elections where crowdsourcing was used, higher levels of election transparency were registered based on the introduction of the concept of participatory democracy and its practical application. This would, then, contribute to more peaceful and democratic elections. This research also sheds some light on the benefits of domestic election monitoring for citizen engagement.

Keywords

Crowdsourcing; Democracy: Election Monitoring; Election Transparency; Social Media; Sub-Saharan Africa

[1] I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Chelsea Johnson, for her constructive comments and standing by my ideas, as well as to Professor Jill Stuart for all the help and patience with me. I would also like to express my gratitude to some of the most brilliant academics I have had the chance to meet, who have truly inspired me and shaped my academic interests, such as Professor Omar McDoom, Professor Bill Kissane, Professor Thomas Leeper and Professor Brian Klaas. I would also like to extend my thank you to Mark Bryceland for helping me during my time at the Department of Government. I wish to also thank the eDev team in IMT, where I worked for the duration of my studies, for the encouragement and incredible support. I also have to thank my family, my sisters and friends, for always believing in me. Lastly, I am grateful to my husband Toby for the unconditional support and patience throughout my research project, so that someone like me could thrive at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

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Introduction

At a time when democracy seems to be facing its worst decline in years (Freedom House, 2019; The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2017), the role of elections becomes more and more relevant. While elections in Sub-Saharan Africa have become commonplace, these countries lack genuine pluralism (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2017: 32) Multiple barriers hinder political participation, notwithstanding improvements owing to new avenues to follow politics created by electronic media (ibid.: 34). Nonetheless, many Africans still prefer democracy to other political regimes, and popular support for democracy exceeds the perception of its supply in most countries (Mattes and Bratton, 2016). Despite the disappointment at formal political institutions, voters are not disengaged from democracy (The Economist Intelligence Unit, 2018). As such, guaranteeing free and fair elections is paramount to meet the popular demand for democracy.

Political environments have become increasingly mediated by the internet, where social media platforms offer opportunities for open communication. But if the Arab Spring revealed the role of social media in political mobilisation, and particularly regime change in Tunisia (Adi, 2014), the 2016 US presidential elections demonstrated that internet can also impact elections negatively (Howard et al, 2018). The online environment can be contaminated by *fake news*, both disinformation and misinformation, and computational propaganda – automated means such as bots dispersing hate speech and other forms of negative campaign or promotion (Howard et al, 2018). This can harm the integrity of democratic processes by confusing and misleading voters, reducing voter turnout, leveraging certain candidates or political parties, and reducing trust in political institutions (National Democratic Institute, 2014). Therefore, although social media have opened new avenues for civic participation in political processes, they have also brought new threats to democracy such as the revival of ethnic tensions and nationalist movements, the intensification of political conflicts, and ultimately caused political crises (Bradshaw and Howard, 2018: 4). These effects can be amplified or aggravated in developing countries, where democracies are younger and traditional media are less established.

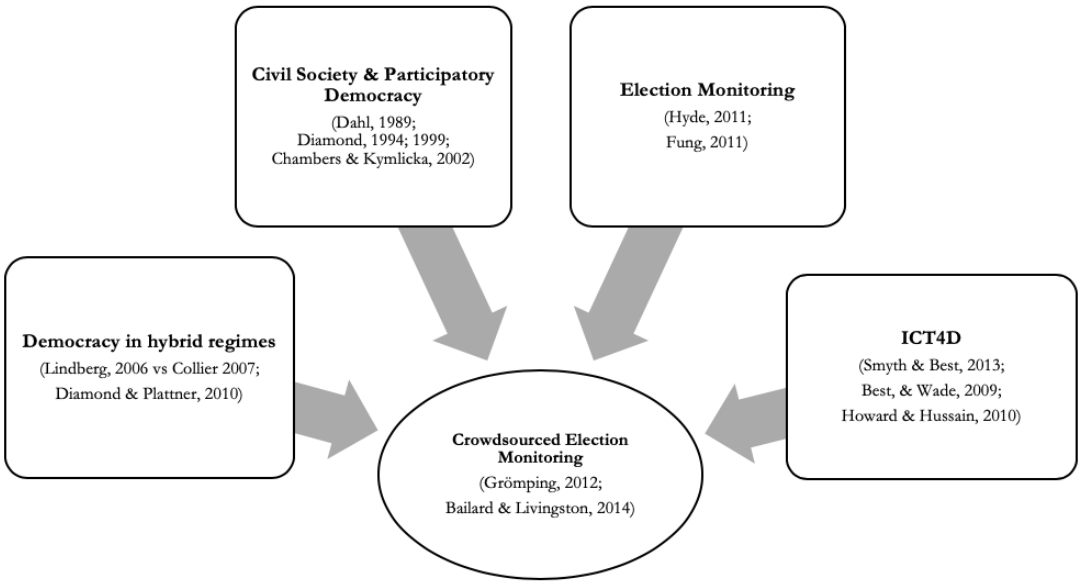
As social media emerge in political life, citizen-led organizations in Sub-Saharan Africa have turned to online crowdsourcing to monitor elections. Crowdsourced election monitoring was first deployed in Kenya in 2007, followed by countries such as Nigeria and Ghana. It is complementary to traditional international election monitoring, offering another form of checks and balances (Aitamurto, 2012: 5). Yet, while existing literature focuses on the contrast between international and crowdsourced election monitoring (Grömping, 2012), and its deployments (Smyth, 2013; Smyth et al., 2016), the effects of crowdsourcing election monitoring on the transparency and quality of

elections remain widely unaddressed. This research aims to answer a broader question within the context of citizen-led movements and initiatives for election monitoring: can participatory democracy improve the quality of elections? Particularly, can crowdsourced election monitoring improve election transparency, therefore contributing to the quality of elections in Nigeria, as well as in Sub-Saharan Africa? Given the opaqueness of social media, and their power to shape public opinion and affect elections, the paper is interested in the ways crowdsourced election monitoring can be used to mitigate these harms by allowing for more election transparency. With social media at the heart of elections, ICT tools such as crowdsourcing must be at the service of democracy to ensure free and fair elections.

Literature Review: ICTs for Development

This research´s theoretical and empirical literature is centred on Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) for Development, an interdisciplinary approach providing a focus on the role of election monitoring in ensuring greater election transparency and guaranteeing free and fair elections, through the lens of participatory democracy mediated by new ICTs. This approach bridges the gap between different areas of knowledge: democratization and election monitoring in Sub-Saharan Africa, and the role of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and of ICTs (figure 1).

Figure 1. Theoretical fields and empirical literature for crowdsourced election monitoring.



Source: Author.

Democratization in hybrid regimes

Has hosting competitive elections in Africa brought democracy closer or further away? The literature concerning the value of elections for democratization can, as of the 1990s, be divided between 'demo-pessimists' and 'demo-optimists' (Wiseman, 1995: 10). Collier represents the 'demo-pessimists', arguing that elections indorsed by Western liberal democracies in Africa "promoted the wrong features of democracy: the façade rather than the essential infrastructure" (2009: 8) and brought unaccountable and illegitimate governments to power which do not enhance the prospects of peace within national territories. By contrast, Lindberg (2006), on the 'demo-optimists' field, believes that repeated contested elections have a surprising democratizing effect in Africa through a mechanism of democratic lock-in. He avers that civic organizations and activism proliferate during electoral periods, through election monitoring and voter-education campaigns (2006: 147-148), highlights the contribution of election monitoring by the international community, that advocates and presses for political reform and broader civil liberties and political rights, and finds that African countries with a higher number of elections up until 2006 had a better level of civil liberties and increased peaceful competition, owning to elites adjusting their behaviour (2006: 141, 149).

However, competitive elections in Sub-Saharan Africa have not brought the democratic progress that Lindberg (2006) had hoped for. Between 1999 and 2006, many African elections were deeply flawed, and some rigged by dictators compelled to allow multi-party elections (Diamond & Plattner, 2010) and, in 2007, the international community witnessed ruling powers openly rigging national elections in Nigeria and Kenya, resulting in post-electoral violence in the latter (Diamond & Plattner, 2010: xi). Nonetheless, in a number of African countries, democracy levels remained unchanged or improved (Diamond & Plattner, 2010: x-xii), confirming Lindberg´s (2006) argument that, even if flawed, elections worked as a force for democracy. For instance, Ghana has experienced competitive elections since 2008, and peaceful turnovers in 2008 and 2016.

There are two relevant indicators of this democratic progress. Firstly, electoral processes in Africa have become less violent and more institutionalised as limits to political terms became widely accepted: for example, in 2006, the Nigerian Senate, following months of divisive national debate, rejected a bill that would have allowed President Olusegun Obasanjo a third term in office – a conflict resolved by the force of institutions and not violence (Posner et Young, 2010: 59). Secondly, the demand for democracy has grown in Africa, and democracy has become the preferred type of political regime (Mattes and Bratton, 2016), with people expressing more confidence in democracy in countries such as Ghana, Kenya, Senegal and Nigeria (Bratton, 2010: 107). There is also a demand for stronger formal institutions: Africans want responsiveness and accountability, whilst remaining

aware that that electoral democracy alone is not able to fulfil the promises of a responsive, accountable leadership between elections (Bratton, 2010: 115).

Participatory Democracy and Civil Society

Diamond and Plattner (2010) argue that the growth of civil society is a potentially long-term positive trend in Africa, and that "*more than ever, the building of democracy in Africa is a bottom-up affair*" (Diamond and Plattner, 2010: 50). According to Habermas, social movements have a dual orientation, as they are both users of the public sphere, pursuing their own political goals within existing forums, and its creators, expanding democratic processes and influencing the political system (Habermas, 1996: 370). Emerging from the gap between citizens and state, social movements can represent the expansion of the public sphere and the empowerment of marginalised groups, creating opportunities to participate, shape policies and criticise, features that define a democratized civil society (Chambers and Kymlicka, 2002: 99). CSOs should have freedom from government control and interference to pursue their own interests, causes and paths – as Chambers and Kymlicka posit, a healthy civil society is driven by shared meanings, whilst "*an unhealthy civil society is one that has been colonized by power or money or both*" (ibid.: 94), and a strong and independent public sphere is a condition for democracy because "*it transforms domination into self-rule*" (ibid.: 99). Perceiving "the Internet as a new kind of public sphere that allows for autonomous deliberation and opinion formation in a spontaneous fashion" (Zittel, 2006: 16), prudent regulation would be necessary to reincarnate Habermas' public sphere in the new age of digital reasoning (Zittel, 2006).

Participatory democracy is then a democratic system that incentivises greater citizen participation beyond voting, creating opportunities for people from all backgrounds and groups to contribute towards decision-making, and fostering a healthy civil society. As information and communication are key to these processes, the rise of ICTs has helped open the debate on participatory democracy, giving citizens from African countries the chance to overcome lack of media freedom and traditional media scarcity. Particularly, and given the rise of social media usage in African countries with significant ICT penetration (Table 1), mainly Nigeria (86 million people online) and Kenya (21 million), the conception of "*monitory democracy*" can also apply. Originally put forward by Keane (1991), a monitory democracy is one in which the public keeps a constant eye on the people in power (Schudson, 2015: 230). Further, a monitory democracy doesn't simply deliver decisions, but creates opportunities for citizens to judge the quality of those decisions (Keane, 1991). The participatory democratic spirit varies between "*politics of faith*" (redemption, populism) and "*politics of scepticism*" (pragmatism), both faces of democracy (Schudson, 2015: 236), both fuelled by distrust.

International Election Monitoring vs Domestic Election Monitoring

Douglas G. Anglin argues that the crisis in democracy bring to the fore the importance of elections as democracy consolidators, hence the contribution of election observers (1998: 471), and establishes the need for election monitoring in Sub-Saharan Africa. Hyde (2011), based on an original dataset of all domestic elections between 1960 and 2006, states that international election monitoring has increased around the world since the 1960s and became an international norm. Traditional election monitoring consists in the deployment of teams of trained election monitors and observers with the purpose of maintaining the integrity of an electoral process (Hyde, 2011), under a set of standardised rules based on common international electoral obligations (Carroll and Davis-Roberts, 2013). In contrast, a social monitoring approach involves the mobilization of citizens with minimal or no training with the purpose of monitoring and reporting events and incidents during an election using digital technology, including mobile technology (Smyth, 2013: 13). Schuler (2008) argued for the use of SMS based strategies for election monitoring prior to the rise of social media, which inspired studies such as Aker et al. (2013) on Mozambique's 2009 elections.

For African elections, election monitoring missions have been particularly important in post-conflict societies in the years immediately after significant upheavals. Although there has been a decrease in violence and coercion in elections, the rise of social media have brought new threats and challenges to African elections that formal monitoring has not yet been able to address, such as the emergence of organizations seeking to manipulate social media and harvest people's personal data, which has become a major challenge to the transparency and integrity of elections. In this scenario, social monitoring is more appropriate for this new electoral landscape where the political arena is just – or more – online as it is offline. With new opportunities and challenges brought by social media, social monitoring can help expose fraudulent behaviour and might become a requirement for electoral integrity and transparency.

Crowdsourced Election Monitoring

The rise of ICTs has put crowdsourcing at the service of democracy. As part of many countries' e-government strategies, crowdsourcing has become a key policy-making tool in initiatives such as participatory budgets, citizen petition sites, law and strategy processes, and open innovation (Aitamurto, 2012). For example, the Parliament of Finland has set up the Committee for the Future, placing crowdsourcing at the heart of government policy. A recent report shows that crowdsourcing offers stimulating possibilities for democracy as a complement to traditional democratic tools or experts, because "*[a] thousand pairs of eyes will spot potential problems easier and a thousand heads will come up with more new ideas than just a few*" (Aitamurto, 2012: 5).

Crowdsourcing for democracy is not exclusive to developed countries, and it has been used around the developing world. Crowdsourced election monitoring missions have been deployed in Mexico in 2009 by Cuidemos Del Voto!, Nigeria in 2011 and 2015 by Enough is Enough, and Pakistan in 2014 with PakVotes. This is a growing practice in Sub-Saharan Africa as relevant studies prove (Fung, 2011; Asuni and Farris, 2011; Salazar and Soto, 2011; Grömping, 2012; Smyth and Best, 2013; Smyth, 2013; Sambuli et al., 2015; Tuccinardi and Balme, 2013; Bailard and Livingston, 2014; Best and Meng, 2015; Bartlett et al., 2015; Moreno et al., 2017), with Howard and Hussain (2011) demonstrating the role of digital media in the unfolding of the Arab Spring powered by the 'crowd'. Best and Wade (2009) argue that there is a positive relationship between democratic growth and internet penetration (2009: 270) and Grömping (2018) notes that NGOs are increasingly using ICTs to document electoral processes, enabling citizens to monitor elections and share live observations such as issues in voter registration.

Table 2. Domestic election monitoring: types of crowdsourced election monitoring.

	Engagement with citizens	**Reporters**	**Data Collection**	**Software**	**Example**
Open Crowdsourcing	Active	Citizens on social networking sites	Social media feed	Ushahidi Aggie	Uchaguzi (Ushahidi)
Bounded Crowdsourcing	Active	Trusted/trained volunteers and staff	Social media feed	ELMO Aggie	Enough is Enough Nigeria
Passive Crowdsourcing	Passive	Doesn't have reporters	Listens to users on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tumblr and other social networking sites	Twitter	#senevotes #zimelections2013 #ghanavotes

Source: Author, and information collected from Grömping (2018).

Crowdsourced election monitoring can be understood as a system in which *"any individual can register an observation about an election [which] is pooled with other individuals' observations to create a public depiction of the reality of the election that is offered back to the public and to election officials in real-time on election day"* (Fung, 2011: 194-195). It can, therefore, enhance election integrity and transparency by unleashing the potential of the 'crowd' to monitor misconduct and wrongdoings during elections, and holding electoral bodies and candidates accountable (Grömping, 2018). Fung (2011) advocates the potential of crowdsourced election monitoring for improving the quality and scope of election administration in aspects such as monitoring capacity, real-time civic engagement, legitimacy, vivid

depictions in an updated medium, transparent analysis and accessibility, benchmarking best practices and levels of voter satisfaction (2011: 194).

Grömping (2012) believes that crowdsourced election monitoring can have a positive effect on democracy, with the added value of crowdsourcing lying in the strengthening of civil society via a widened public sphere and the accumulation of social capital. Bailard and Livingston (2014) found that citizen-generated reports were correlated with higher voter turnout as more failures and abuses during elections were reported to officials and authorities, during the 2011 Nigerian Presidential election.

Methodology

The hypotheses for this study are as follows:

- *H_0: Crowdsourced election monitoring does not improve election transparency in Nigeria, and no findings showed whether it could improve election transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa.*
- *H_1: Crowdsourced election monitoring improves election transparency in Nigeria and has the potential for improving election transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa.*
- *H_2: Crowdsourced election monitoring improves election transparency in Nigeria, yet this is a case-specific outcome and cannot be generalized to apply to the region.*

The initial expectation will be to reject the null hypothesis and confirm hypothesis 1.

This research employs a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative methods, such as the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) dataset analysed by SPSS, and qualitative methods, such as the case study and process tracing, for the analysis and integration of different types of data.

The dependent variable, election transparency, was measured by the Clean Elections Index from the V-Dem Dataset (Coppedge et al., 2018a). The Index uses an interval scale that goes from 0-1 and it is calculated by taking the point estimates from a Bayesian factor analysis model of the following variables: electoral management body (EMB) autonomy (v2elembaut), EMB capacity (v2elembcap), election voter registry (v2elrgstry), election vote buying (v2elvotbuy), election other voting irregularities (v2elirreg), election government intimidation (v2elintim), election other electoral violence (v2elpeace), and election free and fair (v2elfrfair) (Coppedge et al., 2018a: 44) (see Appendix 3).

The independent variable, crowdsourced election monitoring, was measured by the Participatory Democracy Index from the V-Dem dataset (Coppedge et al., 2015; 2018a), and by qualitative data from mission reports and studies. The Participatory Democracy Index uses an interval scale that goes from 0-1, and is calculated from the electoral democracy index

(v2x_polyarchy) and the participatory component index (v2ex_partip) (Coppedge et al., 2018b: 41) (see Appendix 4). The qualitative data were collected from election monitoring organizations' reports, as well as past studies such as Bailard and Livingston (2014) and Best and Meng (2015).

The research design consisted of a comparison of the Sub-Saharan Africa region with a focus on three cases – Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana – narrowing it down to the analysis of Nigeria, to attempt to identify the causal mechanism between the variables over different election cycles (see Appendix 5). The case study approach enables a deeper understanding of the election period and political atmosphere (Smyth, 2013), introducing greater internal validity of the study at the expense of the generalization of results (Sambanis, 2004: 263). Case studies also allow the use of both qualitative and quantitative data (Yin, 1994: 14), which fits the current research design.

The case selection criteria attended to three conditions within the 2007-2017 timeframe: first, countries with significant ICT penetration, given that mobile communication and internet are a growing trend in Africa (see appendix 1); secondly, countries with relevant number of deployments of crowdsourced election monitoring in the region; and thirdly, countries with deployments in consecutive elections. As per Table 1, the countries that matched these criteria were Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana. Nigeria was selected as the main case based on its significant ICT penetration and on the presence of consecutive crowdsourced election monitoring missions deployed in the last two electoral cycles (2011 and 2015 general elections), when CSOs such as Reclaim Naija (n.d.) and Enough is Enough (n.d.) came together in domestic election monitoring efforts. Finally, Nigeria stood out because, out of the three cases, it had the lowest score for democracy and voter turnout while having the largest population online.

Data Analysis

Crowdsourced Election Monitoring in Sub-Saharan Africa

Crowdsourced election monitoring was first used to monitor post-electoral violence during Kenya's 2007 general elections. Ten years on, and as African citizens became more aware of issues affecting elections, such as corruption, propaganda, censorship and often violence, it became more common, with coalitions of CSOs coming together to ensure more democratic and transparent elections through their own monitoring initiatives. To date, 19 crowdsourced election monitoring missions have been deployed in 14 countries to monitor mainly general elections, as shown in table 3. Ushahidi (meaning "*witness*" in Swahili), the first software developed for crowdsourced election monitoring, initially deployed in 2007, remains the most used software for crowdsourcing during these missions, with 11 deployments. It is currently a crowdsourcing platform for submitting violence reports and to map events (Rotich, 2017), employing open crowdsourcing where citizens have an active role in election monitoring by allowing people to send in reports during the electoral

periods. The second most used software is Aggie, with 5 deployments, followed by ELMO, developed by the Carter Center, with 3 deployments. Most of these missions were open or bounded crowdsourcing (table 2).

The flourishing of CSOs in the region brought new hope to the fight against corruption. According to Transparency International (2015), 58 % of Kenyans believe they can make a difference against corruption (Kenya appearing 8th on the list of 28 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, led by Botswana with 72 %), along with 53% of Ghanaians (Ghana appears in 16th position), and a lower percentage (39 %) in the case of Nigerians, their country being in the bottom two with Sierra Leone. However, only 28 % of respondents believed that reporting corruption is the most effective way to stop it and 1 in every 4 Africans is pessimistic about the role ordinary people can play in fighting corruption, with only 12 % admitting to reporting bribes, owing to the fear of reprisals. New technologies, however, can be a tool in the service of democracy by mitigating these fears – Grömping (2018) believes that crowdsourced election monitoring unleashes the power of the crowd to report election wrongdoings such as intimidation, vote-buying and ballot box stuffing, by sharing these observations on social media and holding electoral bodies, parties and candidates accountable.

Table 1: Top 20 Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa with the largest population with internet access, internet penetration rate and crowdsourced elections.

Country	Internet Penetration in 2016 (%)	People with Internet Access in 2016	Crowdsourcing Election Monitoring Deployments
South Africa	52 %	28,580,290	2014
Nigeria	46.10 %	86,219,965	2011, 2015
Kenya	45 %	21,248,806	2007, 2013, 2017
Ghana	28.40 %	7,958,675	2012, 2016
Sudan	26.40 %	10,886,813	2010
Senegal	23.40 %	3,647,939	2012
Angola	23 %	5,951,453	-
Cote d'Ivoire	22 %	5,122,897	-
Zimbabwe	21 %	3,356,223	2013
Uganda	19 %	7,645,197	2011
Zambia	19 %	3,167,934	2011
Cameroon	18 %	4,311,178	-

South Sudan	17.10 %	2,179,963	-
Rwanda	12.40 %	1,478,216	-
Mali	12.20 %	2,212,450	-
Burkina Faso	10.20 %	1,894,498	-
Mozambique	6.40 %	1,834,337	2014
Tanzania	5.30 %	2,895,662	2010, 2015
Ethiopia	4.20 %	4,288,023	-
DR Congo	3.90 %	3,101,210	2011

Source: author and Internet World Stats (available at https://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm)

The flourishing of CSOs in the region brought new hope to the fight against corruption. According to Transparency International (2015), 58 % of Kenyans believe they can make a difference against corruption (Kenya appearing 8th on the list of 28 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, led by Botswana with 72 %), along with 53% of Ghanaians (Ghana appears in 16th position), and a lower percentage (39 %) in the case of Nigerians, their country being in the bottom two with Sierra Leone. However, only 28 % of respondents believed that reporting corruption is the most effective way to stop it and 1 in every 4 Africans is pessimistic about the role ordinary people can play in fighting corruption, with only 12 % admitting to reporting bribes, owing to the fear of reprisals. New technologies, however, can be a tool in the service of democracy by mitigating these fears – Grömping (2018) believes that crowdsourced election monitoring unleashes the power of the crowd to report election wrongdoings such as intimidation, vote-buying and ballot box stuffing, by sharing these observations on social media and holding electoral bodies, parties and candidates accountable.

Using the V-Dem dataset filtered by region (e_regionpol) and year, a regression was run between the independent and dependent variables from 2007-2017. Figures 2 and 3 show a positive strong correlation between participatory democracy and election transparency both in 2007 (r^2 = 0.854) and 2017 (r^2 = 0.761). Even if the nature of this relationship remains unknown, participatory democracy can explain whether elections are more or less transparent.

Although the point cloud in the scatterplots doesn't show significant changes in distribution (see appendix 2.2), Nigeria stands out owning to a drastic increase from 2007-2017. This shows an increase of participatory democracy, reflecting a more active civil society and election transparency.

Neither Kenya or Ghana, however, demonstrate any significant improvements, and, in Kenya, both variables seem to have worsened.

The mean and median for 2017 are higher than in 2007, while having almost identical range and a lower standard deviation in 2017 (see table 4). Although not significant, these changes show that there has been some improvement in election transparency and participatory democracy in the region.

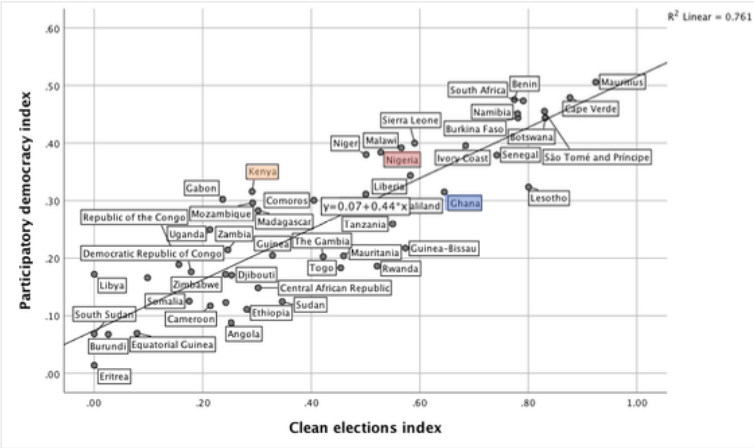
Table 3. Crowdsourced Election Monitoring Deployed Missions in SSA with significant ICT penetration, Ushahidi, since December 2007.

Country	Crowdsourced Missions	Election Type	Date	International Election Monitoring	Software	Relevant Studies
DRC	1	General	2011	EU-EOM The Carter Center	ELMO (The Carter Center)	-
Ghana	2	General	2012	EISA	Aggie	Meng (2013); Best and Meng (2015)
		General	2016	EU-EOM EISA	Aggie	Moreno et al. (2017)
Guinea	1	Parliamentary	2013	EU-EOM	G.V.T - Guinée Vote Témoin	-
Kenya	3	General	2007	EU-EOM	Ushahidi	-
		General	2013	EU-EOM The Carter Center	Uchaguzi (Ushahidi) ELMO	Bowman et al. (2015); Bock and Lederach (2012); Aarvik (2015); Sambuli et al.. (2015); Best and Meng (2015)
		General	2017	EU-EOM The Carter Center	Uchaguzi (Ushahidi)	-
Liberia	1	General	2011	The Carter Center	ELMO Aggie	Smyth (2013); Smyth et al.. (2016); Smyth and Best (2013)
Mozambique	1	General	2014	EU-EOM Carter Center-EISA	ELMO, Texeka-la / Ushahidi	-
Nigeria	2	General	2011	EU-EOM	Reclaim Naija (Ushahidi), Enough is Enough (Aggie)	Bailard and Livingstone (2014); Smyth (2013); Smyth and Best (2013); Smyth et al.. (2016); Best and Meng (2015)
		General	2015	EU-EOM	Enough is Enough Nigeria, ReVoDa (Aggie)	Smyth el al. (2016); Bartlett et al. (2015)
Senegal	1	Presidential	2012	EU-EOM	Senevote (OneWorld)	-
South Africa	1	General	2014		VIP: Voice	Ferree et al. (2017)
Sudan	1	General	2010	EU-EOM The Carter Center	Sudan VoteMonitor (Ushahidi)	-
Tanzania	2	General	2010	EU-EOM	Uchaguzi (Ushahidi)	-

		General	2015	EU-EOM	Uchaguzi (Ushahidi)	Shayo and Kersting (2017)
Uganda	1	General	2011	EU-EOM	Uchaguzi (Ushahidi)	Hellström and Karefelt (2012)
Zambia	1	General	2011	EU-EOM	Bantu Watch (Ushahidi)	-
Zimbabwe	1	General	2013		ZimVoices (Ushahidi)	-

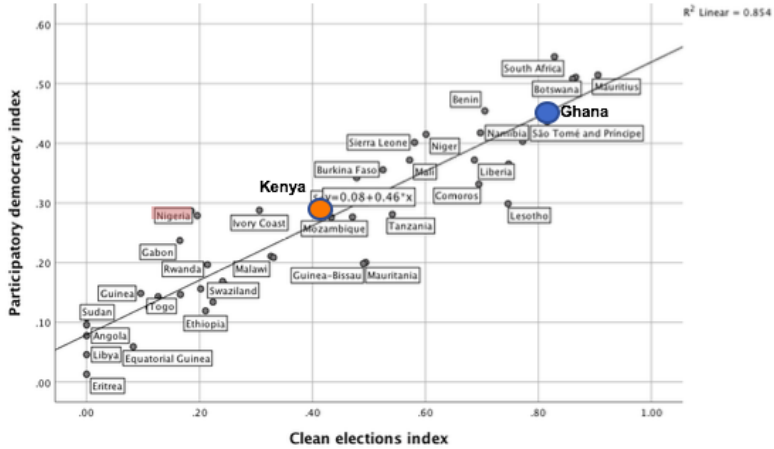
Source: Author.

Figure 2. Correlation Participatory Democracy and Clean Elections Index Sub-Saharan Africa in 2007.



Source: Varieties of Democracy dataset (2018).

Figure 3. Correlation Participatory Democracy and Clean Elections Index Sub-Saharan Africa in 2017.



Source: Varieties of Democracy dataset (2018).

Table 4. Comparing measures of central tendency for election transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2007 and 2017.

	2007	2017
Mean	0.3962	0.4280
Median	0.3992	0.4135
Minimum	0.00	0.00
Maximum	0.91	0.92
Range	0.91	0.92
Standard Deviation	0.2759	0.2599

Source: Author from Varieties of Democracy dataset using SPSS for analysis.

Comparing Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana

In 2015, Best and Meng released a study of identity politics versus political discourse on social media during Nigeria's 2011 Presidential Election, Ghana's 2012 General Election, and Kenya's 2013 General Election, each country´s first elections with substantial social media usage and crowdsourced election monitoring missions (since Kenya's first deployment in 2007), as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Election Cycles since Kenya's 2002 elections that marked a democratic turnover in the country.

	Election cycle 1	Election cycle 2	Election cycle 3	Election cycle 4
Kenya	2002	**2007***	**2013***	**2017***
Nigeria	2003	2007	**2011***	**2015***
Ghana	2004	2008	**2012***	**2016***

***Elections with a Crowdsourced Election Monitoring* Deployment**

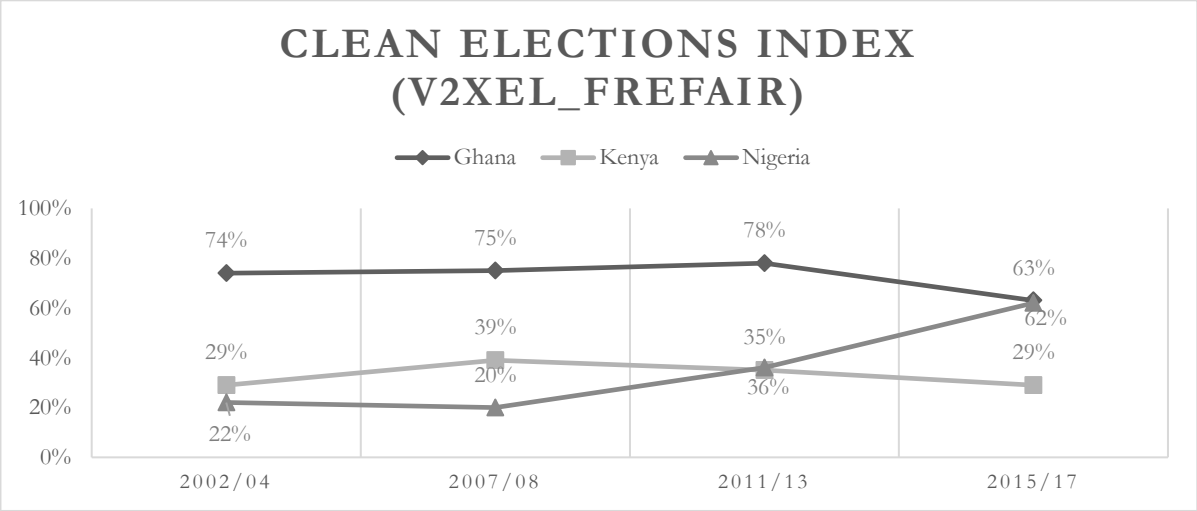
Source: Author.

In hybrid regimes such as Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana, elections mirror the state of democracy by exposing misconduct. Although the 2002 election marked the beginning of a democratic era in Kenya (Anderson, 2003), the post-election environment of 2007 was characterised by civil unrest and violence, fuelled by ethnic divisions, and resulted in the deaths of about 1,300 Kenyans (Best

and Meng, 2015). Ushahidi, developed to monitor and respond to these violent incidents, was later expanded for overall election monitoring. Similar to Kenya's 2007 election, Nigeria's 2011 general election was also plagued with violence, intimidation and fraud. These issues, associated with corruption, were believed to be crippling Nigeria's democratic processes. Although Ghana's 2012 election was not affected by violence, campaigns used strategies of clientelism and opportunism to get votes. Yet Ghana is still the most democratic of the three countries and elections are perceived as more legitimate, a result of the role of political parties in supporting a robust democracy (Best and Meng, 2015).

The findings of Best and Meng (2015) proved that political discourse and pragmatism became more important for voters (Best and Meng, 2015) and suggest that Nigerians seemed to be aware of their democratic deficit and of rigged elections. Their work features an analysis of Twitter's content from Nigeria's 2011 election, showing that the topic "*Participatory Democracy*", originally from Goodluck Jonathan's manifesto, generated powerful discussions around democracy and good governance. Nigerians did not seem to debate policy stances, but were instead worried about the quality of democracy in the country. In Kenya's 2013 election, policy discussions on Twitter were slightly louder than identity politics compared to Nigeria, and in Ghana's 2012 election, users seemed more engaged with policy, with debate being more pragmatic.

Figure 4. Clean Elections Index by country and by election cycle.

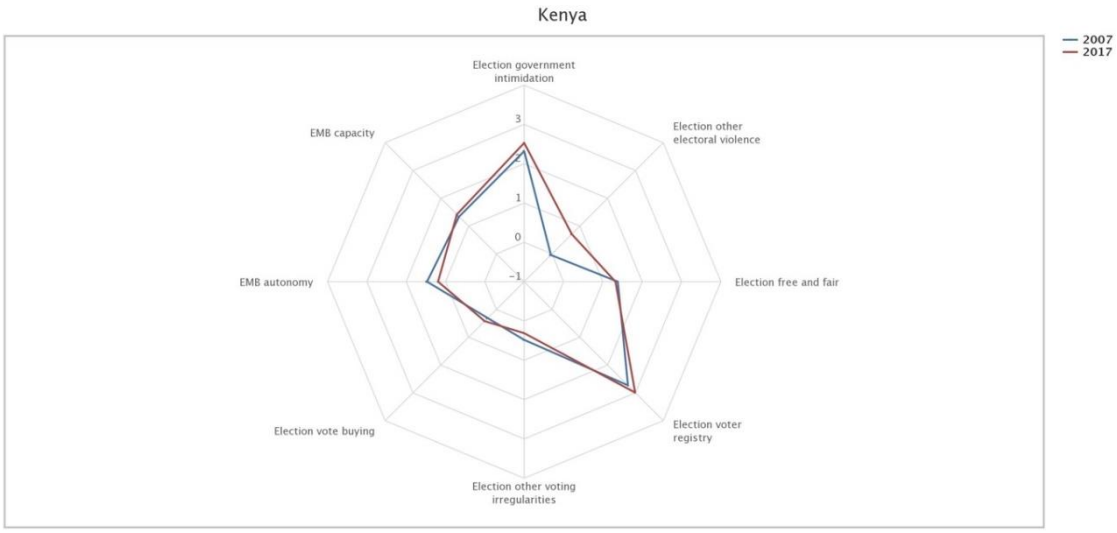


Source: Varieties of Democracy dataset.

A positive increase of election transparency from the third to the fourth cycle would have been expected for all three cases. However, in Kenya, election transparency decreased by about 4% from 2007 to 2013 and 6% from 2013 to 2017. In Ghana, election transparency suffered a 15% regression from 2012 to 2016, despite the fact that, across four election cycles, the country shows

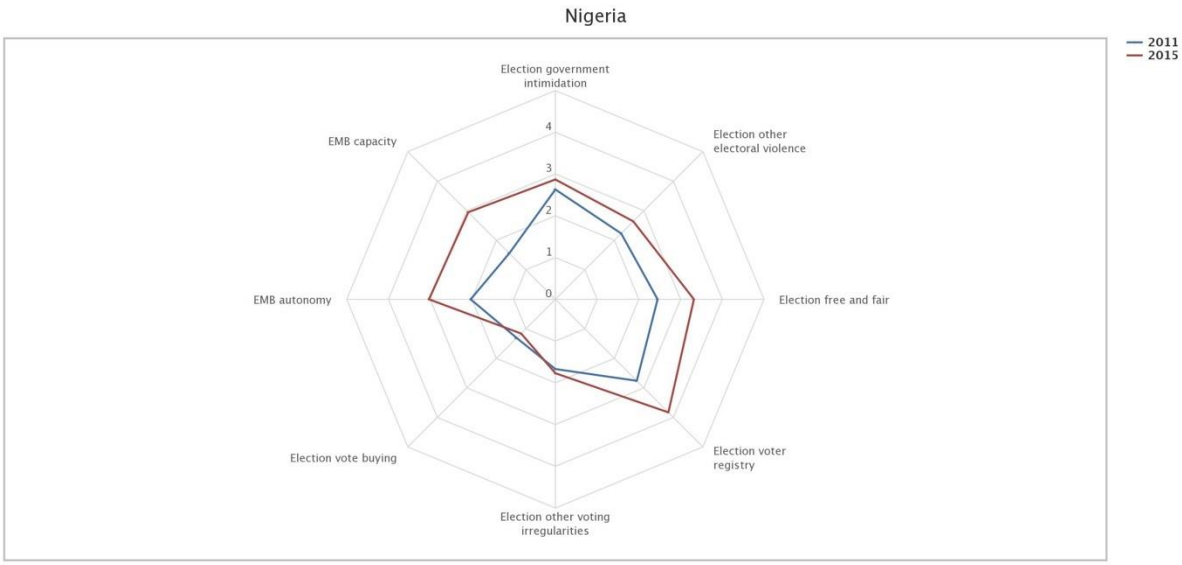
the highest election transparency. Nigeria not only remained the only case where election transparency increased between election cycles with deployments (26%), but also registered a consecutive positive increase totalling 42% since the first deployment, while Kenya and Ghana registered total decreases of 10% and 12% respectively.

Figure 5. Clean Elections Index: variable breakdown in Kenya in 2007 and 2017.



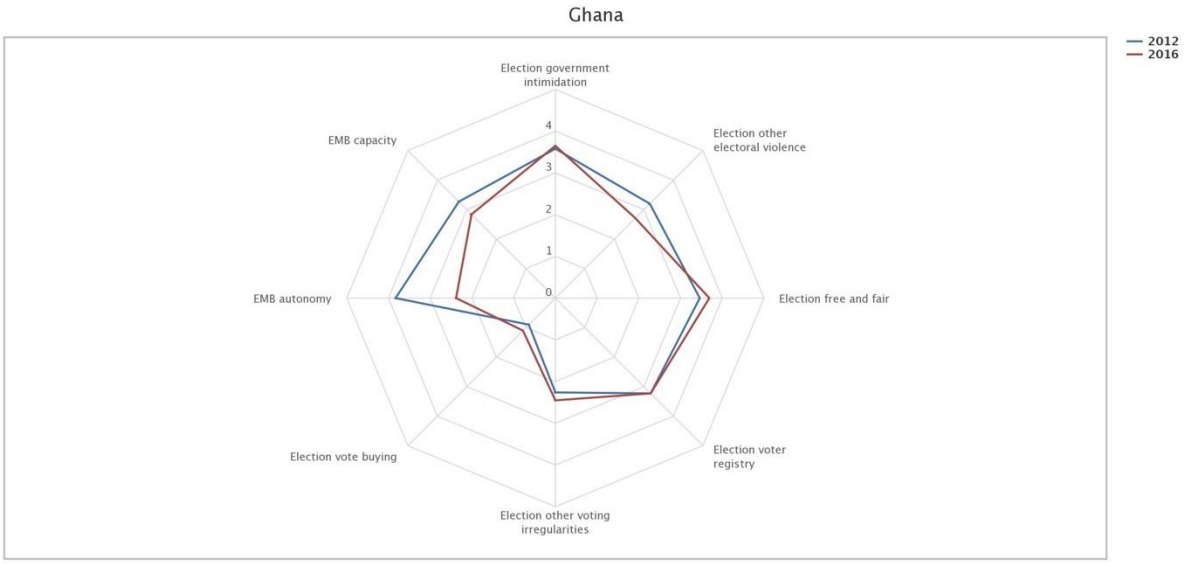
Source: Varieties of Democracy dataset.

Figure 6. Clean Elections Index: variable breakdown in Nigeria in 2011 and 2015.



Source: Varieties of Democracy dataset.

Figure 7. Clean Elections Index: variable breakdown in Ghana in 2012 and 2016.



Source: Varieties of Democracy dataset.

A breakdown of the election transparency data will illustrate the character of each election and the Clean Elections Index's scores. These variables are presented in Appendix 3. The breakdown of election transparency in the radar graphs in Figures 5, 6 and 7 does not show many similarities between the cases. However, confirming the analysis in Figure 6, Nigeria seems to be consistent with the improvement in most aspects of election transparency, with the exception of vote buying between 2011 and 2015. Ghana continues to be the country with the most favourable profile in election transparency, scoring better than Kenya and Nigeria in every single aspect.

As table 6 shows, in Nigeria and Ghana, the main pressuring issues are vote buying, voting irregularities and electoral violence. Although the reality of elections differs from country to country, there are common problems affecting elections in Sub-Saharan Africa, which can be mitigated by technology.

Table 6. Hierarchy of most pressuring aspects (from worst – lowest ranking and points - to best – highest ranking and points) affecting the 2015/17 election cycle in Kenya, Nigeria and Ghana.

	Kenya	Nigeria	Ghana	Aggregated Points	Overall Ranking
Vote buying	2nd	1st	1st	4	1st
Voting Irregularities	1rd	2nd	3rd	6	2nd
Electoral violence	3st	3rd	4th	10	3rd
EMB autonomy	4th	6th	2nd	12	4th

EMB capacity	6th	5th	5th	16	5th
Government Intimidation	7th	4th	7rd	18	6th
Free and fair elections	5th	7th	8th	20	7th
Voter registry	8th	8th	6th	22	8th

Source: Author.

Crowdsourcing Nigerian Elections

Nigeria is a resource- rich country that remains crippled by the experience of civil war between 1967 and 1970, following its independence from the United Kingdom in 1960, and by a chaotic transition to a republic. It has been trapped in an ongoing democratization process since 1999, ending three decades of military rule, and exhibits high levels of corruption. But are there prospects for change? Under the People's Democratic Party, Olusegun Obasanjo became the President of Nigeria on 29 May 1999 – which later became Democracy Day. Obasanjo was committed to democratic reforms and improving the country´s international reputation. His second term, following his re-election in 2003, became notable for the introduction of much needed checks and balances in Nigeria (Collier, 2009).

However, as incumbents look to remain in power, vote-buying and government intimidation have become usual practices in African elections, and new technologies, while useful to tackle these issues, with social media being praised for fostering political participation at Nigeria's 2011 and in 2015 elections (Madueke, 2017), also opened up a whole new world of potential strategies to rig elections and to exercise the same electoral wrongdoings (see Cambridge Analytica controversy during 2015 Elections in Nigeria in Cadwalladr, 2018).

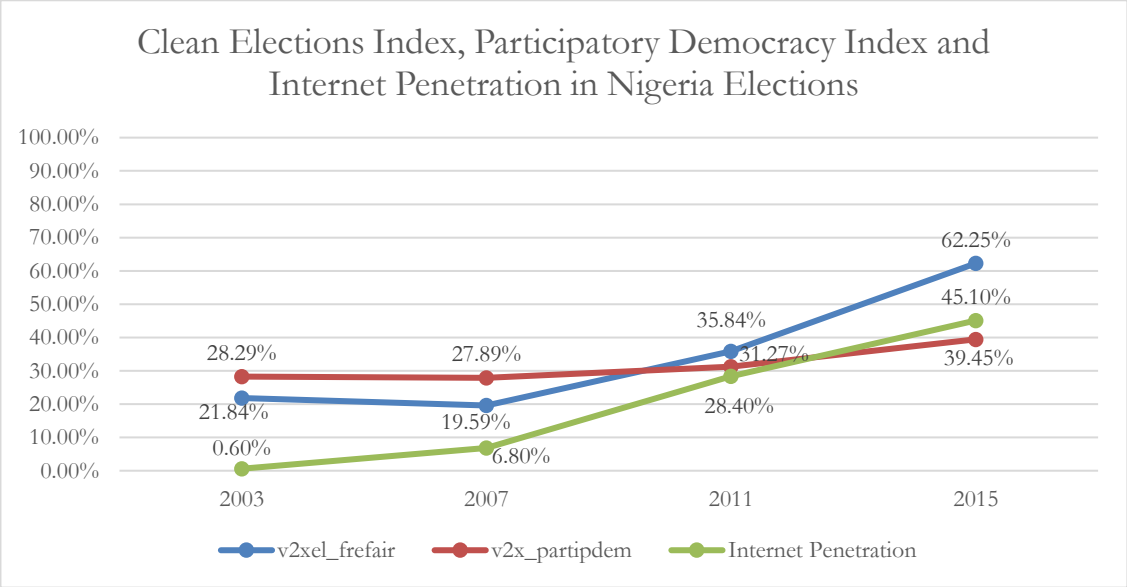
In 2011, CSOs formed the coalition Enough is Enough (n.d.) to promote good governance and public accountability in the face of Nigeria's perceived high levels of corruption. Enough is Enough were behind several initiatives such as Shine Your Eye (n.d.), an SMS and web platform that facilitates engagement with National Assembly members, and ReVoda (n.d.), a mobile app that turns citizens into election observers. Reclaim Naija (n.d.) also emerged as a national platform for grassroots engagement in promoting electoral transparency and democratic government, bringing together a vast network of grassroots organizations across Nigeria, along with individual participants, mostly informal sector workers, such as mechanics, carpenters, traders, electricians, hairdressers. These movements were behind crowdsourced election monitoring missions in Nigeria´s general elections, using technology such as Ushahidi and Aggie, and live reporting of incidents to the

electoral committee through situation rooms full of untrained, yet committed citizens. The growth of civil society in Nigeria was facilitated by the rise of social media, which grew with internet availability. As seen in Figure 8, participatory democracy in Nigeria increased after 2007.

Commonly, voter turnout is perceived to be an indication of participatory democracy. However, as Table 7 shows, voter turnout in Nigeria has continually decreased since 2013, with the 2015 elections registering the lowest voter turnout (43.65 %) to date since the beginning of democratic rule in Nigeria.

Yet, despite the decreasing voter turnout, participatory democracy has slowly increased in Nigeria, as shown in figure 8. This index features other indicators such as the civil society participation index, measuring whether major CSOs are routinely consulted by policymakers, the commitment of people to these organizations, women´s participation and the process of legislative candidate nomination within party organization – from highly decentralized to party primaries (see Appendix 4).

Figure 8. Participatory Democracy, Electoral Transparency and Internet Growth in Nigeria from 2003 to 2015.



Source: Author; Varieties of Democracy dataset.

Table 7. Voter turnout in Nigeria from 2003-2015.

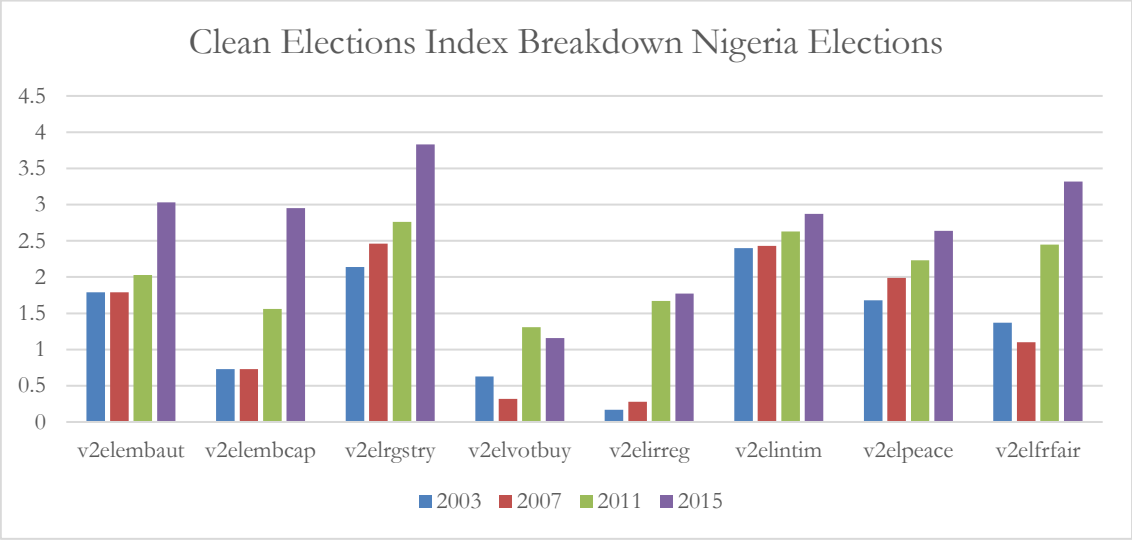
Elections	Registered Voters	Turnout	Percentage
2003	60,823,022	42,018,735	69.08 %
2007	61,567,036	35,397,517	57.49 %

2011	73,528,040	39,469,484	53.68 %
2015	67,422,005	29,432,083	43.65 %

Source: African Elections Database available at africanelections.tripod.com/ng.html.

Figure 9 features the breakdown of the Clean Elections Index, which allows for the understanding of the effects of crowdsourced election monitoring on election transparency, and shows that, despite the unfavourable picture of election transparency in Nigeria across different election cycles, the results only started to improve substantially after the first crowdsourced election monitoring mission in 2011.

Figure 9. Clean elections index breakdown by variable in Nigeria.



Source: Varieties of Democracy dataset.

Among the most substantial improvements on election transparency from 2011–2015 feature, firstly, the electoral management body's capacity to act faster on reports and incidents submitted by citizens, through a more efficient use of resources; secondly, improvements in the accuracy of the voter registry, including voter education and better practices; and thirdly, the electoral management body´s increased autonomy from the government and its ability to impartially apply electoral laws, as, thanks to the vigilance demonstrated by ordinary citizens, who watch the elections unfold on social media where they express their views, there is more pressure and scrutiny for the electoral body to follow the law and demonstrate fairness. Nonetheless, and although elections have become increasingly more democratic and transparent in Nigeria, the public perceptions of corruption have worsened, although this could be due to the fact that citizens will perceive campaigns, candidates and government to be more corrupt in light of the increased available information, even if in reality corruption has not increased (Transparency International, 2018).

Vote buying is still a problem in Nigeria, although it has drastically improved since the first crowdsourced election. An explanation for this is that vote buying happens offline, particularly involving the most vulnerable, such as low-income voters, who are targeted in rural areas deprived from internet access and social media, and is therefore outside the scope of CSOs taking a more active role in election monitoring.

The progressive decrease of electoral violence confirms Lindberg's (2006) belief that repeated elections result in more peaceful competition. It seems that this is not exclusive of holding multi-party elections, but that the new digital technologies and its new role in elections is a relevant factor. Whilst this seems to be true for Nigeria, the same cannot be confirmed for other Sub-Saharan countries.

It is relevant to add to this analysis that the recent election in Nigeria, in November 2019, had the lowest voter turnout in 20 years of democratization as only 30 % of Nigerians voted (see Oladipo, 2019), fitting with the data presented in Table 7. Voter turnout progressively decreased from 69 % in 2003, 58 % in 2007, 54 % in 2011 and 44 % in 2015, a symptom of continuous lack of trust and faith in the political system and institutions. In this latest election, polling stations were reported closed due to violent outbreaks, and there were problems with voter registry, issues that had been identified as pressuring in past electoral cycles in Nigeria. Although some believe that these problems could have affected the turnout, it is not yet possible to understand the extent to which they influenced the election results and how they reflect on election transparency. Yet, some analysts suggested that the use of technology helped improve voting systems (electronic voting) and voter education and awareness, while decreasing fraudulent behaviour.

Results

Was it proven that crowdsourced election monitoring, as a manifestation of participatory democracy, can improve election transparency, and therefore contribute to the quality of elections in Nigeria, as well as in Sub-Saharan Africa? To understand this, we need to look at the hypotheses and our results.

- *H_0: Crowdsourced election monitoring does not improve election transparency in Nigeria, and no findings showed whether it could improve election transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

Although election transparency and participatory democracy improved over a ten-year period in Sub-Saharan Africa, no evidence was found that crowdsourced election monitoring can improve election transparency in the region. However, in the case of Nigeria, we can see that, since the first deployment of crowdsourced election monitoring in 2011, election transparency

progressively improved from approximately 20 % in 2007 to 36 % in 2011, and 62 % in 2015. Participatory democracy increased since 2007, despite a steady decrease in voter turnout since 2003. We showed how citizens were able to report incidents and wrongdoings in real time through crowdsourced election monitoring, which capacitated the electoral management body to act immediately on information received and confirmed by software such as Ushahidi. In every election in Nigeria where CSOs organized a crowdsourced election monitoring mission, almost every single aspect of election transparency improved. For these reasons, we reject H_0.

- H_1: *Crowdsourced election monitoring improves election transparency in Nigeria and has the potential for improving election transparency in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

There were common problems to elections in Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria, such as vote buying, voter registry issues and electoral violence. However, the comparative analysis of the three cases did not show a consistent increase of election transparency in election cycles where crowdsourcing election monitoring missions were deployed: Therefore, it was not possible to identify a causal mechanism to link the dependent and independent variables. In Kenya and Ghana, election transparency decreased by a total of 10% and 12% respectively since the first electoral cycle with significant ICT penetration, while in Nigeria, election transparency increased by 32%. Therefore, we also reject H_1.

- H_2: *Crowdsourced election monitoring improves election transparency in Nigeria, yet this is a case-specific outcome and cannot be generalized to apply to the region.*

The growth of the political participation of CSOs in Nigeria through movements such as Enough is Enough and Reclaim Naija show increased civic and political awareness in the country; there is also a demand for accountability and transparency, with social media playing a big role. Therefore, significant findings regarding the case of Nigeria confirm that the improvement of election transparency is linked to the increase of participatory democracy through crowdsourcing initiatives, such as crowdsourced election monitoring. Having rejected the idea that this is true for Kenya or Ghana, or the Sub-Saharan Africa region, we demonstrated that this link is valid for Nigeria. Therefore, we accept H_2.

Conclusion and Further Research

Several areas for further research were identified, relating to processes of democratization in Sub-Saharan Africa, the rise of social media and ICT penetration in the region, and the growth of the civil society's participation in political processes. Firstly, *technology can contribute to mitigate issues affecting election transparency*. There were common problems to the elections in these countries, such as

vote buying, voter registry issues and electoral violence, which technology can help to overcome, especially through crowdsourcing systems that can inform and capacitate the electoral management body in real time. Exposing these issues becomes easier as access to internet expands, opening channels of communication to share information and to mobilise people. This is yet to be confirmed by further deployments and research.

Secondly, *in African countries with more democratized civil societies, these were empowered by the growth of ICTs.* African countries such as Kenya and Nigeria – although not democracies – have a more democratized civil society that fulfils Habermas's dual orientation (users of the public sphere in pursuit of their own political goals, but also creators of the public sphere by expanding democracy and influencing the political system). Data showed that CSOs in Kenya, Ghana and Nigeria, flourishing along the rise of ICTs, helped capacitate electoral management bodies and reinforce their autonomy. It is still unclear whether internet availability necessarily means more political participation, therefore more research is needed as ICTs permeate Sub-Saharan Africa and civil societies become more aware of political processes.

Thirdly, *the digital age in Sub-Saharan Africa: awareness, participation and scrutiny.* Social media is becoming more relevant in some African elections. Enough is Enough in Nigeria uses a variety of tools that rely on access to the internet and to social media that allows it to reach out to more voters for voter education and awareness campaigns, capitalizing on the fact that more than 86 million Nigerians have access to the internet, the largest group of people in Sub-Saharan Africa. As social media has the potential to add a new level of scrutiny, then what would a digital era mean for incumbents and one-party states in Sub-Saharan Africa? Therefore, a recommendation for further research is on the importance of regulating social media to counter emerging threats such as misinformation, disinformation and *fake news*, and to create mechanisms to mediate this new public sphere.

Fourthly, *elections represent opportunities to improve democratic processes.* According to Fukuyama, the failure of institutionalisation in Sub-Saharan Africa was responsible for the stagnant democratization (2015: 12). Yet, this did not shake the demand for democracy nor the determination of CSOs in electoral monitoring, as seen in Nigeria where election transparency improved considerably in 2011 and 2015. This confirms Diamond and Plattner's idea that building democracy in Africa is a bottom-up affair (2010: 50). Although civil society has been noted as an essential condition for democracy, is it enough to advance democracy when institutions are weak? If so, can the growing participation of civil society in the political sphere become the engine of democratic advancement? Nigerians, out of 28 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, are amongst the ones who least believe that people can fight

corruption. Yet, Nigeria is an example of civil society´s strength in taking a more active role during elections. The role of CSOs such as Enough is Enough and Reclaim Naija in the 2011 and 2015 elections are examples of how participatory democracy has increased in the country, despite voter turnout progressively decreasing since 2007. The social and horizontal nature of crowdsourced election monitoring makes it accessible for citizens to engage during elections.

The conclusions presented above should be interpreted with care. It is also important to point out that the dependent and independent variables in this study, taken from the V-Dem dataset, include other components that were not addressed in depth in this study. Still, we chose to use the V-Dem Clean Elections Index as election transparency for the dependent variable since we believed the components were the most relevant to this research and for looking at election cycles over time, although this single measure is not, on its own, enough to claim causality.

All in all, this ambitious yet limited research contributes to the literature on the changing political landscape in Sub-Saharan Africa facilitated by the rise of ICTs - as social media permeates people's lives, political affairs and elections, and opens up new opportunities for civil society to take part and even shape democratic processes, it also brings new threats and challenges whose dimension remains unknown. Therefore, it is of the most relevance and urgency to further research these topics.

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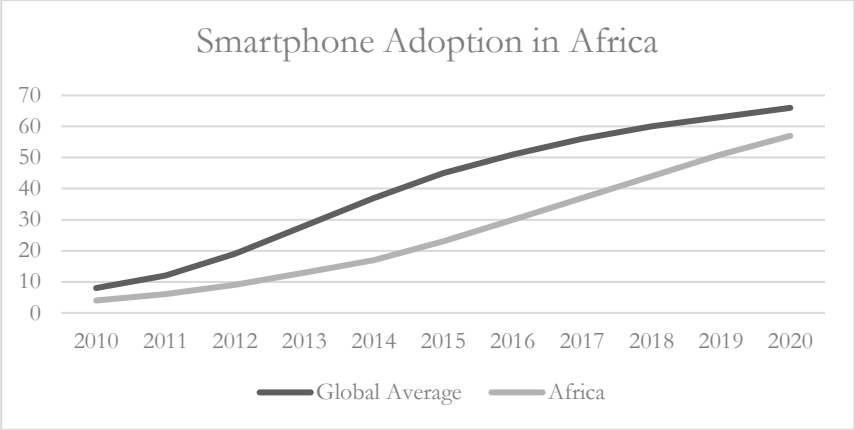
Appendices

Appendix 1 – Smartphone Adoption in Africa 2010-2020



Source: GSMA Intelligence, available at https://www.gsmaintelligence.com/research/?file=3bc21ea879a5b217b64d62fa24c55bdf&download (accessed on 2 July 2018).

Appendix 2 – Statistical regression between Participatory Democracy Index and Clean Elections Index using SPSS Statistics for the Sub-Saharan African region

2.1. Pearson correlation coefficients – Participatory Democracy and Clean Elections Index

2.1.1. Pearson correlation coefficient for 2007

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.924[a]	.854	.851	.10666	.854	274.111	1	47	.000

a) Predictors: (Constant), Participatory democracy index

b) Dependent Variable: Clean elections index

2.1.2. Pearson correlation coefficient for 2017

Model Summary

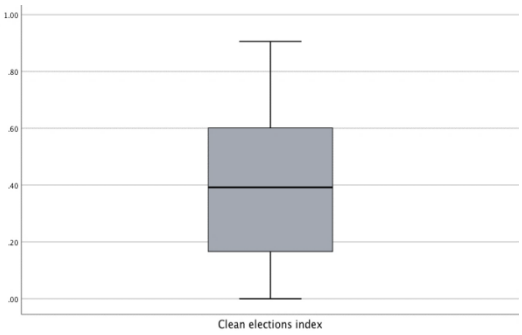
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.872[a]	.761	.756	.12850	.761	152.463	1	48	.000

a) Predictors: (Constant), Participatory democracy index

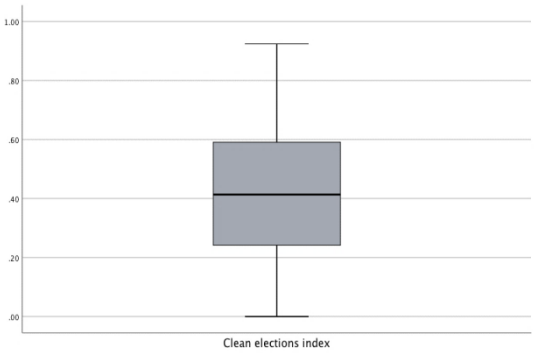
b) Dependent Variable: Clean elections index

Data source*: V-Dem dataset,* analysed using SPSS.

2.2. Box Plots Output – 2007 vs 2017



2007



2017

Data source*: V-Dem dataset,* analysed using SPSS.

Appendix 3. Codification of the Clean Elections Index, Establishing Variables and Survey Questions

Variable	Question	Coding
Clean elections index	*To what extent are elections free and fair?*	v2xel_frefair
1. EMB autonomy	*Does the Election Management Body (EMB) have autonomy from government to apply election laws and administrative rules impartially in national elections?*	v2elembaut
2. EMB capacity	*Does the Election Management Body (EMB) have sufficient staff and resources to administer a well-run national election?*	v2elembcap
3. Election voter registry	*In this national election, was there a reasonably accurate voter registry in place and was it used?*	v2elrgstry
4. Election vote buying	*In this national election, was there evidence of vote and/or turnout buying?*	v2elvotbuy
5. Election other voting irregularities	*In this national election, was there evidence of other intentional irregularities by incumbent and/or opposition parties, and/or vote fraud?*	v2elirreg
6. Election government intimidation	*In this national election, were opposition candidates/parties/campaign workers subjected to repression, intimidation, violence, or harassment by the government, the ruling party, or their agents?*	v2elintim
7. Election other electoral violence	*In this national election, was the campaign period, election day, and post-election process free from other types (not by the government, the ruling party, or their agents) of violence related to the conduct of the election and the campaigns (but not conducted by the government and its agents)?*	v2elpeace
8. Election free and fair	*Taking all aspects of the pre-election period, election day, and the post-election process into account, would you consider this national election to be free and fair?*	v2elfrfair

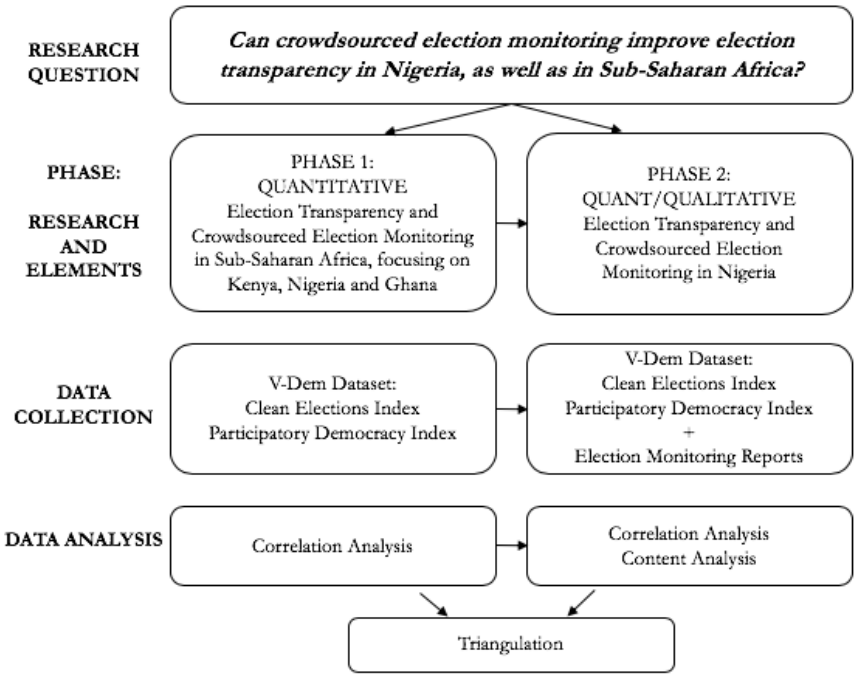
Note: The variables used a scale from 0 – 4, where 0 meant the worst-case scenario and 4 the best-case scenario. For example, for the variable *Election vote buying* where the question was "*Was there evidence of vote and/or turnout buying?*, 0 would be "There was systematic, widespread, and almost nationwide vote/turnout buying by almost all parties and candidates", while 4 would be "There was no evidence of vote/turnout buying". Source: V-Dem Code Book (Coppedge et al., 2018b: 44, 375).

Appendix 4. Codification of the Participatory Democracy Index, Establishing Variables and Survey Questions

Variable	Question	Coding
Participatory democracy index	*To what extent is the ideal of participatory democracy achieved?*	v2x_partipdem
1. Electoral democracy index	*To what extent is the ideal of electoral democracy in its fullest sense achieved?*	v2x_polyarchy
2. Participatory component index	*To what extent is the participatory principle achieved?*	v2x_partip
2.1. Civil society participation index	*Are major CSOs routinely consulted by policymakers; how large is the involvement of people in CSOs; are women prevented from participating; and is legislative candidate nomination within party organization highly decentralized or made through party primaries?*	v2x_cspart
2.2. Direct popular vote index	*To what extent is the direct popular vote utilized?*	v2xdd_dd

Source: V-Dem Code Book (Coppedge et al., 2018b: 41, 46-47, 377).

Appendix 5. Research Design using a Mixed-Methods Approach



Source: Author.

Innovative social work practices by Islamic grassroots organizations in Switzerland

Baptiste Brodard

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Baptiste Brodard, born in 1986, from Switzerland, is a PhD researcher in social sciences and Islamic theology at the University of Fribourg (Switzerland). He received a Bachelor's degree in political science at the University Paris VIII (France) in 2008 and a Master's degree in social sciences, social work and social policies at the University of Fribourg in 2011. His Master's thesis on Islamic social work in Paris was based on an ethnography within various grassroots organizations providing social services in distressed neighbourhoods. Having worked for several years as a social worker, counsellor and project manager in Switzerland and Algeria, he began his PhD thesis on Islamic grassroots organizations tackling social exclusion and identity-based conflicts in Switzerland through a case study method and qualitative ethnographic research. E-mail: baptiste.brodard@gmail.com

Abstract

In Switzerland, specific issues related to Muslims have recently emerged in public debates. In addition to the question of radicalization, Muslim migrant populations are affected by social problems such as crime, marginalization, and overrepresentation in prisons. This situation has drawn the state's attention to the need for implementing new responses to the challenges of religious extremism and social exclusion, particularly involving Muslims. While local authorities have organized trainings and projects to tackle these issues, Islamic grassroots associations have developed some initiatives to address the needs of the population, not only focusing on problems related to Islam and Muslims but also on Swiss society as a whole. Based on a case study of Islamic organizations providing social welfare services, this paper questions the inclusion of such faith-based projects within mainstream society and the area of social work, considering particularly the relation between Islamic organizations and the state.

Keywords

Charity; Grassroots Organizations; Islam; Muslims; Radicalization; Religion; Social Work; Welfare

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Introduction

Following the settlement of migrants from a wide range of countries, most Islamic organizations in Europe and North America were founded with the aim of providing worship and Islamic education to meet the religious needs of Muslims, such as the organization of daily prayers and other regular rites.[1] Muslim communities[2] in the "West" did not generally develop faith-based social services till the late 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century. Over the past years, a new range of Islam-based social welfare services and initiatives have emerged in various European countries. Though most of them have been specifically focused on Muslims, recently a new kind of social engagement has been devised by Muslims and Islamic organizations with the aim of reaching the broader society beyond Muslim communities.

This study was inspired by empirical observations[3] in the context of Western European countries and, more globally, in countries where Muslims constitute a minority. First, the observations showed the existence of social work practices within an Islamic framework: mosques and grassroots associations whose identity and references are built on Islam implementing social services addressing local issues such as social exclusion and identity-based conflicts. Similar services to those having been developed in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and France over the last two decades have started being developed more recently in Switzerland.

The observations secondly revealed that some discourses using theological and normative Islamic references address social justice and propose solutions to tackle mainstream social issues usually targeted by social work. These discourses are being spread through mosques, conferences, videos, and articles. They may be contributing to the shaping of an Islamic theology of social work, something that has not been clearly defined as of yet.

Beyond both of these empirical observations, the link between faith-based practices of social work and theological normative discourses is unclear and unexplored. Moreover, the socio-political environment in which Islamic social work takes place has a strong influence on the possibilities of partnerships between Islamic social work organizations and both public and private agencies. In Switzerland, Islamic organizations involved in social work have developed some partnerships with statutory agencies and they have also established contact with local authorities. Some of these Islamic organizations providing a new kind of community-based social work are recognized by the state and

[1] In the French context, Jocelyne Césari's book "Musulmans et Républicains, les Jeunes, l'Islam et la France" argued that the main concerns of Islamic organizations were initially the development of places of worship (Césari, 1998).
[2] The denomination "Muslim communities" is used in plural in this article as it refers to various Muslim organizations and populations whose diversity prevents them from converging into a single community.
[3] I conducted various academic and independent field research related to Islamic organizations and Muslim communities in France (2009-2011), the United States of America (2009), the United Kingdom (2016), and Switzerland (2015-2018). The comments discussed in this paragraph apply to each of these countries.

considered as potential partners while others are perceived with suspicion. Unravelling the reason for this will be the aim of this paper.

Insights from academic literature

Situated at the intersection of different academic fields, this study cannot be approached through just one disciplinary lens. The areas that inform the research comprise social work, sociology of religion, political science and Islamic studies. As far as the view provided by anthropology is concerned, ethnographic studies on the subject in Switzerland are still lacking despite the effort of many political science studies over the last decade to conduct research on Muslim communities (see for instance Amghar et al., 2007). Observations show that the first Islamic social work initiatives in Switzerland started in the late 2000s, and other faith-based welfare projects or Islamic social work organizations were created after that time[4]. Given the recent nature of these faith-based initiatives, there is still a lack of Swiss data on this phenomenon.

Relevant literature on Islamic organizations and religious activism has, however, already been being produced in Switzerland's neighbouring country, France, since the 1990s. Several authors (Césari, 1998; Kepel, 1987; Kepel, 2000; Ternisien, 2002) have conducted investigations and research on the citizenship of Muslims and on Islamic organizations and transnational movements with a focus on their engagement in society. Later, Boubekeur (2007) intended to draw the religious landscape of Islamic militant movements in Europe. Although this work does not focus on social services, it does shed light on activism within Islamic organizations and networks, helping to identify social and political dynamics within religious organizations and movements. In addition, research conducted in Lille (France) addressed the rivalry between statutory social agencies and Muslim preachers whose role in distressed urban areas could be perceived as social work and counselling (Bouzar, 2001).

More recently, Arslan and Marlière (2014) wrote a paper addressing the competition between statutory social workers and Islamic associations within poor and deprived urban areas in Paris. Their research displayed the legitimacy and success encountered by Muslim actors providing social services in contrast to difficulties met by official social workers in establishing relationships with youth coming mainly from other cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds.

The question of the lack of legitimacy of statutory social agencies within deprived urban areas had, however, been addressed by different authors before, including Duret (1996) who focused on the issue of the integration of "indigenous" social workers within statutory agencies. He showed

[4] In 2009, a social service was launched by a mosque in a Swiss city for the first time, according to the claim of his founder. Observations and interviews confirmed his claim as no other Islamic organization or Islam-based project specifically dedicated to social work or welfare services have been identified prior to that year.

how these new social workers were selected and hired due to their cultural and ethnic commonalities with the beneficiaries, or because they grew up in the same neighbourhoods as the target groups. This "new" trend in social work was a step towards what Jovelin (2002) would later call the "intra-ethnic approach." At that time, the religious background of service users was not yet emphasized as a main identity feature and youth from French housing projects and distressed neighbourhoods were first publicly perceived through their ethnic background (Arslan and Marlière, 2014: 69).

In 2011, an ethnographic study aimed to identify and analyse Islamic faith-based organizations providing social welfare services in Paris, France (Brodard, 2011). This study questioned the tension between partiality and universal logics within the organizations' strategies. It argued that Islamic organizations focused on specific religious groups for community-based consideration, but also extended their services to the wider society, therefore promoting a universal aid and care approach. In accordance with the aforementioned papers, Brodard's study also demonstrated that Islamic organizations had somehow succeeded in establishing themselves in disadvantaged and segregated urban areas where public agencies had failed.

More recently, William Barylo (2016) conducted an ethnographic study on Muslim charities in Europe. Based on his empirical research in France, the United Kingdom, and Poland, he wrote a doctoral thesis focusing on the engagement and motivations of Muslim volunteers which was followed by the publication of a book in English on the same subject (Barylo, 2017). Although these studies are very helpful towards exploring the subject of Islamic charities in Europe, Barylo's focus on the actors does not fully lead to an understanding of Islamic organizations' strategies. This would require an additional macro-level analysis.

Further research on the topic has been conducted by Rosalind Warden. Her doctoral research displayed a detailed description and analysis of a local Islamic social work organization in a medium-sized city in the United Kingdom, focusing on the specificities of its social welfare services and its use of Islamic references. In addition, it also addressed the perceptions and experiences of the beneficiaries (Warden, 2013). In 2017, her article entitled "Islamic Social Work in the UK: The Service User Experience" specifically referred to the latter aspect, examining the importance of such a faith-based approach to social work for service users and its contributions and outcomes in terms of social welfare (Warden, 2017). This paper utilizes the concept of "Islamic social work" to refer to the involvement of faith-based organizations that identify themselves as Muslim and provide social welfare services.

Academic literature has also focused on humanitarian work provided by Islamic NGOs outside of Europe (Benthall, 2003; Juul Petersen, 2014). Although it is useful to understand the nexus between Islam, activism, and social engagement, this literature generally refers to very different socio-political

contexts. Indeed, Islamic NGOs mostly intervene in countries where Islam has been present and dominant for centuries, whereas Islamic organizations in Western European countries provide aid and care within societies characterized by there being both secularism and a Christian heritage within their institutions.

Another in-depth study which has addressed Islamic social work practices within civil society, and which is closer to the subject of this paper but in the context of Jordan is that by Harmsen (2008). However, Islam is the dominant religion of Jordan while it is a relatively new and minority religion in Switzerland where it is still mainly perceived as a foreign tradition. In this respect, the several existing studies on Islamic social work and Islamic humanitarian NGOs do give some interesting inputs towards exploring this field, but they do not provide appropriate data and information towards understanding the subject in the Swiss context.

Academic literature on Islam in Switzerland has been emerging for about two decades with various studies having presented features of Muslim communities in Switzerland. First, studies focused mainly on Muslims as individuals through a sociological perspective (Schneuwly-Purdie et al., 2009). A second perspective examined Islamic associations in the context of their diversity and inclusion in Swiss society. This lens sought in particular to analyse the organization and management of Islamic associations throughout the country. A book by Christophe Monnot (2013) which gathered the work of several scholars examining Islam and Muslims in Switzerland is a precious contribution in this regard.

Further research studies focused on the concept of charity and welfare in Islam. These include, for example, Alioune Ndiaye's article "Islamic Charities in Switzerland and the Practice of Zakat" (Ndiaye, 2007). In the paper, the author provided an outline of *Zakat* practices in the Swiss context. Looking at the role of Islamic organizations in welfare and charity, Ndiaye mainly brought up the case of Islamic Relief and other international NGOs that provide social services and humanitarian aid abroad but not in Switzerland. He also argued in his paper that Islamic organizations in Switzerland "are involved in many different activities, of which charity is just one" (Ndiaye, 2007: 10). His paper was written at a time when no Islamic grassroots organizations dedicated specifically to social work existed apart from NGOs providing humanitarian aid abroad.

The involvement of Islamic organizations in humanitarian aid was also examined by Jamal Krafess (2005). His paper looked at Islamic aid and welfare practices using a conceptual approach, examining Islamic references and texts related to humanitarian aid, but not related to any particular context. His article therefore mostly concerns the field of theology and does not apply specifically to Switzerland.

More recently there have been two doctoral theses addressing the theme of Islam and charity practices in the Swiss context. In the first, Silvia Martens (2013) focused on the welfare practices of Muslims. She studied the ways Muslims in Switzerland individually and collectively manage and distribute *Zakat* and other alms. She also wrote about Islamic associations and networks that offer social services throughout the country and abroad. In the second study, Elisa Banfi approached the topic of Islamic charity work from a macro political science perspective (Banfi, 2013). Her research questioned the effect of institutional models and state-church relationships in Switzerland and in Italy on the strategic positioning of Islamic organizations and their engagement in social work in these countries.

Taking advantage of both of these most recent research studies, this paper aims to study Islamic organizations and projects specifically dedicated to social work. Its approach differs from the previous works introduced above mainly in that while the aforementioned recent studies focus mostly or exclusively on Islamic organizations providing Muslim communities with social services, this paper proposes to address welfare practices and social work services aiming to target society as a whole beyond the boundaries of Muslim communities. Most of the projects and organizations concerned have been created in recent years and have therefore not been previously studied by researchers. For these reasons, new empirical research was needed to collect unknown data and to develop theoretical analyses.

Research question

In Switzerland, Islamic grassroots organizations have been implementing social welfare services only for a few years. Conversely to the case in neighbouring France (Brodard, 2011), Islamic organizations in Switzerland have continuously sought to establish partnerships with statutory agencies, public authorities, and civil society agencies. However, the Islamic identity of these organizations often seems to be considered as a problem by potential partners. This could be explained by the perception of Islam and Muslims as a problem in some segments of Swiss society.[5] Therefore, the involvement of Islamic organizations in social work tends to be perceived as contradictory: in the name of their Islamic faith and identity, religious actors pretend to tackle social issues and to bring about positive change within society whereas Islam and Muslim actors are described by some political groups and other activists as a "problem" (see Schulze, 2015).

In this specific context, this study questions the possibilities and tensions in partnerships between Islamic grassroots organizations and statutory agencies. Moreover, it explores alternative

[5] A conference organized by Fribourg University in 2017 was entitled "Hostility towards Muslims: society, media, politics". It gathered academic staff and state authorities and addressed stigmatization and hostility towards Muslims in Swiss society.

and innovative contributions in terms of potential social work that Islamic grassroots organizations can bring forth. As such, the research questions can be formulated as follows.

1) In the current Swiss context where Islam and Muslims are frequently publicly depicted as a problem, how can Islamic grassroots organizations carry out social welfare services?
2) How do they manage to build relationships and partnerships with statutory agencies and public authorities?
3) Which innovative and alternative social work methods can they promote through their engagement?

Methodology

The phenomenon of Islamic social work has been spreading for less than two decades throughout Western European countries[6], and has been present in Switzerland for only a few years. As such, the first aim of this study was to provide an outline of the phenomenon by identifying Islamic-based organizations and projects providing social services on Swiss territory.

It is important to mention that social welfare services provided by faith-based Islamic organizations belong to an ongoing process which has not yet been solidified both in theory and in practice. Due to the lack of theoretical and empirical research about these new organizations, an inductive approach was necessary. This allowed for the conduction of field research without restrictive theoretical frameworks (Hamel, 1993). Such a context yielded the choice of a qualitative and ethnographic approach aiming to understand the development and changes within the given organizations and networks; the case study method was chosen. First, each of three cases were studied independently through qualitative methods such as participant observation and interviews. At a later stage, the cases were compared and a cross-analysis of both the cases and the academic literature led to a theoretical analysis and conceptualization (Yin, 2014: 48).

As mentioned above, Islamic-based social services have only been implemented in Switzerland recently without following any global management or shared strategy. Such phenomena are scattered across different regions of the country and no inventory is available to identify them. It was therefore necessary to investigate directly within Muslim communities in order to identify various projects and associations. To restrict the research to a manageable scale, some criteria were chosen for the sampling. Among them, it was required that the social projects had to address the broader society beyond the boundaries of Muslim communities. This criterion aimed to exclude numerous associations providing social services exclusively to attendants of mosques or solely

[6] A few Islamic charities providing social work services were created particularly in France in the 1990s and even in the 1980s. However, they focused only on a few neighbourhoods or urban areas throughout the country and did not last long.

Muslims in order to focus on organizations and projects operating without religious discrimination and addressing the social needs of the entire Swiss population. Another important and restrictive criterion concerned the social issues the projects intended to tackle. It was required that social exclusion and identity-based conflicts had to be specifically targeted by the organizations. This was in order to exclude other activities related to leisure, sports, or culture. Finally, both of these criteria led to this paper's focus on only three cases which consisted either of a specific organization or a network of local associations implementing social projects.

Each of these three cases was carefully investigated for a period of two years (from 2016 to 2018), predominantly through ethnography. In addition to non-participant observation, on-site observations took place during social events and internal meetings. Participant observation was used as the main method to access the field and to collect data. First, participant observation was necessary to enter the Islamic organizations and to access their social activities as the managers of several organizations would not have accepted the presence of a "passive" researcher. Participation in various activities and projects was therefore needed to negotiate access to the field.

Indeed, participant observation, closely linked to ethnography, is often necessary to access the field and to gain the confidence of actors and stakeholders, as was pointed out by Vincent Romani in his research on the Palestinian territories where he claimed that participant observation was the only means to be accepted in the field as a researcher and to collect data (Romani, 2007: 28). Moreover, many sociological and anthropological studies on "difficult fieldworks" and "sensible topics" (Bouillon et al., 2005) were based on participant observation, such as Philippe Bourgois's study on drug dealers in New York City (Bourgois, 2013) and Loïc Wacquant's investigations within an African-American ghetto in Chicago (Wacquant, 2000). According to Boumaza and Campana (2007: 8), the category of "difficult fieldworks" extends to controversial topics and stigmatized or proselytized groups. Muslim communities in Switzerland have been stigmatized by both the media and political discourses, and some Islamic organizations were reluctant to be surveyed or investigated even for academic purposes. In this specific context, participant observation allowed the researcher to be gradually accepted by the organizations' managers and volunteers.

Participant observation can also lead to the collection of a wider range of data which would typically not be available through formal interviews or through non-participant observations. Some may argue that the use of participant observation involves bias in data collection (see Soulé, 2007: 129). The presence of the researcher does always influence the field. For this reason, the researcher must conduct a reflexive data analysis, taking into account how his or her presence might have influenced what was observed. Nonetheless, it should be recalled here than every qualitative study potentially involves bias. Indeed, formal interviews lead to similar methodological issues, as

interviewees' speeches often do not reflect concrete facts or thoughts, but rather controlled speech and public statements. For this reason, this study mainly used informal interviews with the organizations' leaders and volunteers. Suspicion from a large section of the community towards authorities and academics indeed brought about the requirement of these specific interview methods, as many actors targeted by the case studies were reluctant to be interviewed and recorded in a formal setting (Lanzarini and Bruneteaux, 1998). Nevertheless, formal semi-structured interviews were also conducted with some organization leaders as well as statutory agency managers in order to collect official claims and to provide another type of data.

Data

Firstly, this research identifies and describes the most influential Islamic social services and Islamic social work organizations in Switzerland. The research focuses on the three main associations or networks which were the most active in social work in the areas of social exclusion and identity-based conflicts during the research period. Each is briefly described below in order to elaborate on its main features. For confidentiality reasons, the names of the organizations and cities are anonymised.

Case A: A community-based project to tackle radicalization

A project was launched in 2016 following the terrorist attacks that happened in France in 2015 in a bilingual Swiss city. This project aimed to tackle "radicalization" and "religious extremism" among youth who identified themselves as Muslim. Two years later, it turned into an independent non-profit association registered under Swiss law.

Concretely, this association developed two kinds of activities. First, it provided youth and their families with free mediation and counselling services. To this end, the association trained more than ten mediators with a focus on intercultural skills. Subsequently, some of these mediators began to approach children and teenagers in trouble and their families. First contacts were often initiated through the network of the association's leader or of other members. Some schools or social workers took the initiative to establish links with this association if they considered someone to be subject to religious radicalization or extremist thought. Over time, the association extended its social services and counselling to tackle "non-religious" issues such as drug addiction, violence, and petty crime. This latter orientation raised the question of its identity as a faith-based organization specialized in preventing and countering radicalization and violent religious extremism insofar as it aimed to extend its contributions to other social problems beyond a religious context.

A second aspect of the association's societal involvement pertained to the prevention of sociocultural and identity-based conflicts through the holding of several public events which addressed themes such as Islam, gender issues, and asylum. These events gathered diverse groups

and included the participation of local authorities and civil society organization leaders. The association insisted on the importance of peace-building and integration through activities which sought to bring people together in spite of their prejudices and fears. It tried to include the widest possible audience, ranging from right-wing leaders to Christian pastors and Muslim activists.

Despite having taken advantage of important media coverage since its beginnings, the association lacked funding. On the one hand, media and political figures, not only at a local but also at regional and national levels, lauded the association's merits and quality by insisting on the need of such projects and involvement, deeming them particularly useful towards tackling the issue of radicalization and towards preventing terrorism amongst young Muslims. On the other hand, some public and private donors were reluctant to provide significant funding to the association, apparently because of their suspicion towards the religious identity of its leaders.[7] Finally, the lack of human and financial resources curbed the development of the association.

Case B: Social welfare services addressing poverty and exclusion

In a French-speaking city of Switzerland, a local mosque launched a social agency to address poverty and exclusion especially within the local Muslim community. A few years later, the social agency became an independent association and began to extend its social services to the broader public. It held a "social grocery" activity weekly to provide free food to needy people who were directed to the mosque by statutory social agencies. The association also organized free meals and other welfare and social services such as French courses, educational activities, and public workshops on administrative, political, health, and social issues. Beneficiaries, including a majority of migrants coming from diverse countries, were disparate in terms of gender and origin.

The selection of beneficiaries was based on the sole criterion of need regardless of religious or cultural identities. This point was a condition in the organization establishing partnerships with local statutory agencies and private welfare organizations.

Due to its inclusion within the mosque, this association was first managed exclusively by practicing Muslims. Over the years, mainly after its independence, it began to hire volunteers from other religious backgrounds, including many South American Christian migrants. Finally, most of the association's members and volunteers were not Muslims. However, the association still contained in its name an explicit reference to Islam, and its leader continuously claimed to orient its involvement in line with "Islamic ethics".

[7] During interviews, public and private donators expressed some concerns about the links between Islamic social work organizations and transnational religious movements and their ideologies. A local municipal authority claimed that it was not conceivable to establish partnerships with an association close to the Muslim brotherhood movement. In another case, a Church welfare organization representative claimed that they could provide Islamic organizations with grants on condition that they respect gender equality, which involved certain theological issues.

Over the years, this association became a recognized social agency of the city. It joined a local network gathering most of the statutory social agencies and civil society organizations addressing social exclusion in the city. Despite its Islamic identity, which sometimes led to questions and misunderstandings among some stakeholders, the association succeeded in being included and well-integrated into the local network involving both the public and private voluntary sectors.

Case C: A network of associations and welfare projects gathered around a mosque

Conversely to cases A and B, case C did not involve a single organization but rather a network of associations and projects within a defined territory. Situated in another French-speaking urban area of Switzerland, several associations defined by both an Islamic identity and a charitable or social mandate developed a range of activities and extended social services beyond Muslim communities. The choice of considering them together within a sole case study was justified by both their link with a specific mosque and their interaction with an umbrella organization which gathered together most Islamic associations in the region.

The umbrella organization itself carried out its own social projects. A major social service associated with it aimed to foster the integration of young people into the professional market, providing them with counselling and coaching. The strategy was to accompany them throughout their work prospection and facilitate their integration within their new work environments. This project received state funding over a period of time.

Several associations and independent actors more or less linked to this umbrella organization developed social work projects to contribute positively to society as a whole. Some of them organized food distribution in the streets while others implemented educational workshops intended for female migrants. The aforementioned mosque linking the organizations also launched some tours in the streets to prevent suicide during Christmas and New Year's, considered to be a period of high risk.

For each of these three cases, several dozens of hours of interviews were conducted with primary actors including organization leaders and project managers as well as volunteers and stakeholders associated with either statutory agencies or civil society organizations. Long-term participant observation in the field was also undertaken.[8] A third source of data came from both internal and external documentation such as reports, advertisements, and media articles. The data were collected and analysed for each case. Then, the three case studies were compared, and cross-cutting issues and features identified and analysed in the light of the academic literature.

[8] As mentioned above, participant observation was often needed to access and enter the organizations, observe social services and organization environments, and conduct informal interviews with organization managers and volunteers.

Analysis and findings

The cross-cutting analysis of the three case studies highlighted shared challenges and issues related to Islamic social work within Swiss society. It then enabled the conclusion of a series of results.

First, the three cases show that Islamic grassroots associations in Switzerland have developed some initiatives and social services to address the needs of the country's population as a whole, focusing mainly on problems related to Islam and Muslims but also extending to non-Muslim recipients. Therefore, these organizations have contributed to addressing broader societal issues which reach far beyond the concerns of solely Muslim communities.

The study assessed that the different Islam-based associations were independent of transnational Islamic movements and primary global Islamic organizations, although some of them were initially linked to mosques or religious umbrella organizations. This is a relevant discovery as it challenges the widespread idea that Islamic social services aim to implement a hidden agenda or political strategies as may be the case in other geographic and social contexts (see Davis and Robinson, 2012).

The three case studies converged on the idea that social projects were developed and implemented independently by Muslim actors for reasons related to faith, moral principles, citizenship, or personal interests. It was observed that the social projects carried out by the examined Islamic associations in Switzerland sought to contribute positively to society. They did not aim to enact radical socio-political change and they did not promote alternative systems. They often labelled their actions as "civic engagement" and "socially-responsible engagement".

Nevertheless, the combination of Islamic identity and a Swiss citizen-based approach in the activities of these associations raises questions regarding their specific features and purposes in a "welfare state". During public events held by mosques and Islamic organizations, some Muslims in the public argued that social work was the duty of the state and that Islamic associations should not invest this field, which was discussed and contradicted by others. To address them, it is necessary to consider the role of the government and statutory agencies in the treatment of social issues involving Muslims and Islam over the past years.

In Switzerland as well as in other European countries, specific social issues related to Muslims have recently emerged in public debates. Although Switzerland has not been targeted by Islamist terrorist attacks, some citizens have travelled to conflict zones to joined groups such as ISIS or Al-Qaeda. Moreover, the major terrorist attacks in France and other neighbouring European countries which have been taking place since 2015 have been largely covered by local media and have triggered fear and misunderstanding within several statutory agencies and institutions, including

probation services, childhood protection agencies and high schools. In addition to the question of terrorism and radicalization Muslims are often associated with, Muslim migrant populations are highly affected by specific social issues such as crime, poverty, exclusion, and overrepresentation in prisons.

This context has drawn the state's attention to the need for implementing new responses to the challenges of religious extremism, crime, and exclusion particularly involving Muslims. Specific training and discussion points have been developed within statutory agencies to define strategies to address these problems, particularly in the prison system but also in education and other areas.

In parallel, faith-based organizations including the cases highlighted by this research have developed a range of social projects and services. Many of them have been designed to tackle community-based issues such as unemployment among young Muslims as well as religious extremism and radicalization. Even projects that are developed to address social problems and exclusion without any reference to Muslim communities or the Islamic religion target mostly Muslims due to their overrepresentation in marginalized groups. Therefore, to a certain extent, the Islamic associations' social projects seemed to specialize particularly in "Islamic-related" problems and Muslim populations even if their managers tended to display and promote a universal, impartial, and neutral approach to social work.

In various contexts, several Islamic organizations began to be viewed positively by some civil society organizations and local public authorities that noticed that the organizations were contributing effectively to social welfare within the scope of their focus on problems related to Muslims and Islam. Further, some Islamic organizations fostered this "communitarian" trend by conceptualizing their own approach of social work based on an "intra-cultural approach" in which they claimed that common religious and cultural belongings lead to the provision of more efficient services and to obtaining better results at work. This point demonstrated a shift from a cross-cultural practice in social work, in which statutory agencies already considered the need of taking into account the cultural and religious characteristics of aid recipients, towards an intra-ethnic (Jovelin, 2002) or "intra-cultural" practice which promotes a shared and common background between social workers and recipients in order to facilitate access to specific target groups and to foster intervention efficiency. Islamic organizations often commit to this intra-cultural approach and argue that their shared values and backgrounds lead them to understand and work more effectively with Muslim populations, and that they can therefore provide more efficient and relevant social services. In parallel, some local and regional authorities consider that the identity of these organizations could be a useful asset to some specific groups that often mistrust the state and therefore remain difficult to work with.

The relative success of Islamic-based social services at a local level in Switzerland seems to have been permitted by needs for which the state's solutions were insufficient and inadequate. A lack of social solutions to issues related to Islam and Muslim youth created an opportunity for community-based organizations to develop their own projects and to implement specific strategies. Some of these have been innovative and efficient, particularly due to the cultural skills and religious awareness of the Islamic organizations' actors as well as due to the proximity between them and their beneficiaries. Therefore, some Islamic organizations and Muslim leaders have highlighted an intra-cultural approach, cultural awareness, and religious competencies as added-value which they bring to social work.

Several local authorities have recognized the need for these alternative initiatives, acknowledging their positive contribution to society. In this sense, public and private funding has been provided to several Islamic social work organizations, notably by local and regional authorities. However, all the organizations studied in this research mentioned that the funding they received was insufficient and irregular. Therefore, all of them continued to look for more public and political recognition as well as perennial sources of funding.

It is important to note here that support from public authorities and private stakeholders has been very disparate as regards the socio-political context, agencies, and decision-makers. Therefore, as there have not been any common practices among public agencies throughout the country, it is not yet possible to make a general statement on the stand of public authorities regarding Islamic welfare organizations and their involvement in Swiss society. This article showed that partnerships strongly depend on public agencies and decision-makers and that a clear public policy strategy is still lacking. Some statutory agencies did encourage and fund Islamic organizations whereas others refused any partnerships and expressed concerns related to their religious profiles.

Conclusion

The analysis above raises questions about the public, political, and social participation of Islamic organizations in Switzerland's secularized society. Public authorities in Switzerland are still looking for ways to deal with these new religious actors, oscillating between cooperation, disinterest, and undue mistrust. These contradictory patterns and positions were observed during this research. Some authorities and statutory agencies encouraged the analysed Islamic organizations to provide welfare services and funded some of their projects, while others refused any partnership with them and expressed some concerns about their religious identity. This latter point has to be understood in light of the current context of Islamophobia in Switzerland (see Zouggari, 2017) in which Islam and community-based activism may appear suspicious to various stakeholders and decision-makers.

Whereas some political discourses have promoted the relegation of religion to the private sphere, others assume that faith-based organizations should or could be of positive value to society. Which of these political positions seems to be dominant and socially legitimized varies according to a particular country's political systems and contexts. Besides the question of the role of religion in society, which is raised regularly throughout different regions of Switzerland and to a greater extent in neighbouring France, Islamic engagement remains generally considered as foreign and illegitimate. Nevertheless, models of state-religion relations according to various political systems are not sufficient to explain the development of Islamic faith-based initiatives in Switzerland.

To illustrate that the potential of Islamic social work also depends on other factors, one can quickly argue that a strict view on secularism along with a Republican state model hostile to any community-based demands and claims have not prevented the development of consistent faith-based and community-based social work associations among Muslims in France. Indeed, many Islamic grassroots organizations have been emerging for more than a decade in deprived neighbourhoods across France, and they seem to have succeeded where statutory services and authorities have failed (Bouzar, 2001; Brodard, 2011). In the Swiss context, this article outlined that Islamic social work organizations were often able to establish partnerships with the authorities and statutory agencies, as well as with private institutions such as the churches or civil society organizations, despite the hostility against Muslims and Islam in the society. Both the public and private sectors have demonstrated a willingness to work with Islamic organizations, mostly on issues related to migrants, integration and religious radicalization issues. Islamic organizations often understood they had to invest and to focus on these specific social issues to be considered and funded by public and private institutions. Intra-cultural approach in social work paradoxically led to higher chances of sponsors and funding from the state. However, in several regions of Switzerland where the state implicitly fosters religious communities to implement social welfare services, Islamic organizations have often not been able to deliver sustainable and consistent social work services due to a lack of community-based resources. Many of these faith-based organizations generally did not find the means to provide regular and efficient social services despite their aspirations and claims. Most association leaders and managers interviewed as part of this research explained that their limitations were due to difficulties in finding long-term volunteers and significant funding. This shows that political context is just one factor among many when it comes to the effectiveness and thriving of faith-based social work organizations, and that the features of Muslim communities and organizations, such as their inner resources and ideological views, also have to be considered carefully to understand this matter.

Finally, faith-based social services provided by Islamic organizations question the use of new practices in social work in the Swiss context. The innovative and alternative contributions of these organizations still have to be evaluated. However, there have already been positive outcomes. Through the cultural awareness of Swiss Islam-based social work organizations as well as through their understanding of current social issues and their positive relationships with aid recipients, they participate in the development and reinvention of social intervention and compete with other agencies. Moreover, the "intra-cultural" perspective advocated by Islamic organizations reflects a minority but debated trend within institutional social work. Therefore, Muslim actors could contribute to social change by rethinking and redefining social work practices. These faith-based organizations additionally bring cultural and religious diversity to the country which contributes to enriching it with different perspectives.

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Appendix: interviews and observations

In each of the case studies, data were collected through observation, interviews and documentation. The details related to the interviews are outlined below.

Case A

Interview dates

With the founder and director of the association (A1):

- 15/11/2017
- 16/03/2018
- 23/03/2018
- 12/04/2018
- 20/06/2018

- 24/09/2018

With the co-president of the association (A2):

- 11/11/2017
- 09/02/2018
- 16/03/2018
- 23/03/2018
- 18/04/2018

With the other co-president of the association (A3):

- 09/02/2018

With a volunteer of the association (A4):

- 09/02/2018

With a volunteer of the association (A5):

- 28/12/2017
- 09/02/2018

With partner (A6):

- 10/04/2019

With partner (A7):

- 25/11/2017
- 21/03/2018

With partner (A8):

- 25/04/2018

Interviewee profiles

A1: Founder and director of the association / Middle aged woman, migrant from North African who has lived in Switzerland for many years, unemployed / Practicing Muslim.
A2: Co-president of the association and volunteer / Middle aged man, Swiss citizen from Turkish background, born in Switzerland, employee / Practicing Muslim.
A3: Co-president of the association and volunteer / Swiss citizen from local background, employee / Practicing Christian (Protestant).
A4: Volunteer / Third-age male, Swiss citizen from local background, retired / Atheist.
A5: Volunteer / Middle aged woman, migrant from North African who has lived in Switzerland for many years, unemployed / Practicing Muslim.
A6: Manager working for a Church-based welfare organization.
A7: Counsellor working for a statutory agency.
A8: Analyst working for the Federal Police.

In addition to these interviews, direct and participant observations were regularly conducted from 2017 to 2019 at 1) working sessions and internal meetings 2) workshops and trainings 3) public events. Besides, the association's paper document and online resources were carefully analysed as well as the official reports and media articles.

Case B
Interview dates

With the founder and director of the association (B1):

- 04/12/2016
- 29/01/2017
- 15/11/2017
- 29/06/2017
- 18/07/2017
- 01/02/2018
- 12/03/2018

- 07/09/2018
- 08/09/2018
- 28/09/2018
- 16/10/2018

With volunteer (B2):
- 03/07/2017

With volunteer (B3):
- 17/06/2017

With volunteer (B4):
- 20/03/2017

With community leader 1:
- 03/07/2017
- 16/10/2018

With community leader 2:
- 14/03/2018
- 06/04/2018

With partner (statutory agency partner):
- 14/09/2018
- 12/10/2018

With partner (civil society organization):
- 16/04/2018

With Muslim chaplain 1:
- 16/10/2018

With Muslim chaplain 2:
- 21/04/2017

With researcher A:
- 11/04/2018

With researcher B:
- 18/04/2018

With a partner Islamic organization leader:
- 24/10/2018

Interviewee profiles

B1: Founder and director of the association/ Middle-aged man, migrant from Africa who has lived in Switzerland for many years, unemployed/ Practicing Muslim.
B2: Volunteer in the association/ Middle aged-woman, Swiss convert to Islam / Practicing Muslim.
B3: Volunteer in the association/ Middle-aged woman, Colombian who has lived in Switzerland for a few years / Christian.
B4: Volunteer in the association/ Middle-aged man, Swiss born in Switzerland / Practicing Christian.

In addition to these interviews, direct and participant observation was regularly conducted from 2016 to 2018 and focused on 1) social work services 2) workshops and trainings 3) meetings with the stakeholders and partners 4) public events 5) community-based events in the mosque. Besides, the association's paper documentation and online resources were carefully analysed as well as the official reports and media articles.

Case C

Interview dates

With the Umbrella organization leader 1 (C1):
- 02/10/2018

With the Umbrella organization leader 2 (C2):
- 06/10/2018

With the Umbrella organization leader 3 (C3):
- 03/10/2018
- 06/10/2018

With volunteer (C4):
- 04/06/2018
- 06/09/2018
- 02/10/2018

With volunteer (C5):
- 27/11/2017

With volunteer (C6):
- 06/10/2018
- 06/05/2018

With volunteer (C7):
- 02/10/2018
- 06/10/2018

With volunteer (C8):
- 04/06/2018
- 05/06/2018

With volunteer (C9) :
- 05/06/2018

With volunteer (C10) :
- 06/05/2018

With the Imam:
- 23/09/2017
- 06/05/2018

With partner (statutory agency):
- 06/09/2018

Interviewee profiles

C1: Middle-aged man, Swiss citizen from local background/ Practicing Muslim.
C2: Middle-aged woman, Swiss citizen from local background/ Practicing Muslim.
C3: Middle-aged man, migrant from North Africa who has lived in Switzerland for many years/ Practicing Muslim.
C4: Middle-aged man, migrant from North Africa who has lived in Switzerland for many years/ Practicing Muslim.
C5: Middle-aged man, French citizen converted to Islam who has lived in Switzerland for a few years/ Practicing Muslim.
C6: Middle-aged man, migrant from North Africa who has lived in Switzerland for many years/ Practicing Muslim.
C7: Middle-aged woman, French citizen from North-African background who has lived in Switzerland for many years/ Practicing Muslim.
C8: Middle-aged woman, migrant from North Africa who has lived in Switzerland for a few years/ Practicing Muslim.
C9: Middle-aged woman, migrant from North Africa who has lived in Switzerland for a few years/ Practicing Muslim.
C10: Young woman, Swiss citizen converted to Islam/ Practicing Muslim.

In addition to these interviews, direct and participant observations were regularly conducted from 2017 to 2019 and focused on 1) social work services 2) internal work meetings 3) workshops and trainings 4) public events 5) community-based events in the mosque. Besides, the association's paper document and online resources were carefully analysed as well as the official reports and media articles.

Contesting the digital world order: China's national role strategy in changing the norms of global internet governance

Andrew Devine

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Andrew Devine is a master's student at the Institute of East Asian Studies, University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany). He received his Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Central Florida (Orlando, USA). He is currently researching his master's thesis in Wuhan, China on a scholarship and grant from the University of Duisburg-Essen. His research interests are authoritarian resilience, digital governance, Chinese politics, and foreign policy analysis. E-mail: adrewdevine@gmail.com.

Abstract

This article aims to understand China's national role conceptions and strategy within the context of the World Internet Conference (WIC). The Chinese government uses this conference to promote its model of internet governance known as cyber sovereignty. The foreign policy behaviour of China (role performance) as well as role prescriptions from the US are also analysed. A novel approach based on frame analysis is taken to uncover China's national role conceptions. The related frames in this article are then categorized into national roles. China performs four national roles as part of its strategy to reshape international internet governance norms: developer, global village member, global leader, and law-abiding citizen. This article concludes that the national roles in the WIC are aimed at developing and emerging countries in order to increase China's power and win gradual support for the cyber sovereignty model.

Keywords

China; Cyber Sovereignty; Global Governance; Institutions and Norms; Internet Governance; Multistakeholderism; National Roles; World Internet Conference.

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Introduction

In November 2018, the fifth World Internet Conference (WIC) was held in the city of Wuzhen, China. Since its inception in 2014, the WIC has hosted some of the world's top tech leaders. Previous speakers at the WIC include Alibaba's Jack Ma, Apple's Tim Cook and even Google's Sundar Pichai. The theme of the fifth conference was "Creating a Digital World for Mutual Trust and Collective Governance – Toward a Community with Shared Future in Cyberspace". This theme is not unique; each conference has had nearly identical themes hinting at the restructuring of global governance norms. The objective of these conferences is not sharing technological innovations so much as it is about creating a stage to discuss the global norms of Internet governance. The WIC is hosted by the Zhejiang Provincial People's Government and the Cyberspace Administration of China (CAC), the government's central internet regulatory agency, making the conference useful for analysing the Chinese government's foreign policy in global internet governance (GIG).

This article uses national role theory as conceptualized by Holsti (1970) to determine how the Chinese government is using the WIC in order to reshape the GIG structure. National role theory posits that nation-states often behave in certain ways (role performance) to increase their decision-making power in international relations. This article also analyses to what extent these strategies have been successful. The article argues that China performs four distinct roles within the WIC: developer, global leader, global village member, and law-abiding citizen. These roles are used in varying circumstances to influence developing and emerging countries to adopt China's preferred governance model – cyber sovereignty. This strategy falls immensely short of influencing any changes in the current liberal GIG structure because it has no impact on nations with the most decision-making power. Instead, however, the WIC is part of a gradual approach by China to build its international influence within the GIG regime by winning the support of countries with developing or emerging economies.

This article is structured as followed. First, the literature on the GIG structures is reviewed with respect to two competing GIG models: multistakeholderism and cyber sovereignty. China's domestic governance concerns in relation to foreign policy are also discussed. Then a brief narrative of China's message at the WIC is provided to begin the analysis of China's national roles in the WIC. In this section, the method and its application to national role theory is explained. As a preface for the reader, each of the four roles discussed in this section contain multiple frames. The fact that there are several frames in a role implicitly shows that role conception and performance is multilayered. When someone plays the role of a leader in daily life, for example, there can be multiple dimensions to that role, such as being decisive, but at the same time willing to listen, trust and compromise. Comparably, there are also multiple dimensions to diplomatic roles, such as those

performed by China with respect to GIG. The next section is an analysis of China's role conceptions and role performance in the WIC. Finally, the impact of China's role performance in contesting global governance norms is examined.

The multistakeholder model vs. cyber sovereignty

The literature on China's interactions within the Global Internet Governance structure overwhelmingly tells the story of a power struggle between the Chinese government and the current US-dominated Internet governance model (Arsène, 2016; Galloway and He, 2014; Liu, 2012). This struggle is largely predicated on one question: "Who should be in charge of governing the Internet?" China believes nations should hold the decision-making power in the GIG regime (Cai, 2018; Galloway and He, 2014; Jiang, 2010). This model of governance, known as cyber sovereignty, comes from the traditional Westphalian concept of sovereignty (Demchak and Dombrowski, 2013). This model is at odds with the current multistakeholder governance model, which gives governments, civil society and the private sector equal roles in the GIG regime. The official definition of Internet governance, which legitimates the multistakeholder model, states that:

> Internet governance is the development and application by governments, the private sector and civil society, in their respective roles, of shared principles, norms, rules, decision-making procedures, and programmes that shape the evolution and use of the Internet (WGIG, 2005: 4).

China actively contests this model, often on the basis of improving cybersecurity (Chenou and Radu, 2014). In contrast, a report by the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG) states that "measures taken in relation to the Internet on grounds of security or to fight crime can lead to violations of the provisions for freedom of expression" (WGIG, 2005: 7). The US continues to use this argument in support of the multistakeholder model (Kruger, 2016) while Chinese academics claim that this model increases the power of the US to force its will on other nations (Arsène, 2016). China, therefore, supports the formation of an intergovernmental agency "in which it will have greater power and remove US hegemony" (Galloway and He, 2014: 86), a statement corroborated by other scholars (Cai, 2018; Liu, 2012). To reach this goal, China has learned to moderate its stance in order to avoid alienation in decision-making processes (Galloway and He, 2014: 75). The Chinese government continues to adapt its strategy through moderation and adoption of some aspects of the liberal, multistakeholder model (Hart and Johnson, 2019), albeit with a distinctively Chinese interpretation (Cai, 2018). Yet, the US still dominates the GIG regime, and some believe the system simply cannot be changed because it would involve adapting the policies of all nations to a single locale (Mueller, 2010: 186).

China, along with most of the developing world, has supported cyber sovereignty as a better alternative to multistakeholderism, whose proponents[1] are actually in the minority (Weber, 2014). States supporting cyber sovereignty often do so on the grounds that the status quo favours a US-led, techno-imperialist regime at odds with democratic decision-making, which "allows the US to enforce rather easily its domestic policies, at times with extraterritorial effects" (Hill, 2014: 86). This can be disastrous for the political legitimacy of authoritarian states like China. Cyber sovereignty is not only a way to firmly establish cyber territoriality based on a country's own borders, but also to diminish the hegemonic power of the Western-led, liberal order. Deng states that, for China, sovereignty "constitutes the key ingredient for a truly new world order of equality, peace, and justice," (Deng, 2001). Therefore, China continues to promote multilateralism in favour of states, democracy in terms of international decision-making processes, and transparency in a way that makes the rules of GIG available and applicable to all states (Cai, 2018). China does not want to overhaul the entire GIG regime, but rather to tweak the system in the favour of states.

China's domestic Internet governance concerns

Understanding China's domestic concerns develops a more complete picture of the government's foreign strategy. The Chinese government sees solving its domestic Internet governance issues as a necessary prerequisite to participating in the GIG regime (Cai, 2018: 69). In China, domestic stability and national security are more important than individual freedoms, and this influences the government's position on GIG norms (Jiang, 2010; Cai, 2018). Scholars have also stressed the importance of domestic structures and political contestation in national role theory (Brummer and Thies, 2015; Cantir and Kaarbo, 2012), which is the central framework of this article.

The most obvious form of political contestation in China is between the government and the masses. The government has been active in addressing citizen complaints, and although social unrest in China tends to be high, it does not pose a threat to the government's legitimacy (Göbel and Ong, 2012). This is partly because online political contention rarely materializes in the real world (Yang, 2008), and the Chinese government's domestic strategies and institutions are adaptable and responsive to public opinion, reducing the need for protest mobilization (Dickson, 2005). Li (2007) predicted three possible scenarios for China's government in 2020, namely: democracy, chaos, or business as usual. As that time has nearly arrived, it seems safe to say that it is business as usual in Beijing.

Jiang notes that "Beijing's cyber approach and practices are inseparable from its promotion of legitimacy in five major areas: the economy, nationalism, ideology, culture, and governance" (Jiang, 2010: 72). Some observers have claimed that the Internet would lead to Chinese democracy

[1] This includes most liberal countries such as the US and member states of the European Union.

(Endeshaw, 2004) while other scholars note that China has more concrete power thanks to the Internet (Jiang, 2010; MacKinnon, 2011; Qin, Strömberg and Wu, 2017). China's domestic internet policies help generate legitimacy in the form of economic growth, social stability and national identity (Jiang 2010: 82). These policies implicitly require cyber sovereignty, which makes it easier to regulate foreign influence. Cyber sovereignty also gives the Chinese government the legal basis to censor the internet on grounds of national security (Jiang, 2010: 83), which is often the basis for contention among supporters of the multistakeholder model (Freedom House, 2018; Kruger, 2016; WGIG, 2005). Thus, China's domestic governing strategy often conflicts with its desire to change international norms (Kahler, 2013).

Another point that ties China's domestic and foreign policy together is its desire to become an Internet superpower (Creemers, 2017; Wübbeke et al., 2016). Zhao (2009) predicted a political legitimacy crisis for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) due to China's slowing economy, but the domestic policies of Internet Plus and Made in China 2025 highlight the CCP's awareness of averting this crisis. Internet Plus, which focuses on the development of big data and the Internet of Things, has even generated significant economic growth in the household appliance industry (Ling, 2015). Made in China 2025 is currently China's largest national economic strategy, which aims to substitute foreign tech companies in China with indigenous companies and to develop an "industrial Internet" (Wübbeke et al., 2016). Cyber sovereignty is essential for the success of these policy goals. It is being vigorously studied by Chinese scholars who emphasize that cyber sovereignty has been widely recognized (Zheng and Zheng, 2018), and that, as a concept, it has the power to solve most major political issues in cyberspace (Zhu et al., 2016).

Galloway and He (2014: 72) note a gap in the literature on China's policy and strategy to change the structure of GIG. This article hopes to help fill this gap. Aside from looking at how China uses national roles to increase its norm-making power in the global order, it also serves as an in-depth look into China's foreign policy frames with respect to cyber sovereignty.

Role performance in the WIC – generating support for cyber sovereignty

The government's message at the WIC is basically the same every year. China promotes a vision to transform the current GIG regime based on the following principles: respect of cyber sovereignty, safeguarding peace and security, stimulating open cooperation, and building a good order (Xi, 2015). Xi Jinping has also put forward five positions in order to "jointly build a community of common destiny in cyberspace." These five positions were built on State Council Vice Premier Ma Kai's speech at the first WIC and later published in a document known as the "Wuzhen Initiative." This document was made available through the WIC website (CAC, 2015); the position points include:

1. Imperative to promote Internet deployment and development;
2. Fostering cultural diversity in cyberspace;
3. Sharing the fruits of Internet development;
4. Ensuring peace and security in cyberspace;
5. Improving the global Internet governance.

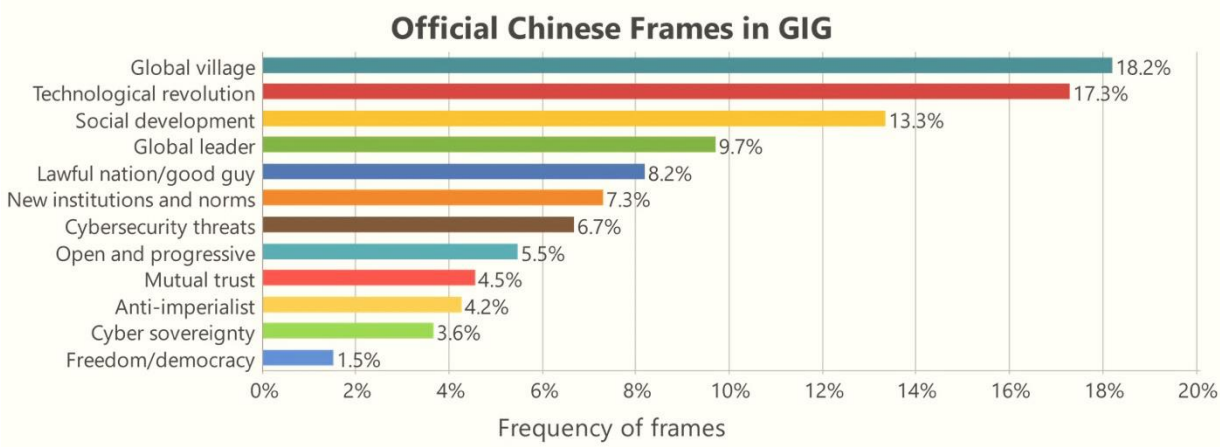
These positions are easily digestible for an audience that favours the GIG status quo. The principles and positions above have been repeated year after year at each WIC. There have only been slight tweaks to verbiage and articulation of these positions, indicating strong consensus and a decisive strategy on the part of the CAC and the Chinese government in general. These principles and positions can be found in many of the frames and roles uncovered below.

How does China frame global Internet governance?

Frame analysis and open coding of official speeches given at the WIC were used to uncover the national roles conceived by the Chinese government. Taking clauses as a base unit of analysis served the purposes of deconstructing frames to their smallest parts (individual words) while also producing a larger number of coded segments from a limited source (WIC speeches and documents). This method was influenced by Bondes and Heep (2012) who adapted frame analysis from social movement theory in order to analyse how the CCP frames ideology to generate political legitimacy. Frames can be defined as discursive structures constructed by an actor to justify a particular concept or system. Bondes and Heep (2012: 7) also state that frame analysis is "a useful tool for analysing the efforts of the ruling elites in authoritarian regimes to shape people's perceptions of political reality". As framing is largely connected to persuasion, it is also logically consistent to assume that governments also use framing to shape the perceptions of governmental and non-governmental actors in the global order as a means to change norms of international governance. Furthermore, the discursive nature of frames makes official speeches a direct source for analysing national role behaviour. Building on Bondes and Heep, who use official frames to explain how the central government creates a form of persuasion-based legitimacy, this research holds that the central government uses similar framing techniques to legitimize its stance on cyber sovereignty and increase its discursive influence.

Open coding resulted in twelve frames (see Chart 1), which exhibit how the Chinese government constructs issues of domestic and foreign internet governance. These frames are later divided into China's national roles in the WIC.

Chart 1. Official Frames in Chinese Internet Governance



Source: Author.

To demonstrate how frame analysis helps uncover implicit strategies and motives, it is worth looking at Xi Jinping's fundamental view on GIG in the following statement from his speech at the second WIC:

> We should respect each country's rights to choose its online development path, its network management model, its public internet policies and equal participation in international cyberspace governance, not engage in cyber hegemony, not interfere in other countries' internal affairs, and not engage in, tolerate or support online activities harming the national security of other countries. (Xi, 2015).

China has already explicitly stated its principles and positions via official speeches and the Wuzhen Initiative, all of which fall into a specific frame; however, there are more subtle frames in the quote above. "Harming the national security" is a *cybersecurity threats* frame, and "respect each country's rights" and "not interfere in other countries' internal affairs" are *cyber sovereignty* frames. An *anti-imperialist* frame is found within the clause "not engage in cyber hegemony."

Among the twelve frames uncovered in this analysis, the *global village*, *technological revolution*, and *social development* frames comprised approximately half of all coded segments, heavily suggesting that Chinese leaders stress these points more than contentious frames such as *anti-imperialist* and *cyber sovereignty*. Each of these frames reconstruct specific issues of GIG in ways meant to persuade global actors to adopt new governance norms. These frames are defined and explained in the following section.

Official frames

The *global village* frame stresses cooperative governance of the internet by all nations. The term "global village" itself is a signifier of this frame as are articulations of cooperation, commonness and togetherness, the importance of the internet in relation to mankind, and shared development.

The *technological revolution* frame shows China's commitment to developing a digital economy. This frame looks purely at the issue of the domestic digital economies. Clauses relating the economy to technology, innovation and research signify this frame.

The *social development* frame is tied to ideas concerning cultural exchange and abstractions related to the improvement of society. Articulations of this frame reference improvements to livelihood in terms of culture and spirit[2], social development and stability, efficient administration and even, in some cases, big data.

The *global leader* frame is often accompanied by strong language that highlights China's power and will. Frequent references to size, netizen population and leadership roles in developing technology are used to legitimate China's authority as an international norm-maker and institution builder.

The *lawful nation/good guy* frame uses the ethos of international legal institutions (lawfulness) and the pathos of victimization (good guy) to justify why China has earned the right to be heard. Frequent references to respect of international law and willingness to cooperate with other countries define this frame. The *good guy* part of this frame is a reference to the tone and verbiage used to describe China's policy – the predicate "is willing to" indicates a tone that, despite an unfair balance in world order, China will take the high road, seeking no recompense for these inequities all for the sake of common progress.

The *new institutions and norms* frame uses a cooperative tone to suggest new governing institutions and rules that would apply to all nations. This frame often highlights China's solution to the current inequity in the system by stressing its "community of shared destiny in cyberspace."

The *cybersecurity threats* frame uses amped up language, discussing security concerns as both global and existential threats. This frame is expressed in phrases that use security, terrorism, attacks, and an overall tone that frames cyberspace as a warzone. This frame is an appeal to emotion.

The *open and progressive* frame appeals to the multistakeholder, liberal governance regime. This frame seeks to obscure China's domestic political realities, instead showing how China is a global team player, open to free trade, foreign investment and the basic principle of economic collaboration.

[2] In Ma Kai's speech at the first WIC conference, he says "We will better use the Internet to strengthen the dissemination of excellent culture, strengthen the overall strength of the cultural industries, and effectively satisfy the people's various spiritual and cultural demands" (Ma, 2014).

The *mutual trust* frame is used by China to overcome realist, zero-sum game interpretations of international relations and diplomacy. The phrases "mutual trust" and "mutual respect" signify this frame as well as the language pointing to win-win situations and cooperation.

The *anti-imperialist* frame is used to criticize, though not directly naming, the cyber hegemony of the US. This is an active framing of the issues regarding the imbalance of power within the GIG regime. This frame is different than the *new institutions and norms* frame, which proposes suggestions rather than criticisms.

The *cyber sovereignty* frame is articulated by any reference to national sovereignty, cyber or otherwise. It correlates to text segments that contain "cyber sovereignty" or alternatively states the term in another way.

The *freedom/democracy* frame articulates freedom and democracy as tools to tackle the issue of social stability. Online freedom itself is expressed as being an important aspect of a flourishing internet – of course, with limits. In this frame, "democracy" refers to the structure of the global order; it is not in reference to individual freedom, as Cai has explained (Cai, 2018: 652). This frame is predominantly found in Xi Jinping's speech and the Wuzhen Initiative.[3] Later speeches abandon the use of this frame opting instead to work with the *open/progressive* frame. This is likely because the Chinese *freedom/democracy* frame is too inconsistent with Western conceptions of freedom and democracy.

Uncovering China's role conceptions

Each of the frames above contains a specific definition that guided the coding of additional segments of text. Yet, it was impossible to pull national role conceptions from each frame. While the *global village* and *global leader* frames were exceptions, other frames, like the *cyber sovereignty* frame, pose issues when attempting to interpret them as a national role.[4] Rather, these frames operate *within* a national role. To solve the issue of explaining China's conceptual framing of GIG issues in terms of national roles, it was necessary to search for a common ground between each of the frames. Essentially, frames alone are insufficient to describe China's strategy of influencing GIG norms within the framework of national role theory because role conception and performance can use multiple framing perspectives simultaneously.

[3] Other than these documents, the *freedom/democracy* frame is mentioned only one more time in the 1st WIC speech, which as mentioned previously, is a reference to democratic structures of global governance. The decision to abandon this frame is the only major strategic shift made in the context of the WIC.

[4] To put it bluntly, a nation can be a member of a global village or a global leader, but it cannot be a "cyber sovereignty", a "technological revolution" or any other such abstract concept. I would further point out that the concept of a role and a frame are quite distinct, and thus it is logical to conceive that playing a role may influence how a nation uses multiple frames simultaneously.

Thus, a pattern was found in how the frames were combined in terms of role conception and performance. A single statement often contains several frames, illustrating how multiple frames can be projected within a single role. As an example, the *cyber sovereignty* frame is directly connected to frames such as the *anti-imperialist* and *social development* frames. The *cyber sovereignty* frame is indirectly connected to other frames since cyber sovereignty is seen by the Chinese government as a prerequisite for things like openness, mutual trust and new norms. And while there is a difference in the definition and articulation between the *cyber sovereignty* and *new institutions and norms* frames, they have an obvious relationship in the fact that cyber sovereignty is an institution[5] in itself. A category was created for those frames which call for new governing norms in GIG on the basis of fairness – and thus the Law-abiding Citizen role was established.

This process uncovered that, in the context of the WIC, Chinese leaders rely on four national roles: Global Leader, Global Village Member, Law-abiding Citizen, and Developer (see Appendix). Although China almost certainly projects more than four roles in global governance institutions generally, the roles discussed in this article satisfy the purpose analysing China's strategy in changing the GIG regime.

China's national role conceptions and performance

Role conceptions include China's national interests, attitudes, political values, and its socioeconomic needs (Holsti, 1970: 245), which have already, to a large extent, been analysed in the frame analysis above. Now we can look at how these frames intertwine and fit within a role.

One of the main roles that China projects is that of the Developer. Positioning itself as a developer allows China to be near the head of the table when it comes to issues affecting its domestic situation. This role helps China reap the benefits of economic growth and social stability that are vital for its political legitimacy (Jiang, 2010: 72, 77; Zhao, 2009) through collaborative development with other countries.[6] The *technology revolution*, *social development* and *cybersecurity* frames are all present within this role. This is a passive role, which is apparent from the language surrounding this role's frames; this includes a willingness and need to embrace, but not necessarily lead, global development in internet infrastructure, e-governance and cybersecurity. On the issue of cyber sovereignty, China, as the Developer, behaves in a logical, unemotional manner, treating this issue as purely socioeconomic, rather than political.

The next role conceived by China in the WIC is the Global Village Member. Here China positions itself as a willing and cooperative member of the existing GIG regime. Knowing that securing its domestic needs hinges on its bargaining power in the GIG regime, China plays a non-

[5] This is according to Douglass North's (1991) definition of institutions as structures of political, social and economic organization.
[6] China's Belt and Road Initiative is one of the most obvious examples of this role in action.

confrontational role in order to find a voice. This is a strategy of "alter-casting," as described by He and Walker (2015: 377), in which China adopts language of the alter (the liberal West) in order to influence the discourse on international cyber policy. Another piece of evidence showing that China is only playing a role to improve its position, rather than truly taking the norms of the alter, is the limited activity of civil society organizations at the WIC (McKune and Ahmed, 2018: 3846). As civil society plays an important part in the multistakeholder model, statements that allude to this model without inclusion of civil society actors are empty. The *global village*, *open/progressive*, *freedom/democracy*, and *mutual trust* frames, which often adopt the discourse of the alter, can be found in this role conception. This role also has a passive dimension as China only plays this role as a participant. The following roles are more active conceptions.

China is beginning to view itself as an international decision maker that is to be respected and trusted. Zhang also calls China, "the second among equals in the Great Power club" (Zhang, 2016: 797), so it is unsurprising that China has conceived a Global Leader role for itself. The *global leader* frame clearly encompasses nearly all of the sources of this role conception (China's rise, size, and increasing technological development); however, the *mutual trust* and *new institutions and norms* frames are also present in this role. The *mutual trust* frame in this role signifies China's desire to lead benevolently. The *new institutions and norms frame* is used by China to reassert its intention to alter the existing system, namely its opposition to liberal solidarism (Zhang, 2016). As a global leader, China also sees itself as an institution builder (Ren, 2016). For instance, just as the Chinese-led Asian Infrastructure and Investment Bank (AIIB) successfully provided an alternative to the liberal institutions of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (Ren, 2016), the WIC is meant to replace institutions such as the multistakeholder Internet Governance Forum (IGF), the main decision-making institution in the GIG regime. China's behaviour in this role is that of a nation reestablishing itself in the liberal hierarchy within which it must operate when bargaining for new norms.

Finally, China also views itself as a Law-abiding Citizen. This role contains the most frames, but nevertheless they all have a common aspect that unite them under this role conception: fairness under the law. This role is somewhat counterintuitively active. Part of the identity of this role lies in its position as a victim to an unfair world order; however, in this role, China conceives itself as a nation that aims to correct this imbalance. China's self-awareness of being the "other" in the liberal hierarchy (Zhang, 2016: 806) is key to how this role is performed. This role is mainly a reaction to US hegemony. The role also highlights the righteousness of China, and thus, is meant to justify its foreign policy position. This role creates a strong basis for China to demonstrate its shared identity

with other developing nations. The *lawful nation/good guy, anti-imperialist, new institutions and norms, cybersecurity,* and *cyber sovereignty* frames are present in this role.

The speeches and documents analysed in this article are not only essential for analysing role conceptions, but also for looking at China's role performance. Role conceptions and performance are linked since "the fact of sovereignty implies that foreign policy decisions and actions (role performances) derive primarily from policymaker's role conceptions, domestic needs and demands, and critical events or trends in the external environment" (Holsti, 1970: 243). Role performance has already been touched on with respect to the activeness or passivity[7] of the conceived roles above. But how do these roles play out for China diplomatically?

Cyber sovereignty is a concept that many countries in the developing world can get behind. This includes the Shanghai Cooperation Organization to which Russia and India are partners, and "is perhaps one of the most successful examples of multilateral embrace of digital authoritarian norms and practices" (McKune and Ahmed, 2018: 3841). For these countries, China has used both its Developer and Law-abiding Citizen roles in advocating for cyber sovereignty. China as a Developer is attractive to developing nations who have an interest in social order and economic development, while the Law-abiding Citizen role is attractive to nations like Russia who oppose US cyber hegemony. China also attempts to influence the developed world via the Global Leader and Global Village Member roles. Offensively, as a global leader, China claims a legitimate place in setting global norms and demands to be taken seriously. Defensively, as a member of the global village, China highlights its commitment to a GIG regime that is mutually beneficial to all nations as well as an open and progressive internet. Still, developed nations seems unaffected by China's national role strategy. China's foreign internet policies have led to outcries from human rights organizations (McKune and Ahmed, 2018: 3841), indicating major resistance to the cyber sovereignty model from the developed world. Also, a report on the 2nd WIC attended by Xi Jinping published by a Hong Kong-based website, pessimistically describes the event as being a who's who of Third World nations, implying that the "developed nations in the West have not bought into China's multilateral program[8]" (Fang, 2015). Therefore, the question remains, if the developed nations of the world are not buying into China's promotion of norms at the WIC, then who is?

Conclusion: Has the WIC helped China to improve its position?

It is difficult to say whether the WIC has registered an impact on China's overall ability to influence global norms on Internet governance yet. Each year, the tone of the speeches given by

[7] Holsti (1970: 286) provides an "activity-passivity" scale in his seminal work on national role theory.
[8] Here the "multilateral program" refers to cyber sovereignty and participation of governments, not civil society or private actors, in GIG (Cai, 2018: 652).

officials at the WIC seem to become softer in tone, more concise, and yet more definitive and consistent in purpose. That is to say, the speeches are articulated in a vastly different way than typical CCP party language, which uses specific phrases and terminology as part of a language "game" to adapt Marxist ideology (Holbig, 2013). This suggests, in part, China's use of alter-casting as a strategy. Still, by all accounts, China's foreign policy strategy within the WIC has had no impact on the status quo.

The US actively opposes any foreign policy to change the current GIG regime; that is, it considers supporters of cyber sovereignty to be revisionists.[9] Last year, the White House released a whitepaper that details the US commitment to maintaining the status quo in GIG, including promotion of the multistakeholder model and active prevention of "attempts to create state-centric frameworks" (White House, 2018: 25). A whitepaper from two years prior by the US Department of State (2016: 6) uses this exact terminology, showing consistent US foreign policy across two very different presidencies. Additionally, in the last meeting of the IGF, the Secretary General of the UN reaffirmed the commitment of the UN members to the multistakeholder model (United Nations Secretary General, 2018). Western media's analysis of the WIC also provide insight into China's role with one author calling the WIC "hilariously farcical and unsettling" (Shu, 2014). Freedom House's yearly "Freedom on the Net" reports are widely cited and annually castigate China for its internet policies, which is a sign that Western civil society also remains unaffected by China's role performance. If anything, the WIC may be having a negative impact on China's image among Western countries. China's roles within the WIC are, however, framed in such a way as to avoid being labelled a revisionist power in the global order; the Global Village Member role most obviously illustrates this point.

So far, we can be sure that China is willing to accept the multistakeholder model for now due to its performance in the Global Village Member role. Yet, although it is dedicated to cooperation over conflict, and despite a focus on cooperation and a repudiation of realist interpretations of the current global order, China actively seeks to reduce the power of the US, as seen in China's Global Leader role performance. Although there is little to no effect on budging the US and Europe's stance on GIG norms, China's influence is growing in Southeast Asia, developing countries in general, and nations with an interest in building a Chinese style Internet at home (McKune and Ahmed, 2018). This suggest that geographic location and shared interests are also

[9] Looking at the official statements from the White House and State Department, it is apparent that the US prescribes a Revisionist role to promoters of cyber sovereignty. China has clearly countered this role prescription with its Law-abiding Citizen role, which reframes the issue into one in which the US is the revisionist because it does not respect the concept of sovereignty in international law. These differences are due to divergence in official interpretations of GIG. It is acknowledged here that this article is limited in its discussion of role prescriptions, which is due to the large scope of understanding China's role conceptions and performance.

significant factors in China's influence. The US remains the most influential power in GIG, but as the US removes itself from world affairs, a vacuum is likely to open up for China to promote cyber sovereignty to developing countries (Segal, 2017: 2). Although China has called for a formal institution within the United Nations to govern the global internet, this is apparently not China's predominant strategy in the WIC. Rather, the roles conceived and performed in the WIC target smaller states over which China either has economic influence, as a Developer, or political influence, as a Global Leader, in the wake of vacuums created as the US retreats from certain foreign affairs issues.

The political influence of the China's role as a Law-abiding Citizen and Global Village Member must also not be understated. The Law-abiding Citizen role is useful for attracting nations opposing US hegemony and also those who support the cyber sovereignty model. Russia is the prime example as several authors have already made clear (McKune and Ahmed, 2018; Segal, 2017; Zaagman, 2018). Other nondemocratic governments have a clear interest in the cyber sovereignty model as well. The Global Village Member role, as an alter-casting role, targets developing nations who have democratic institutions, such as Sri Lanka, an important member of China's Belt and Road Initiative, and even India, now a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. In essence, it is clear that China's strategy via the WIC is not to influence the status quo directly, but rather to gradually win over allies largely from the developing world. This is similar to China's strategy in reforming the global economic governance structure (Zhang, 2016: 813); however, a key difference is that these economic reforms took place within the IMF, an institution that has participation from all the global powers, including Western liberal nations. But the WIC is meant to be different than Western, liberal-led institutions like the IMF. The WIC's existence in itself is a statement that global norms can be developed in non-Western institutions. China's foreign policy in the WIC is the promotion of a message to the developing world: China is an alternative to a hegemonic internet power that does not share the economic benefits of its technological prowess.

As a last note, there are two consideration this article does not have space to touch on, which are areas for potential future research. Firstly, a micro-evaluation of the role prescriptions of the liberal order on China would shed more light on China's role performance, not just in the WIC, but also within other institutions. Next, this article considers only very broadly the concept of the alter. The alter is broadly taken as the US and EU-led liberal order, cramming other private and civil society actors into this order. As the multistakeholder model also includes civil society and private business, it would be worth analysing China's role performance in individual dealings with these actors.

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Appendix

National Role Conceptions and Performance in the World Internet Conference

Roles	Frames	Definition	Role performance
Developer	Technology revolution; social development; cybersecurity	Using the Internet to improve livelihood in economically, socially and culturally positive ways; particularly to reduce dependence on the West	Passive; takes apolitical stance on GIG; only practical socioeconomic and security issues are relevant
Global Village Member	Global village; open/progressive; freedom/democracy; mutual trust	Desire and willingness to participate in and improve a free and open internet "governed by all" in the name of existing global internet governance order	Passive; accepting norms of the multistakeholder model; alter-casting; different interpretations of "democracy" and "multilateral"
Global Leader	Global leader; mutual trust; new institutions/norms	Citing dominance and productivity in information technology to claim a seat at the rule-making table	Active; heavily norm-making role; providing developing countries with alternative to US-led GIG order
Law-abiding Citizen	Lawful nation/good guy; anti-imperialist; new institutions and norms; cybersecurity; cyber sovereignty	Pointing blame at hegemonic power while citing self-righteous, law-abiding nature to fight criticism and justify position	Active/reactive role; refer to international law to justify position; acts as victim of US GIG hegemony

Source: Author.

Exploring the Roles Metanarratives Play in the Dynamics of Conflict Recurrence in Madagascar: 1947-2016

Velomahanina Tahinjanahary Razakamaharavo[1]

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Velomahanina Tahinjanahary Razakamaharavo, from Antananarivo (Madagascar) holds a PhD in "International Conflict Analysis" from the University of Kent, Brussels School of International Studies. She is currently a Scientific Collaborator at UCLouvain in Belgium. She wrote a PhD Thesis on the dynamics of conflict recurrence in Madagascar. Her interests include conflict transformation and peacebuilding, gender in peace support operations, and the implications of artificial intelligence in the fields of peace and security. E-mail: ijailah4@gmail.com.

Abstract

Madagascar has experienced various episodes of conflict since the colonization period. Despite the solutions local and external actors implemented, conflict recurs. Metanarratives such as socialism, communism, capitalism, and liberalism greatly impacted the conditions explaining the dynamics behind such recurrences. How did metanarratives contribute to the creation of more peaceful (de-escalating roles) or conflict situations (escalating roles)? With the help of Qualitative Comparative Analysis, this article identifies and studies the metanarratives influencing and being influenced by the following: a) conflict dimensions, b) the framing of the conflicts by the actors involved, c) the construction of the images of the self/the other, d) the accommodation policies (the solutions implemented to address the incompatibilities between the actors), and e) the repertoires of action. It argues that metanarratives play significant roles in transforming a conflict in both constructive and destructive ways.

Keywords

Accommodation Policies; Conflict Recurrence; Conflict Transformation; Metanarratives; Peace and Conflict Processes

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Introduction

Life is built on lived experiences transmitted through stories, both imagined or fictive. Narratives significantly shape the interactions of the actors involved in peace and conflict processes, as well as the decisions they make: pursuing peace or sustaining conflict. For some time, narratives in social sciences have been criticized and questioned, with scholars suggesting that "narrative should, figuratively speaking, go back where it belongs—in the arts, not the sciences" (Merrill, 2007: 20). However, narratives are an important element that needs to be taken into account in peace and conflict studies, as they are central in actions relating to conflict resolution (for example, when setting up a Truth and Reconciliation Commission).

Madagascar, an island in the Indian Ocean, experienced nine episodes of conflict between 1947 and 2016. Despite the various solutions local and external actors implemented to resolve the incompatibilities between conflicting parties, conflict recurs in the country. This article argues that metanarratives are among the significant elements transforming a given conflict in a constructive or destructive manner, thus building up the dynamics behind conflict recurrence.

Metanarratives are embedded in structural factors and parts of mechanism behind those dynamics. This article shows how they influence and are influenced by these factors. Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), a set of methods and techniques using causal configuration to explain the occurrence or non-occurrence of a given outcome, helped to identify these metanarratives. This article starts with a literature review, after which I define the factors (the conditions in QCA terms) I study in this article and describe the methodology. I continue with the presentation of the results and conclude with a discussion of the findings and an indication of future studies.

The episodes of conflict in Madagascar: contextualizing the study

The dynamics of conflict in Madagascar involve multiple episodes occurring sequentially, yet all part of a single conflict, sharing elements such as the continuous involvement of the state or the political dimension. This indicates continuity and conflict recurrence. However, these episodes are qualitatively different in terms of conflict dimensions, actors involved, or solutions implemented to resolve their incompatibilities.

In 1947, the fight for independence triggered a conflict (with more than one thousand deaths) involving the ethnic communities *Merina* and the *Côtiers*.[2] It is said that France created the conflict between these two groups (Spacensky, 1967). Another episode occurred in 1971 (with more than one thousand deaths) – an uprising of farmers in the South supported by the Maoist opposition political party MONIMA, followed by State intervention (the *gendarmerie*). 1972 saw another conflict

[2] There are eighteen (18) ethnic groups in Madagascar. But the categorization of "*Merina*" and *Côtiers* has been used to differentiate between the people from the highlands and those from the Coastal regions.

(forty deaths), involving students in the capital, Antananarivo, and a group of deprived and jobless youth called ZOAM. These protestors opposed what they believed to be French neo-colonialism and imperialism in education, culture, economy, etc. (Blum, 2011; see also Télévision Française 1's documentary on episode 1972 available at the repository of INA.fr, 1972). In 1975, another episode (twenty-two deaths) involved the elite and the assassination of the new President, Colonel Ratsimandrava, after just six days in power. It is said that he was assassinated because of the bottom-up policy called *Fokonolona* he wanted to implement in Madagascar (Archer, 1976): it upset France, the Bourgeoisie, the *Côtiers*, the Socialists and the Communists. Another episode occurred in 1984, during which the state used a group of young delinquents called TTS to attack and terrorize the population and crush any political protest the opposition organized (ZOAM member, personal communication, March 2016). In response, a Kung-Fu group stood up and fought against the state, an action that was strongly repressed through military intervention (more than one hundred people died). In 1991, another conflict arose between President Ratsiraka and the opposition, generating a strong movement fighting for democracy (Urfer, 1993) and climaxing at the Presidential Palace, *Iavoloha* with three hundred wounded and fifty deaths. In 1996, another crisis among the elite occurred, leading to the impeachment of the President by the National Assembly. In 2002, one more episode started with an electoral dispute (Raharizatovo, 2008, Mocaër, 2002), but involved other issues pertaining to identity dimensions concerning the *Merina* and the *Côtiers* ethnic groups, resulting in over sixty deaths. Finally, the military coup of 2009 that toppled President Ravalomanana and resulted in more than one hundred deaths (Ralambomahay, 2011, see also TV Plus' documentary on episode 2009 produced by Realy, 2009) involved many politicians from the historical political parties participating in the former episodes of conflict, supporting Mayor Andry Rajoelina against the President, whom they accused of corruption and authoritarianism, and demanding democracy and freedom of speech.

My research design considers these episodes of conflict together, due to the homogeneity of the actors involved (presence of state governance in all events) and to the saliency of the political dimension in all of them, despite the presence of open and multiple underlying dimensions – for example, some episodes greatly revolved around centre/periphery issues (e.g.: in episodes 1971 and 1972, the state was accused of neglecting the development of the southern region of the country), while others involved conflict among political leaders/top-down conflict (e.g.; episode 1996 and 2009 concerned mainly the political elite and their policies). That being said, it is worth remembering that these dimensions can be purely subjective as the interpretation of the causes of conflict depends on the involved actors' understanding of them and the narratives they built upon them. This article aims to understand how such narratives affect peace and conflict processes.

State of the art

Narratives in peace and conflict processes

Narratives are potent (Raheja and Gold, 1994), powerful and impactful. People give sense to their experiences through stories. They create meanings, tell their own versions of events and voice their concerns about a given issue through personal narratives (Erol, 2015), which are said to "be negotiated in the context of narratives told by communities in which we live" (Rappaport, 2000: 6). Consequently, in society, communities and collectives of actors develop and use superior narratives to justify their existence (e.g.: nationalist narratives), to build an image of the other – the enemy – as morally and existentially inferior (e.g.: narratives pertaining to ethnicity in civil wars), to imagine a collective future (e.g.: living together in peace after war), or to counter a given narrative (e.g.: counter-narratives aimed at addressing extremism), etc.

There has been a growing interest in studying narratives in peace and conflict processes, with some scholars working on conflict-supporting narratives. For example, there is an important amount of literature on narratives in protracted conflicts such as the one between Israelis and Palestinians (Rotberg, 2006), and on narratives in inter-group conflicts based upon "Justification and Threats (of conflict), Delegitimization (of the opponent), Glorification and Victimhood (of the in-group), the in-group's need for Patriotism and Unity…" (Bar-Tal et al. 2014, p.662). Others explore narratives in contexts of conflict resolution or those building peace, including storytelling to address intractable conflicts (Bar-On and Kassem, 2004), collective narratives in peace education (Biton and Salomon, 2006), or the roles of conflict narratives in leading to empathy and dialogue (Cobb, 2013). This article builds on this peace and conflict-potency of narratives.

In peacebuilding literature, narratives have been studied through various lenses and from various sources: as collective memories in joint textbooks (Wang, 2009), as narrative therapy dealing with trauma (Pia, 2013), as personal narratives of social trauma (Chaitin, 2014), or through the roles of narratives in peacebuilding with women (Flaherty, 2012). In the literature on hybrid peace, conflict and politics, Mac Ginty and Firchow (2016) highlight the importance of studying the roles of top-down and bottom-up narratives, exploring the differences between everyday bottom-up narratives and those employed by international actors. However, and despite this burgeoning literature, there is a significant gap in the study of the processes behind narratives´ influence and implications for the dynamics of conflict recurrence, a caveat this article addresses through the lens of conflict transformation.

Conceptualizing metanarratives

Scholars have studied metanarratives mostly in processes of national identity-building. They are called grand narratives, master narratives, universal truths, super-stories, and shared worldviews.

Ross (2003, 2007) uses the concept to study anchored beliefs pertaining to national identity, while scholars working on hegemonic narratives study these through social representations that are considered as dominant scripts or myths (Moscovici, 1988).

Metanarratives are "abstract, intangible, non-figurative" (Auerbach, 2009: 298), they "legitimize specific action or beliefs under the guise of a universal truth" (Panuccio, 2012: 2) and they are a "holistic, hierarchical framework that embraces the national narratives and creates and feeds them" (Auerbach, 2010: 102). Metanarratives are grand ideologies people believe in and strongly adhere to. They are deeply anchored in the national psyche and it is argued that they are "very hard to modify, particularly so in the early stage of conflict resolution (Auerbach, 2010: 103). In a country like Madagascar, which has been greatly influenced by the outside world and, therefore, has experimented with ideologies from China, Russia, the US and France, these narratives play crucial roles in shaping collective memories, as featured in the song excerpt below:

> "The political game in Madagascar aims at giving birth to AMBATOBEVOKA
> Many are dreaming of seeing the sky falling on us so as to save us
> As if a Boeing will land on a hut
> Waiting for a train to arrive at the top of a tree….
> Hoping that we become Russians and Americans
> However we live in Africa…" (Author's translation of an excerpt from the song by Sareraka, 2018 entitled "*Méditations*" (*Ambatobevoka* means "pregnant stone")

As mentioned earlier, this article considers the peace and conflict potency of narratives. Consequently, metanarratives can be about how the conflict erupted, how the conflict was resolved or not, about an imagination of a peaceful future and how violence continued. Cobb (1993) talks about conflict narratives, those that create fractures, while Galtung (1998) speaks about peace narratives, those that counter-balance the conflict ones [see also Hammack (2010) regarding peace-supporting narratives]. On the one hand, "societies in conflict develop opposing conflict-supportive narratives" (Bar-Tal et al. 2014: 663) and, on the other, peace narratives are created from positive and critical imagination: "positive imagination is utopian creating a world of positive peace that does not exist while critical imagination communicates a predictable post-conflict state" (Matyók, 2010: 10).

Structural factors and parts of mechanism building up recurrence

There are many factors that can intervene in the dynamics of conflict recurrence (Razakamaharavo, 2018), but, in this article, I mainly study how metanarratives are embedded, interact, co-exist and co-construct each other with a set of factors outlined below:

Structural factors

These are remote factors which are relatively stable over time. Structural factors are outcome-enabling conditions and can also be considered as contexts. In this article, they are:

a) the conflict dimensions, also considered as the causes or the issues of the conflicts: cultural, socio-economic, political and external dimensions (Féron, 2005);
b) the accommodation policies – the initiatives the actors implement so as to address the incompatibilities during the episodes of conflict (Féron and Schildt, 2007). They can be conflict management, resolution or transformation initiatives, mediation and negotiation activities, peacekeeping, peacebuilding…

Parts of mechanism

These are proximate factors which are spatially closer to the outcome to be explained. In this article, they are:

a) how the conflicts are framed by the actors, based on their interpretations of the origins of the conflicts [referring to the categorization of Élise Féron's (2005) conflict dimensions];
b) how the actors construct the images of themselves and the others: the alien, the one that does not exist symbolically (the non-culture), or the one from the different culture who can nevertheless be a partner (Vetik, 2007);
c) the repertoires of action: the actions actors use to defend their causes. They are conventional and institutional (e.g.: voting, lobbying…), non-institutional actions (e.g.: authorized demonstrations, petitions…), non-conventional actions with or without violence, possibly involving damage to public or private property (e.g.: boycott of products, destruction of signposts…) or violence against persons (e.g.: bombing, sexual abuse…) (PEACE-COM, 2005).

I posit that metanarratives can influence and be influenced by the elements (the structural factors and parts of mechanism) intervening in the dynamics behind conflict recurrence (escalation, de-escalation or phases of stability). Thus, based on the discussion above, I hypothesize that metanarratives play significant roles in transforming a conflict in either a constructive or destructive manner. A given factor changes the conflict in a constructive manner when the situation becomes more peaceful. Destructive transformation occurs when a given factor builds situations of conflict.

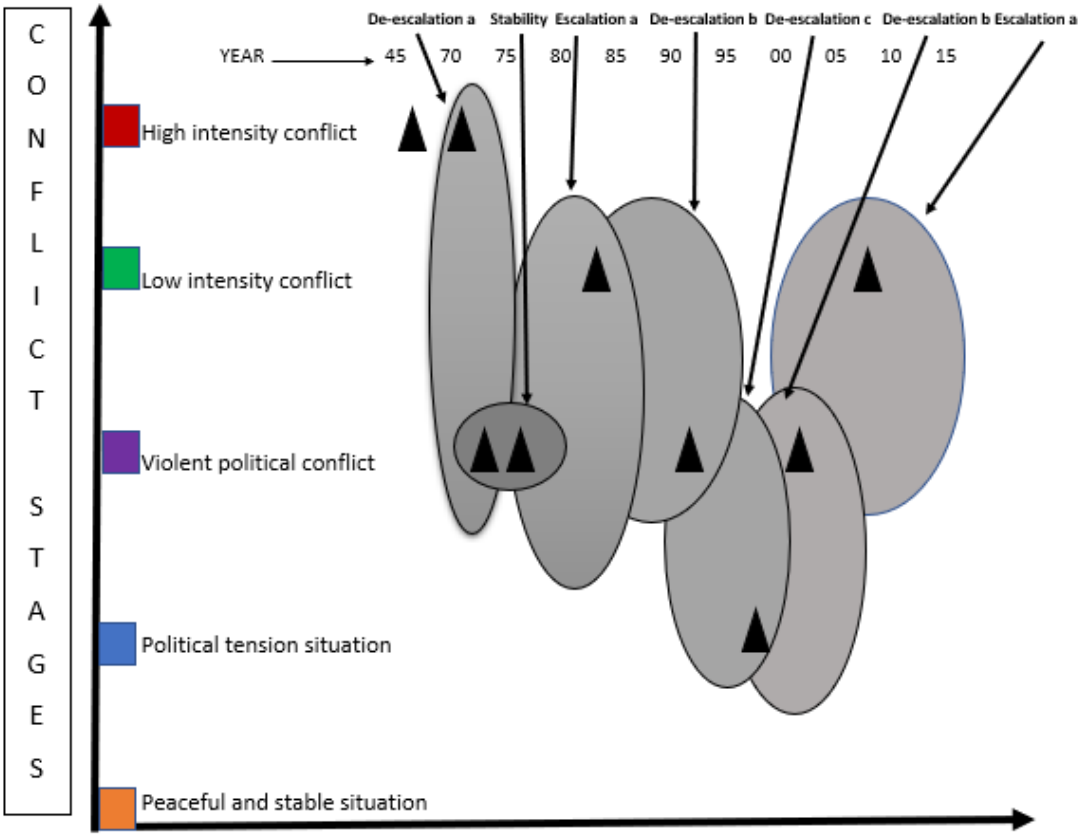
Methodology

Conflict trajectories: escalation, de-escalation, and stability

I grouped the episodes of conflict in Madagascar by using Féron's typology of conflict stages (2005): stage one – peaceful and stable situations; stage two – political tension situations (one or two people killed); stage three – violent political conflict (up to one hundred deaths); stage four – low

intensity conflict (between one hundred and nine hundred ninety nine deaths) and stage five – high intensity conflict (more than one thousand deaths). It is worth noting that these are categorizations and these episodes feature various dimensions and intensities (sometimes similar and at other times different). Graph 1 shows these episodes of conflict along with the shifts occurring throughout the cycle: conflict escalation, conflict de-escalation and a situation where the level of conflict does not change, which I call a situation of stability.

Graph 1. Timeline of the episodes of conflict in Madagascar. The triangles represent the episodes of conflict and the circles the shifts of conflict stages. In order to place the episodes of conflict in a timeline, I have used dates with 5-year intervals. The episodes of conflict occurred in 1947, 1971, 1972, 1975, 1984, 1991, 2002, and 2009. The period between 1950–1970 is not considered as no major episode of conflict broke out.



Source: Author.

Data collection and analysis

The data for this article, specifically focusing on the narrative aspects of conflict, results from a larger project studying the dynamics of conflict recurrence in Madagascar (see Razakamaharavo, 2018a). The methods and techniques behind Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) allowed me to identify the metanarratives and study their influence at multiple levels (see Appendix 1 for details about the QCA procedure). QCA draws both from variable-oriented and case studies approaches

(Rihoux and De Meur, 2009) and its main principle is causal configuration: a combination of conditions (factors) explains the occurrence or non-occurrence of a given phenomenon (one causal path). It is possible that such occurrence or non-occurrence can be explained by multiple causal paths (Rihoux and Ragin, 2009).

Various sources were used to collect data on metanarratives: the discourses of the actors involved in the episodes of conflict, found in reports and policy documents, local and international news outlets (e.g.: Lakroan'i Madagasikara, Midi Madagasikara, L'Express de Madagascar, Radio France Internationale, etc.), songs of Malagasy artists (e.g.: the group Mahaleo and Sareraka) or during protests, video footage from local and international TV broadcasts (e.g.: TV Plus, MaTVetc.), blogs (e.g.: Pakysse), or press releases from political parties. I also conducted in-depth interviews with 44 informants in Madagascar and abroad (in France and Switzerland).

Before the first round of interviews in Madagascar (June 2014), a list of interviewees was drawn up from the literature review and my knowledge of the episodes of conflict. I identified the main leaders of the parties involved in each episode of conflict, the actors involved in the accommodation policies (if there were any), opinion leaders (journalists, bloggers) and actors from the grassroots and civil society (Churches, NGOs and associations). However, once on the ground, I discovered that other actors who did not appear in the public sphere were much more knowledgeable about the issues I wanted to cover, having been deeply involved in the whole process. I was introduced to them by those in the initial list.

During the second round of interviews in Madagascar in April 2016, I adopted what I call "phased and focused interviews". I made a careful choice of interviewees based on the knowledge of the issues we were to discuss. Some were well-informed about the mediation and negotiation initiatives, others were highly knowledgeable about the episodes of conflict and the evolution of the events, while the remainder had a thorough knowledge of the history of Madagascar. However, I initially posited that, even if I succeeded in getting direct testimonies, perceptions change over time and one's understanding of the conflict in the present might not be the same as when the events occurred. Thus, the data from the interviews were checked against other materials I collected about each case (e.g. posters, press releases…).

The data collection was made easier thanks to the Boolean logic (Rihoux et al. 2013) used by QCA. It allowed the construction of all the typologies categorizing the concepts I used, the selection of the episodes of conflict to be studied and of the information I was specifically looking for. I dichotomized the data as follows: for each condition (structural factors and parts of mechanism), I assigned a value [e.g.: high (one: 1) or low saliency (zero: 0) of a given conflict dimension, presence (one: 1) or absence (zero: 0) of significant accommodation policies…]. The narratives are therefore

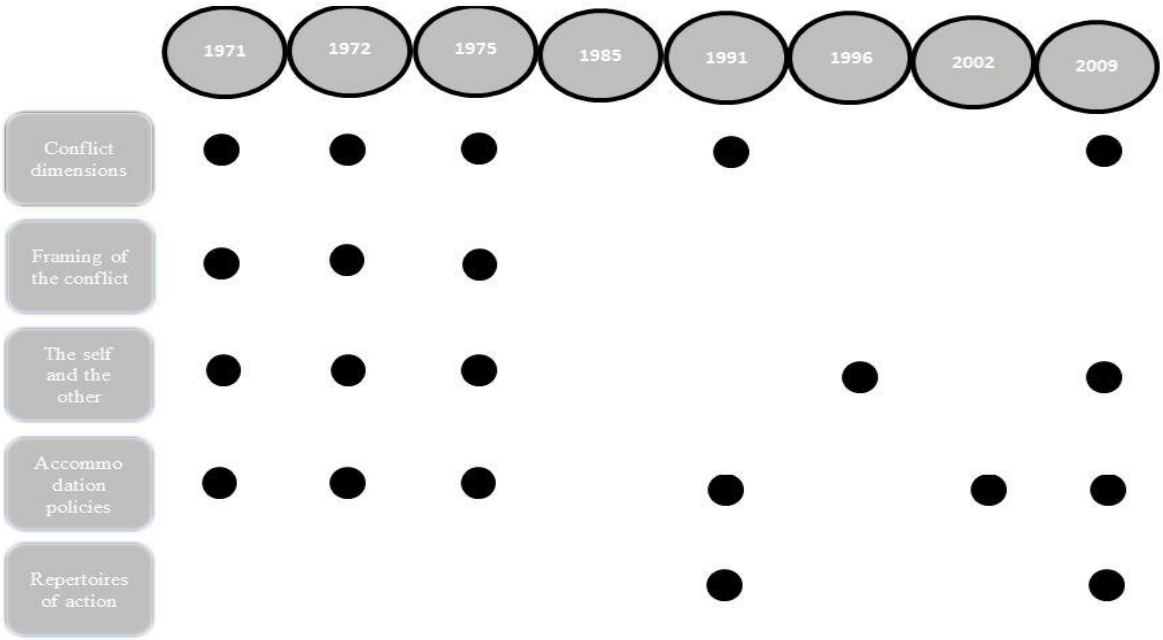
circumscribed within these categorizations/typologies. Once the data were collected, I coded them, dichotomized the data by using Crisp-set QCA (csQCA) and input them into the fs/QCA software.

It is worth reiterating that the study of narratives in this article is part of a larger project (see Razakamaharavo, 2018a). Therefore, I will only explore the metanarratives in the contexts and the parts of mechanism from these results. The goal is not to identify which narratives are important and which ones are not (obviously, other narratives were important during the process, e.g.: the local narratives), but to locate in which episode the metanarratives have high and low saliency. Therefore, I used the process of dichotomization of QCA for each episode of conflict: the saliency of the metanarratives is high if they are decidedly present in the discourses of the actors, in policies, and in the other resources selected for the study (e.g.: flyers, press releases), and low when they are absent. During the interpretive phase of QCA, I did interpretive analysis (Yanow, 2014, Bhattacherjee, 2012; note that the data collection itself already includes the interpretive approach - e.g.: interviews and documentation) to substantively study and analyse the metanarratives.

Results

This section explores how metanarratives are embedded in the structural factors (e.g.: conflict dimensions) and parts of mechanism (e.g.: the perceptions of the self and the other, repertoire of actions of the actors) and what effects they have on peace and conflict processes. Graph 2 shows the levels at which metanarratives were highly salient throughout the episodes of conflict (the concepts are also explained in Appendix 1).

Graph 2: Contexts and parts of mechanisms in which metanarratives were highly salient. The dots indicate all conditions (factors) where metanarratives are highly present in each episode of conflict.



Source: Author.

Clashes of metanarratives in the conflict dimensions and framings of the conflict

In some of the episodes of conflict in Madagascar, metanarratives were deeply ingrained in the conflict dimensions and in the framings of conflict origins by the actors involved. For example, a phenomenon I call "clashes of metanarratives" created situations of conflict during episodes 1971 and 1972. These were not merely ideologies the elite based their decisions on or adhered to, but metanarratives entrenched in the national psyche that could persuade the conflicting parties and the population to take arms and fight each other.

External dimensions were highly salient as the capitalism vs socialism/communism debate was raging during these episodes – see song excerpt below

> "Because my Ministry is to run a fair and impartial school
> Those who are placed at the top will be brought low, and those who are at the bottom will be uplifted
> It is there that the BEMOANED social EQUALITY will occur"
> (Author's translation of an excerpt from the song by Mahaleo entitled "*Tao antsekoky*", about socialism and social and educational inequalities)

Indeed, when Madagascar gained its independence, the country was led by President Tsiranana, who, supported by his political party PSD (Social Democratic Party), chose to engage the country in the path of capitalism (Althabe, 1980), facing the opposition of two major historical parties: the AKFM (Congress Party for Independence of Madagascar), with a "progressivist nationalist" wing and a pro-communist wing, espousing the ideas and principles of the URSS, and the MONIMA (Madagascar for the Malagasy), which defended Maoism and socialism as practised by the People's Republic of China, with its ideology revolving around the fight against social inequality, the *"fitovian-tsaranga"* (Rabearimanana, 2002).

The co-existence and interaction of these metanarratives in the conflict dimensions and the framings of the conflict (capitalism, communism, socialism, Maoism etc.) created clashes and incompatibilities. On the one hand, the opposition was fighting against those who they considered to be imperialists and capitalists: the state represented by its President and his political party. On the other, the state based its interpretation of the origin of the conflict and its military intervention upon the idea that the protesters had fallen into a very weird communist conspiracy (Althabe, 1980: 425). Indeed, the President engaged in discourses such as: "…there are really leaders who get small children involved in this… they are really crafty. Be careful, they are bandits, so they are communists… Be wise… Get yourselves out of this weird story" (Blum, 2011: 17).

Roles of metanarratives in the construction of the images of the self and the other

> "These were people who did not accept being controlled by the colonial power or the state… they had a big and renowned nationalist leader, Monja Jaona… very close to the communists and the socialists. At that time, the Tsiranana regime fought against communism. He built alliances with

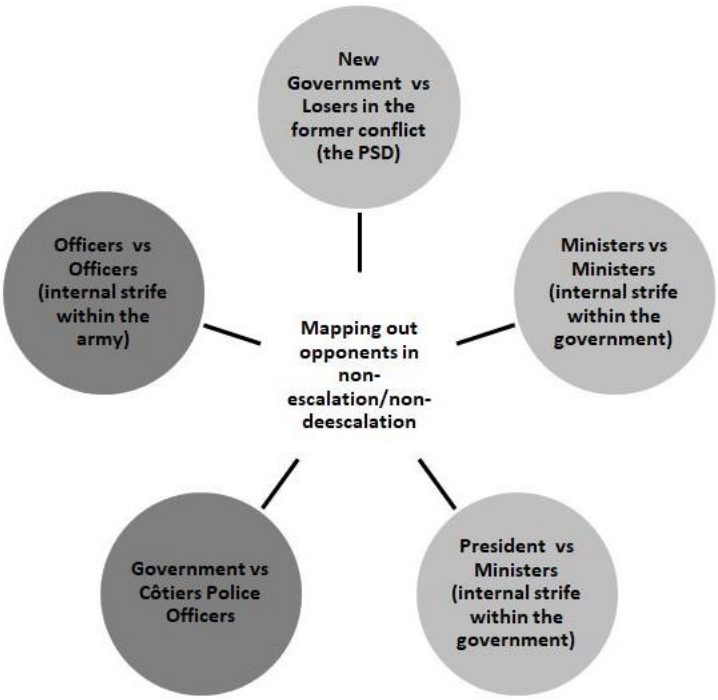
Taiwan's China, not with Mao Zedong's communist China… Madagascar was considered to be a barrier against communism in Africa, the colonial power put Tsiranana in power to protect against that threat" (Raharizatovo, personal communication, June 2014, Madagascar).

The clashes of metanarratives mentioned earlier have a lot to do with the construction of identities and relationships between the actors. Among the political elite, and during the phase of stability, they never led to physical confrontations. However, once the clashes included the ethnic dimension there was direct violence.

Metanarratives define and construct the identities of conflicting parties

Another example showing the massive role metanarratives play throughout the peace and conflict processes in Madagascar can be seen at the level of identity construction: the construction of the self and the other. Episode 1975 is an example of that, as metanarratives are particularly highly salient, especially in terms of identity construction of the conflicting parties. Graph 3 maps out all the actors involved in episode 1975 and the relationships influenced by metanarratives.

Graph 3: List of the opponents in the dynamics of no shift of conflict stage/ stability phase (shift from episode 1972 and 1975). The circles with lighter color represent the relationships influenced by metanarratives.



Source: Author.

The clashes of metanarratives carried on during this episode created disputes mainly within the government and state institutions, obliging the head of government to transfer power to a Military Officer (Archer, 1976). It was important for some to be a "socialist", or a "socialist but relying on Malagasy principles", for others to be a "communist" or a "Maoist" (Rajakoba, personal communication, June 2014). The image of the other was constructed through these lenses and

identities were defined by these metanarratives. Consequently, the clashes of metanarratives prompted the disputes between the new government and the losers in the former conflict episode (the PSD), among the ministers within the government, and between the President and his ministers. These clashes arose because these actors´ identities stemmed from the metanarratives and political aspirations they promoted.

Graph 4: Extracts illustrating the use of metanarratives in discourses.

Author's translation:

. "Who won: America or China?" Lakroan'i Madagasikara (1972)

. "Letter from Monja Jaona: "… This government must be dissolved because it does not care about human lives. It is a government that is amassing wealth, a puppet of imperialists, and plotting with those who hate the blacks … this government persecuting the small people was dissolved…" Lakroan'i Madagasikara (1972)

. "We do not need various foreign ideologies" Lakroan'i Madagasikara (1972)

Source: Lakroan'i Madagasikara (1972).

Social class, ethnicity, and metanarratives in identities: direct violence at play

The identities built upon these metanarratives were even stronger as they were accompanied by an acute awareness of social class and ethnic origins, a mix that led to direct violence. Indeed, after episode 1972, an apolitical government was formed to protect national unity, composed of six military officers from various units of the army and the *gendarmerie*, and six "technicians" representing each of the provinces, but they could not agree on which ideologies should shape Madagascar. The origin and social class of each group's leader constructed the image of the group and how it saw the other. The proponents of capitalism were mainly from the national Bourgeoisie, the big families of the *Merina* ethnic group and the Nobles who occupied the key economic positions (Razafindrakoto et al. 2017). The followers of Maoism, mainly from the working class and peasantry, wanted to protect the interests of the weak, the poor and the peasants, defending a proletarian power. Finally, the *Fokonolona*, led by General Ratsimandrava, of *mainty* (black) and *andevo* (slave) origin, defended a pure Malagasy socialism (see Midi Madagasikara, 2016). It is worth noting that in episode 1947, democracy already influenced the identities of political parties. For example, the first nationalist political party whose members were Merina and who fought for the independence of the Malagasy

was called Mouvement Démocratique de la Rénovation Malagache (Democratic Movement for Malagasy Rejuvenation)

The *Fokonolona* was a "*politique paysanne*" (rural-based policy) aimed at giving power back to the population, inspired by Malagasy values and principles (tolerance, the cult of the ancestors, family links…) (Condominas, 1961) against so-called progressive ideas (the grand ideologies from 'outside' such as capitalism). It is said that General Ratsimandrava was assassinated because of this policy (Rakotovazaha, personal communication, March 2016). Moreover, in the coastal regions (e.g.: Toamasina), after episode 1972, when President Tsiranana gave the power to General Ramanantsoa, the members of his political party PSD felt totally excluded from the political arena. As a result, they formed a new political party called "*Partie Socialiste Malgache*" or Malagasy Socialist Party (PSM) (Morrison et al. 1989), which campaigned along ethnic and tribal lines, fomented troubles and organized riots in those areas.

Metanarratives in the accommodation policies

In the course of these episodes of conflict, there were many types of accommodation policies: those fashioned and implemented in a collaborative manner (e.g.: officially-signed agreements, tacit agreements, initiatives supported by third parties) and those that were designed and implemented in a confrontational manner (e.g.: unilateral intervention by the state, by the military, pacification).

The waves of metanarratives in accommodation policies

What I call "the waves of the metanarratives" built the dynamics up. The first wave, prior to 1980, saw the glory of the socialism/communism vs capitalism debate. During this first wave, the Malagasy relied a great deal on initiatives they implemented among themselves. For example, an interesting dynamic was built upon what I consider to be a "transfer of accommodation policies to regular policies", when regular policies were used to address the issues of the conflict. During episode 1972, the actors implemented a series of accommodation policies which resulted in a transfer of power to General Ramanantsoa. Immediately afterwards, the state engaged in the implementation of regular policies aimed at addressing some of the issues at stake in episodes 1971 and 1972 (Ravalitera, 2016). Among these were initiatives addressing external dimensions, namely the problems triggered by the socialism vs capitalism debate. These policies were implemented through a local solution called "*Malgachisation*": giving a Malagasy character and feature to something (culture, economy, education…). For instance, the "*Malgachisation*" of the economy was done through the nationalization of French-owned firms and the replacement of foreign shareholders and managers by Malagasy people (Ramarolanto-Ratiaray, 1984). Madagascar also decided to leave the French Franc Zone, advocating economic independence and renegotiating the cooperation treaties it signed

with France. This decision was followed by the dismissal of French "*co-opérants*" working in Madagascar (see Raison-Jourde, 2002).

Graph 5: Extracts illustrating the use of metanarratives during the second wave of metanarratives.

Author's translation:
. "A population ready for democracy and development" Lakroan'i Madagasikara (1971)

. "Do not cry because that day will come … Demos is a no he says!" Lakroan'i Madagasikara (1971)

Source: Lakroan'i Madagasikara (1971).

The 1980s saw a rupture with a complete shift of metanarratives. The failed socialist experiment brought to the centre of the political arena external actors, namely the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (African Democracy Encyclopaedia Project, 2010), and the Malagasy government accepted to implement the Structural Adjustment Programme imposed by these two institutions. Consequently, the actors completely changed metanarratives and the national psyche shifted from adhering to socialism, communism, and capitalism to supporting liberalism and democracy.

During this second wave of metanarratives, accommodation policies included the Panorama Convention, an official Peace Agreement aimed at addressing the issues at stake in episode 1991. Democratic principles and ideas guided the design and the implementation of this accommodation policy, which was thought to be the only way to save Madagascar back then:

> "We changed our name, we were no longer those who fought for the setting up of a government for the small people, we were those who fought for the development of Madagascar, we chose liberalism … the interpretation was because we cannot back down from the agreement with the World Bank" (Rakotovazaha, personal communication, March 2016).

Institutions built upon metanarratives: creating extractive and inclusive institutions

A significant aspect of the accommodation policies influencing and influenced by these metanarratives is the type of institution that was created. These institutions played significant roles in the dynamics of conflict recurrence, having at times destructive effects, but also playing constructive roles. For instance, in the case of the transfer of accommodation to regular policies (along the first wave of metanarratives), the solutions addressing external dimensions were supposed to improve the Malagasy economy. However, they created even more situations favouring the

outbreak/recurrence of conflict. In episode 1975, the actors created publicly controlled firms that increased the power of the state and its agents, who were running monopolies – this approach resulted in the creation of a new generation of *Merina* administrative elite and Bourgeoisie, reinforcing the oligarchic control of the economy by the *Merina* ethnic group (see Razafindrakoto et al. 2017). The decision to exit the French Franc Zone also backfired, hitting the economy hard, causing monetary inflation, increasing unemployment, decreasing GDP, and leading to a recession and an economic crash (Jütersonke et al. 2010: 21). It is thus fair to argue that some of the accommodation policies building on the first waves of metanarratives (pre-80s) created bad and extractive institutions (Acemoğlu and Robinson, 2012), instead of benefiting the masses as they were intended to.

In episode 1991, as mentioned, liberalism and democracy became the metanarratives. In this case, the implementation of the peace agreement (the Panorama Convention) had both constructive and destructive effects on the process. Constructively, it allowed for the setting-up of a government of transition and the organization of democratic elections, creating institutions built on the "democratic principles" the actors involved had demanded, and addressed the identity issues in episode 1991: representativeness of the *Merina* and the *Côtiers* ethnic groups, both receiving key positions within the state institutions (e.g.: presidency and National Assembly). The actors also chose a multi-party system, in response to having been silenced prior to the 90s, during Ratsiraka's presidency, when they were forced to unite under the one umbrella party FNDR (*Front National pour la Défense de la Révolution Malgache* or the National Front for the Defense of the Malagasy Revolution). Note that the Assembly of Christian Churches, FFKM, is a key player in this episode. It initiated the "*concertations nationales*" or national consultations in 1989 aimed at revising the socialist constitution of President Ratsiraka, but also had the goal of setting up a government of transition, and later became an instrument for peace - for example, it was a crucial participator of the mediation process, and the Panorama Convention was the fruit of their support.

Nonetheless, in the long run, the system the actors chose and the democratic institutions they thought would solve the problems proved to be sources of trouble. A majority with variable geometry (expression to qualify the absence of a stable majority at the National Assembly) caused instability and disputes among the actors, as many were driven by vested interests and it was impossible to make decision alone without consulting the others (anonymous interviewees, personal communications, June 2014 and March 2016). The revised constitution was also thought to be a threat, given that the President had no control over the Prime Minister, while the National Assembly accused the President of having too much power and abusing it. Moreover, the constitution the Assembly of Christian Churches drafted, which was part of the provision of the Panorama

convention, did not satisfy everyone. Finally, the losers (President Ratsiraka and his supporters) were excluded from the political sphere during the post-conflict period.

In the second period, corresponding to the second wave of narratives (post-80s), liberalism, democracy and globalization were the fundamental guides of the institutional choices (see Radio France Internationale, 2010). Interestingly, those dynamics are associated with cases of escalation of conflict stages in Madagascar. This second wave of metanarratives created what I consider to be "better institutions", "more inclusive" and representative, with power more evenly distributed. Furthermore, the actors involved were, at least in the beginning, working collaboratively to make their choices effective. However, contrary to what was expected, it was precisely the inclusive institutions that brought the demise of the actors who had chosen democratic institutions and the multiparty system. It is also worth considering that the interpretations of democracy and how it should be implemented can be different, which could explain why there are negative transformations [see the discussion by Ralijaona (2014) of the kind of democracy the Malagasy and the mediators such as the African Union wanted during episode 2009].

Metanarratives and repertoires of action

As explained earlier, in the 70s, there were situations during which the actors used metanarratives as an excuse to commit direct violence. For instance, in 1971, the state sent the *gendarmerie* to pacify the Southern parts of Madagascar and committed horrendous exactions under the pretext of fighting against communism. In 1972, the ZWAM used extreme violence, attacking and killing some members of the FRS, the President´s Security Forces.

Other cases show that metanarratives can influence the choice of repertoires of action in a more constructive manner. For instance, the Churches in episode 1991 made a strategic use of non-violence to overthrow the state. This strategy got its inspiration from the democratic principles the actors from the opposition side strongly supported and adhered to (Tronchon, 1995).

The case of episode 1996 was quite different. Because the actors wanted democracy and liberalism, they were supposed to respect democratic rules, procedures and institutions established by the Panorama Convention. Consequently, patterns of behaviour and repertoires of action mostly followed such a framework, with disputes happening at the institutional level. However, the actors used loopholes, controlling the machinery of institutions and the law to settle their incompatibilities. For example, they used the law to impeach President Zafy Albert (Allen, 2003), whose power was transferred to the Head of the High Constitutional Court, Norbert Lala Ratsirahonana. Such a decision was unconstitutional given that it should have been the head of the Senate coming to power.

Discussion and conclusion

The findings of my research demonstrate that metanarratives are indeed embedded in structural factors and parts of mechanisms building up peace and conflict processes in Madagascar. For example, when they were deeply ingrained in the conflict dimensions triggering what I call clashes of metanarratives (capitalism vs socialism) which created situations of conflict and incompatibilities. Furthermore, my research found that metanarratives are so powerful to the extent that they construct identities, the images of the self and the other. In the case of Madagascar, this, paired with an acute awareness of social class and ethnic origins triggered direct violence. I also demonstrated that metanarratives in Madagascar have been playing crucial roles in the shaping and the implementation of accommodation policies aimed at resolving the incompatibilities between the actors. I explained that Madagascar experienced two waves of metanarratives: the first saw the glory of the socialism/communism vs capitalism debate and the second started in the 1980s with a complete shift where the national psyche fully adhered to liberalism and democracy. Depending on the situation, the accommodation policies influenced by metanarratives created extractive as well as inclusive institutions. Indeed, metanarratives can also build peace and I could further confirm this for example when explaining how democracy influence the actors' choice of repertoires of actions.

These findings confirm my hypothesis that metanarratives are among the elements transforming a conflict in both constructive and destructive manners. They can influence and be influenced by the structural factors and parts of mechanism building up the dynamics of conflict recurrence. This means that metanarratives influence the trajectory of a given conflict as they can be, at one level, peace-supportive (Galtung, 1998), while, at another, behave as conflict- supportive elements (Cobb, 1993). However, it is worth remembering that metanarratives alone cannot explain destructive or constructive conflict transformation. They do not work alone in the dynamics, but are part of the answers, in interaction with other factors.

The conflict potency of metanarratives indicates its power to transform a conflict in a destructive manner. The case of Madagascar shows that their high saliency in conflict dimensions and framings trigger clashes of metanarratives and construct incompatibilities. Metanarratives can be strong enough to make actors take up arms and fight each other, especially when ethnicity and social class are involved. The real danger of metanarratives also lies in the fact that they are deeply anchored in the national psyche. In the eyes of those who completely adhere to them, they are the one and only option (accommodation policy) that can resolve incompatibilities between conflicting parties and address the issues at stake in the conflict. As a result, some of the institutions that were created based on metanarratives can cause further situations of conflict. That is the case of communism creating extractive institutions or liberalism leading to more hardship and poverty.

Unfortunately, many of the accommodation policies implemented to resolve conflicts can be categorized as what Mac Ginty and Firchow call top-down narratives (2016) from external actors – in the case of Madagascar, these constituted metanarratives.

The peace potency of metanarratives shows that they can also be leveraged to transform conflicts in a constructive manner, as they create inclusive institutions. However, they have their limitations. The most concrete example of those types of narrative is the role democracy, liberalism, and capitalism play in peace and conflict processes in Madagascar. One can say that these are part of the liberal peace paradigm (Richmond, 2006). Some of the principles behind those metanarratives are peace-supportive, with the accommodation policies – such as the peace agreement – encouraging collaboration, power-sharing and freedom of speech (see the intervention of Mr Mamy Rakotoarivelo in the evening news of the TV channel MaTV, 2012 discussing the importance of freedom of speech during the peace processes in episode 2009). The effects of the Panorama Convention in episode 1991 are the best example of a constructive transformation built upon metanarratives in terms of repertoires of action. Indeed, the places of contention became the institutions, with actors appealing to both conventional and non-conventional institutional actions. That is because their behaviour was dictated by the belief in democratic rules and procedures – such a situation established some sort of law and order, even if the actors also exploited loopholes in order to impeach the President in episode 1996.

All this has policy implications. Miall (2004) argues that conflicts are transformed gradually either in a constructive or a destructive way. Through the results communicated in this article, it is clear that metanarratives are among the elements contributing to those transformations. In order to prevent conflict recurrence, it is necessary to address the problems of the effects/the influence of metanarratives on the structural factors and parts of mechanism, or their interaction and co-construction discussed in this article. Metanarratives are genuinely present in peace and conflict processes and anchored in the national psyche. The narratives about Russia and China are back in the political arena, in the fields of international development and in peacebuilding in Africa. Proxy wars can also be considered as a manifestation of the role metanarratives play in conflicts. Peace and conflict scholars are familiar with the failure of liberal peacebuilding (Paris, 1997). But, even if we are aware of these issues, these problems are not addressed in conflict management initiatives, peace agreements or peacebuilding programmes.

This article is just the beginning of a questioning of the roles played by metanarratives in conflict recurrence. Further research should be done at regional and international levels, involving cross-national studies. This article is also key to starting discussions among scholars, policymakers and practitioners regarding the roles metanarratives play in conflict prevention and transformation,

and to the extent they should be taken into account in accommodation policies. Regarding Madagascar, I can confirm the hypothesis that metanarratives influence the conflict trajectory, as they played constructive and destructive roles in the process of conflict recurrence. However, in order to fully understand the dynamics behind these processes in the country, it is necessary to analyse all the QCA results in Appendix 2, to understand how these elements interact in the dynamics of conflict recurrence. A key question that could be addressed in future research is why, in the case of Madagascar, the first wave of metanarratives (socialism, communism, Maoism, etc.) is associated with de-escalating phases and stability while the second wave (liberalism, democracy, globalization etc.) is related to phases of escalation.

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