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Efforts Towards Conflicts Mediation: How UN Policy and Geopolitics Can Influence the Processes

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Abstract:

This article aims to raise the effects of governance and ignorance in conflicts generation worldwide. The approach here is qualitative and based on a constructivist design. This conceptual research is grounded on a documentary analysis and some observations of conflictual situations in different contexts. The results show that governance when mixed with ignorance could have some negative effects such as conflictual situations. Thus, it is suggested that good governance and appropriate knowledge about both reactive diplomacy and preventive diplomacy could help towards conflicts mediation through a good leadership. This paper has an original value in revealing the link between bad governance and conflicts and by providing the implementation of some mechanisms that could help solve conflictual situations.

Keywords: Conflicts, Mediation, United Nations, Policy, Geopolitics, Processes

INTRODUCTION

From the world wars to nowadays, there are some efforts from international institutions towards the resolution of conflicts worldwide. However, the United Nations Organisation (UN) is doing its best to bring peace, even if it has always failed to bring a good mediation in some conflict (Panizza, 2011). Upreti (2004) has demonstrated that the inappropriate use of resources by governing authorities could be a source of conflictual situations. In addition, Martynoga and Sielenzak (2018) have shown that mediation is the best process for solving conflict situation, while Naji, and Jawan (2013) preconise a deep knowledge of the geopolitics of the Islam world as a perfect guide for building peace in some inter-state conflicts. Until nowadays, there are few investigations about the efforts that are vital for conflicts mediation. However, there are some factors that influence the processes towards such mediations at a point that there are some tremendous challenges to take into account. Governance often reveals its limits by being a trigger of conflictual situations. Thus, the United Nations (UN) is regarded as the organisation that could make the difference by bring hope in steering these conflictual situations into peaceful and sustainable resolutions. An interrogation may arise from this perspective: What are the effects of UN policy efforts on conflicts mediation?

The main objective of this paper is to assess the influence of the UN policy efforts on conflicts mediation worldwide.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Conflict

The concept of conflict has been well-defined by some researchers in several contexts. Etymologically, the concept of conflict is originated from the Latin word 'conflictus' which means an opposition between some entities that have different feelings (Sicard & Rognon, 2015). In the

western context, for Pruitt and Rubin (1986) the construct of conflicts refers to some behaviors that are discordant or contradictory whereas Ross (1993) views conflict as a divergence in perceptions. Goodhand and Hume (2009) have defined conflict as a disagreement resulting from individuals or groups that differ in behavior, beliefs, and values or in needs. The concept of conflict as approached by Goodhand and Hume is limited by the fact that it does not involve the violent aspect of conflict, but it rather shows conflict to be a mere disagreement. In the African context, the concept of conflict has been approached differently by numerous authors. First of all, in Burkina Faso, the concept of conflict has been defined in a religious environment by Nassè et al., (2016) as a misunderstanding between individuals and groups as a response to a given misbehavior that affect a given religious community or group. The concept of conflict as approached by Nassè et al., depicts the social violence aspect of conflict and that is why recommendations have drawn the attention of political authorities and managers to help prevent these conflicts. Second, in Ghana, the concept of conflict has been defined by different authors. For Sulemana (2009) the concept of conflict refers to a disagreement or an antagonism between individuals or different groups of people that is associated with violence. For Awedoba (2009) and for Awedoba (2011) conflict is viewed as a relationship between two or more parties centered on differences, disagreement and some issues of common interest or concern, divergence, incompatibilities. For Awedoba conflicts exist because of the contact between human being in term of politics, culture, and economic concerns. Mahama and Longi (2013) show that conflict is an unavoidable phenomenon that bears disagreements or differences which can result into aggressive clashes. Dery and Diedong (2014) relatively understand conflicts as a domestic violence that involves both adult men and women who are victims of physical, mental, emotional and sexual aggression. For Marfo et al. (2018) the construct of conflict is approached as a disagreement between interreligious individuals, communities or groups centered on needs such as space and different views about the wearing of religious veil. Sabogu, Nassè and Osumanu (2020) define conflict as a form of difference over some selfish interests, or individual greediness, and characterized by aggressive actions or violence. These conflicts are sometimes expressed in a form of social violence against the manufacturers or the sellers of the non-desired products. Conflicts are observable under in a form of products boycotting or products rejection by consumers. Moreover, in the Asian context, particularly in India, Poulouse and Srinivasa (2009) have demonstrated that conflict refers to a high-risk behavior that involves two or more individuals and thus, it is associated with violence or aggressive behavior.

Mediation

Hörner, Morelli, and Squintani (2015) mediation refers to a set of designed mechanism towards a conflict resolution despite facing obstacles or inoperative constraints. For Martynoga, and Sielenzak (2018) conflict mediation refers to a diplomatic way of solving conflicts which is less stressful and where the different belligerents decide the agreement conditions. For the present research mediation is understood to be a process where a third party is required to provide some sustainable solutions to a conflict when the parties to a conflict are not able to resolve their differences by themselves. Thus, steering a conflict to a peaceful and sustainable resolution can be often challenging as it requires some diplomatic skills from the third party.

Link between Governance and Conflict

Governance and conflicts are linked in that some political policies, that are not well thought often lead to both a disaster in the long term. It is evidence that some governments worldwide often fail to construct sustainable policies, programs and projects. Latto (2002) recognises the link between governance and conflicts specifically in a context where there is poverty, inequality and

a lack of transparency in the governance process. Upreti (2004) also emphasizes the link between governance and conflicts by demonstrating that the wild and uncontrolled exploitation of resources is a source of conflictual situations in Nepal.

Social Class Theory

Social class theorists like Karl Marx and Max Weber perceive society as a stratified system of interrelationships that define individuals, their rights, and responsibilities in relation to the position they occupy in the social stratum of that society. Consequently, questions of rights and freedom of choices are determined by the privileges imposed by one social class (Marx, 1886; Shapiro, 1960; Goldstone, 2019; Nassè, Musah, Carbonell, & Marfo, 2021). In reality, the institution of the private property state with the emergence of entrepreneurial capitalism and free market systems has led to a natural imposition of economic class realism that regulates individual taste, purchasing power, purchasing decisions and choices. Rational choice theory requires a vertical relationship between one's social class and the quality and quantity of goods the individual purchases and consumes.

INFLUENCE OF UN POLICY ON CONFLICTS MEDIATION

First of all, in conflicts mediation there are always some different challenges which are linked to the need of some nations to be leaders (Naji and Jawan, 2013; Panizza, 2011). Thus, the UN has always been perceived as an organisation which is a tool of the western countries, with United States of America playing an important leading role. The implication of such powers in conflicts mediation may sometimes turn the mediation towards the interests of USA and its geopolitical allies and avoiding a win win mediation. For instance, a typical case is the war between Israel and Palestine. Secondly, there are also some challenges linked to the apparition of new superpowers (Huntington, 1999) that are challenging the US position of leadership which affects the mediation of conflicts (Russia, China, North Korea). A typical example can be found in the context of the Syrian crisis where US and Russia are challenging each other in the mediations. Moreover, one challenge that is an issue is the time in mediation (Panizza, 2011, p.114). Conflict mediation often takes a very long time in finding the right solution what may lead to the failure of the mediations; and to the enhancement of the crises. The crisis in Lybia is a perfect illustration that time plays a key role in mediations. The mismanagement of time in that crisis lead to the death of Ghadafi and to the expansion of terrorism from Northern Africa to West Africa. Finally, according to the modernization theory the developed countries always want the least developed countries to follow their trends or to adopt their ideas; but according to the dialectical modernization theory (Rudolph & Rudolph, 1967) some ideas from western world may often obstruct progress in other contexts. This is why conflicts mediation should also take into account the cultural aspect in term of cultural differences. For example, the islamic world always has its own cultural aspects and the fact of not taking that contextual analysis into account may lead to the failure of mediation in some islamic conflicts (Nadji & Jawan, 2013).

The challenges are such that one fundamental emergency is to find some possible solutions for an efficient mediation of conflicts. First of all, one solution for an efficient mediation of conflicts is that the third party should always look for a win win situation for the different parties in conflict. As an illustration the conflict in 1985 between Burkina Faso and Mali is solved by a win win mediation that provided a sustainable resolution. Secondly, the conflicts mediation should not be done by the use of some armed forces. It should be done through the use of diplomacy and a clear dialog between the different parties. There is also a need that the third party should be an entity

which is likely related to the UN security council members that has an efficient cooperation ability (Panizza, 2011).

CONCLUSION

Conflicts mediation and resolution is a headic and challenging issue worldwide. The present seeks to understand issues and controversies in conflicts mediation through a review of literature and then to make some proposition.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nowadays, there is no doubt that an international institution such as UN is becoming weak in conflict mediation. Conflict mediation might require diplomatic mediation with particular emphasis in taking the right and strategic actions quickly to provide some sustainable solutions before the conflictual situations reach their pic. In addition, to reactive diplomacy, it is preconised to put some preventive diplomatic mechanism to help identify conflictual situations earlier in order to help in conflict prevention.

FUTURE RESEARCH

It is useful to look at the relationship between governance and conflicts in the West African context.

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What Constitutes a Large Family Today? A Multi-Dimensional Approach

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Abstract:

What constitutes a large family? There is no common definition for the size of the family that can be attributed the status of a large family across European countries. In some countries the legislation defines the criteria for a large family (some examples will be provided), in some other countries there isn't any such legislation. However, there are arguments leading the legislators and policy makers to defend their favourite definition (or it lack) of a large family, stemming from different perspectives. This paper aims at discussing the need for legally defining the status of a large family and, mainly, presenting a multi-dimensional approach for arriving to the appropriate size of a family to be named as a large one. These dimensions, which stem from the legal, demographic, utilitarian, and poverty risk / social inclusion perspectives, have direct implications in policy making in the areas of welfare, family, demography and social affairs in general.

Keywords: large family, demography, social policy

INTRODUCTION

The size of the family, i.e., the number of children to be acquired, is the result of different forces that shape the appropriate context as well as the desire of parents to acquire children. These forces include:

1. religious, cultural and educational attitudes
2. family policies and measures urging or inhibiting the acquisition of children
3. social acceptance and trends
4. situational circumstances
5. Family settings such as remarried, divorced etc. parents
6. existence or lack of prenatal demographic policies etc.

It is certainly true that living conditions, urbanization, the risk of poverty and several other factors such as lack of time and resources, increased cost of living, prolonged education, unemployment, differentiated personal advancement aspirations, postponed decisions for family creation etc. have significantly reduced the number of children finally acquired by European families. However, it is still the case that Europeans would like to acquire more children than they currently have, according to the Eurobarometer. "Britain now has more families with four or more children than at any time since the 1970s. According to the European statistics agency, Eurostat, there's a growing trend for large families – even though the average family size is getting smaller." [Harker, 2015]

Large families (defined as those having three or more children) nowadays account for about 13 percent of the total European population, although their importance for the entire demographic situation at a national and even European level is significant. "In Germany, decomposition analyses show that the decline of large families (parity 3 or more) has a higher impact on the

decrease of the cohort total fertility rates than increasing childlessness does. (Bujard and Sulak, 2016)” (Schneider et al., 2021). Despite their importance, in most European countries there is no explicit legal definition for a large family. Since “family dynamics are driven by changing institutional opportunities and constraints” (Hank and Steinbach, 2019), a large family is defined differently at times. Defining a large family as a family that has more children than the average family nowadays, such a definition would result in two-children’s families to be named as large families, which is obviously not the implicit rationale behind the definition of large families. Therefore, a mere statistical approach is not appropriate; thus, the need for a multi-dimensional approach. This study aims at revealing the true sources of the need to distinguish large families from the others, and how this is better translated into the number of the children of families considered as large.

DEFINITION OF LARGE FAMILIES IN EUROPE

Although used in practice, the concept of large families is neither defined in law in all European countries, nor defined in the same way, whenever it is defined. Some researchers define large families those with 3 children (Bujard et al. 2019), while others those with four and more children (Curran, 2019), (Bradshaw et.al., 2006). As far as countries as concerned, large families are defined by law in, for example, Germany (3+ children), Greece (4+ children), Spain (3+ children but several categories), Latvia (3+ children), Slovakia (4+ children), Cyprus (4+ children), while it is not defined in Hungary, Romania, Italy, etc. Although not defined in law, Hungarian family policies have special provisions for families with 4+ children in some policy areas. In France, the medal of the French family comes in three classes: “bronze for those raising four or five children, silver for parents of six or seven children, and gold for those with eight or more children.”¹

THE LEGAL PERSPECTIVE

In shown above, in most / less countries the criteria for attributing to a family the status of a large one is defined in law. It is interesting that there exist some countries where the definition of a large family is more complex than simply the number of children / size of family:

1. Greece² (Law 3454/2006)
 - A family with four or more children OR
 - A family with three children when one of the parents has died OR
 - A family with three children when one of the parents has a permanent (lifelong) disability of more than 68% by medical committee estimation
 - A family with two children when both parents have died.
2. Spain³
 - with three or more children or
 - two children, one of them with a disability, or disability of one parent;
 - widowers with two children, etc.

There are two categories of large families:

- **General Large Family:** families of up to 4 children (*)
Families of 4 children whose annual income, divided by the number of members of the family unit, does not exceed 75 percent of the IPREM (Public Indicator of Multiple Effects),

¹ Wikipedia “The Médaille de la Famille française”

² www.aspe.gr/information/25-Συχνές%20Ερωτήσεις/627-who-is-identified-as-a-multi-child-person

³ www.familiasnumerosas.org/titulo-de-familia-numerosa/

including extraordinary payments, will be considered as a Special Category Large Family (same as with 5+, see below).

- **Large Family Special Category:** families with 5 or more children.

In both of these cases, the lawmaker has in mind that since large families require special care by the State, they have opted in attributing the status of a large family to families with smaller sizes if there is some disability or lack of a parent in such a family. So, the status of a large family has been used to offer wider social protection and acknowledgement also to families other than those having three or four or more children. However, families where one parent has died are considered as single parent families, who receive a lot of attention in the recent years. In such cases where a family can be supported both as a large family as well as in another capacity, such as a single parent one, or a disability-related one, then law should define each capacity prevails or that the law provisions apply cumulatively. Ideally, a definition that solely relies on the size of a family would be more preferable in the sense that it would be easier to apply cumulatively all the policies that apply to the various family situations and statuses (such as disability, widowhood, financially precarious etc) on top of the special care for a large family due to demographic and family policies.

THE DEMOGRAPHIC APPROACH

From a demography point of view, families with two children are supporting the sustainability of the population size since the parents can be replaced by the two children. Any child beyond the second has the potential of increasing the population. That is why a family with three children can be considered as a large family. However, this argument is fundamentally wrong because it is based on the underlying assumption that all families have two children; therefore, any one in excess increases the population. It is obvious that, from a demographic perspective, the 3rd child of a family replaces the second child that is missing from a family with one child. And the 3rd and 4th children of a large family with four children replace the missing children of a childless couple. Without any complex statistics, it is the fourth child which makes the difference from the demographic perspective, if the aim is to stabilize the size of the population. Therefore, if the definition of large families is going to be used for the design of demographic policies, then measures for supporting families with 1, 2 or 3 children can be included into a general demographic policy and policies for the fourth and subsequent children should be aimed at a special demographic policy that will provide for stronger motives and support of large families with four or more children.

THE STATISTICS APPROACH

"In the EU, 12.6 % of the households with children in 2020 consisted of households with three or more children. Ireland, Finland, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Sweden* and Croatia recorded the highest share of households with three children or more, all above 15.0 %; this was also the case of North Macedonia. In Portugal (6.3 %), Bulgaria (7.4 %), Italy (8.1 %), Spain (9.3 %), Lithuania (9.4 %) and Greece (9.8 %), less than one in ten households with children had three children or more."⁴

Combining this information with total fertility rate in the following table, shows that large families account for a higher percentage of the families in countries with higher total fertility rates and

⁴ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/index.php?title=Household_composition_statistics#Presence_and_number_of_children

certainly higher than the European average. Countries with low TFR and certainly lower than the European average, meaning that these countries do not have effective demographic and family policies, the number of large families is smaller.

1 st group-above 15% of households with three or more children	% Share of households with three children or more	Total Fertility Rate (TFR) ⁵
Ireland		1.80
Finland		1.44
Belgium		1.72
France		1.84
Netherlands		1.67
Sweden		1.84
Croatia		1.42
Europe-average		1.61
2 nd group - less than 1 in 10 households with three or more children		
Greece	9.4%	1.27
Spain	9.3%	1.37
Italy	8.1%	1.30
Bulgaria	7.4%	1.60
Portugal	6.3%	1.33

There is an exception to the observation, since Bulgaria, which is before last in the second group, has higher TFR than Finland and Croatia from the first group, as shown markedly by the red figures. However, this exception does not destroy the general tendency as described above. Unfortunately, there are no data distinguishing large families of three and of four or more children to analyze the issue further.

THE UTILITARIAN APPROACH

This approach tries to identify practical issues that differentiate families with three children from those with four or more.

First of all, the most common family cars have five seats, meaning that a family with three children can be safely transported. A fourth child creates immediately a need for a bigger car with seven seats, meaning an additional cost for the replacement of the car with a new one. Subsidizing the car cost with the same amount of money for families with three or more children is against common sense, since it is a discrimination against families with four or more children. Moreover, toll fees in roads are usually defined in terms of the car length, meaning that a 7- or 9-seat car has to pay more to get through. Such a fee calculation does not take into account that bigger cars are not necessarily professional or commercial cars; large families with four or more children are using bigger and longer cars to transport their family rather than for luxury or professional purposes.

When it comes to housing, significant issues arise for large families. International as well as civil society organizations consider that 25 square meters represents the least decent housing space per person – which is, unfortunately, far from reality for several European countries. Therefore, a family of five persons with three children has to be accommodated in a house of 125 sq.m. Such a house is wrongly considered as luxury living conditions in some countries; when a property tax

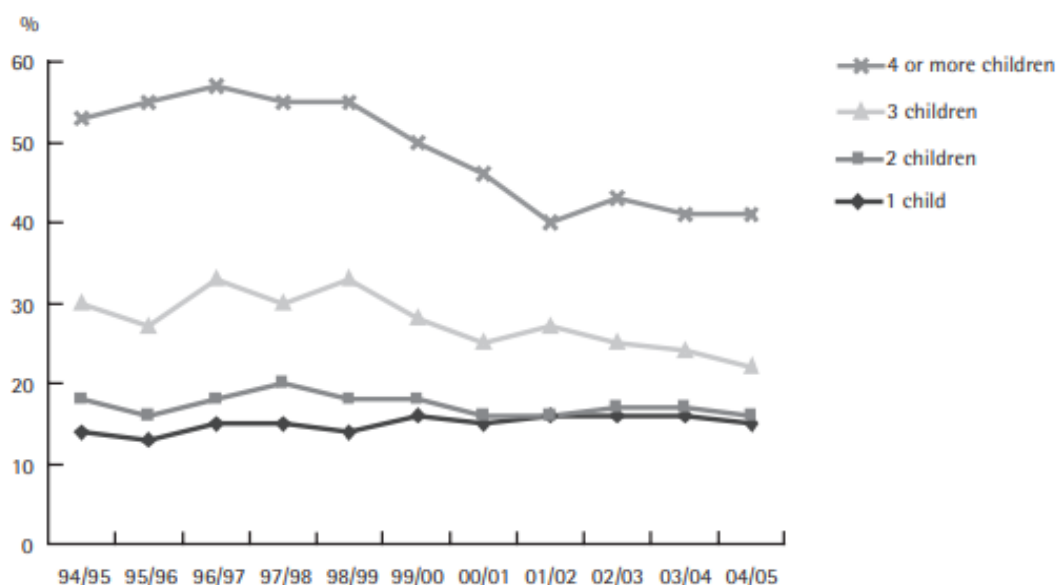
⁵ <http://www.statista.com/statistics/612074/fertility-rates-in-european-countries/>

applies, large families' needs are rarely taken into account, incurring additional cost and, thus, negative discrimination against large families. For families with three children, one could say that a spacious enough two-bedroom house would be adequate; but for four children it is obvious that more is needed; for large families with four or more children, a house with at least three bedrooms is necessary. The utilitarian approach examines practical issues in daily life that differentiate the needs between families with three and those with four children. That is why a policy that subsidizes in some way the cost of a car or a house cannot follow a proportional logic based on the number of children. The acquisition of the fourth child has a jump forward effect on the daily needs of a family; hence, there is a clear line separating large families with three children from those with four or more children.

THE POVERTY RISK / SOCIAL INCLUSION APPROACH

"The UK child poverty rate for large families is among the highest in the OECD. [...] Given the UK government's commitment to the abolition of child poverty by 2020, the report discusses how the tax and benefit system might be adapted in favour of large families so that this target might be achieved." (Bradshaw et al., 2006) In this study, the child poverty diagram according the size of the family is provided, as follows:

Figure 2: Child poverty (% living in households with <60% of contemporary median household income, BHC) rate by number of children in the family



Source: DWP (2006), Table E4.1

Source: www.jrf.org.uk/sites/default/files/jrf/migrated/files/9781861348777.pdf

Looking at the graph, it is clear that the risk of poverty is not proportional to the number of children, because the distance between the lines / curves of the graph are not the same. It is clear that distance between the curve of four or more children is bigger than the distance of the curves between two- and three-children's families. Therefore, from a poverty risk perspective, large families had better be defined as four or more children's families. The same study reveals that in the UK in 2003/04, 51% of children in 4+ child families were poor compared with only 24% in three-children's families. Children in 4+ child families constituted 41% of all poor children. If the policy of reducing poverty risk is to be achieved then attention needs to be paid to larger families.

The problem with the relationship between large families and poverty risk is that large families are not a homogeneous group. According to a study in Germany [Bujard et al., 2019], the following types of large families can be distinguished:

- large families with little education of the parents and precarious economic conditions,
- large middle-class families with good educated parents who, despite higher incomes, have to improvise,
- large families of the elite with high economic resources and the intensive use of household and care services,
- Large families with a migrant background, low educational qualifications and strong religious, Muslim character,
- Large families in rural areas (often with religious characteristics) and with comprehensive living space,
- single mothers with three or more children, and
- Continuation families.

The risk of poverty is different for each of these subsets of large families, so a mean value of risk poverty for all of them may not convey meaningful and actionable information. Instead of looking only at the poverty risk, it is important to acknowledge that large families are vulnerable, regardless of whether they live in poverty, or close to the poverty line, or above of it. Most of them definitely not the large families of the elite, who represent an extremely small percentage of them are vulnerable to macro-economic conditions, especially so in the price of goods and services. The energy crisis which has risen significantly the cost of electric power as well as of petrol, natural gas etc. has shown how vulnerable most large families are to these changes. The size of the family magnifies the cost for the consumption of goods, services, utilities etc. absorbing a big chunk of the family budget unexpectedly. Safety nets that provide special care for large families to utilities (electricity, water, telecoms etc.), services (such as health- and education- related) and goods should always be active, otherwise sudden surges of costs easily derail the large families' financial planning, causing social exclusion.

The vulnerability of large families to changes of their financial context of living and macro-economic environment modify significantly the ability to cope with poverty risk of large families. Therefore, large families should only be treated according to their poverty level and poverty risk, but their vulnerability should be taken into account when designing social, demographic and family policies.

CONCLUSIONS

On behalf of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.g., the Federal Institute for Population Research has dealt with large families. Under the title "Three children and more families from the middle of society", the study comes to the conclusion that "large families are heterogeneous. There is no such thing as "the" large family. On the one hand, the proportion of double academic couples among three-child families has increased, on the other hand, almost 1/4 of couples with 4 or more children do not have a vocational qualification, so that 18% of large families are at risk of poverty and are thus higher than in two-child families with 16%."

Unfortunately, Eurostat and other national statistics authorities collect data for families with 1, 2 and 3 or more children, without distinction between families of three and four children; so there is a lack of more data to analyze whether the 4th child is disproportionately more costly as compared to the previous ones in order to base the argument about the definition of large families

definition on this discontinuity. However, there are other family costs, such as housing, car ownership and usage that indicate significantly higher costs for families of with four children against those with three. After all, definitions matter only when policies are decided to support realistically and objectively a decent way of life of all sizes of families as well as their non-discrimination. In this area, there is a tremendous policy deficit in most European countries, leaving ample room for poverty risk and social exclusion. This is confirmed by statistics showing that large families have higher risk as compared to the rest of the families. Moreover, provisions for large families had better be based on the vulnerability of large families to fluctuations of macro-economic parameters and price levels for utilities, goods and services.

Each country has its own peculiarities in family size, making a global definition of large families non-relevant. Taking into account the dimensions identified in this study, each country takes the decision about the definition of a large family based on the 3rd or the 4th child according to her own situational characteristics aiming to comply with some global specifications:

- Families should be able to have as many children as they want to,
- Families should not be discriminated based on the size of the family, i.e., the number of children,
- Societies need to have a stabilized and non-ageing population; therefore, large families with four and more children are desperately needed,
- Social inclusion must also take into account the special needs of large families, because, “nothing is more unequal than the equality of unequals” (Aristotle).

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Simplicity, Moderation and Sensitization as Preventive Measures to Excessive Alcohol Intake and Intra-Religious Conflicts in the African Context

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Abstract:

The relationship between alcohol consumption and conflicts has been explored in several contexts. Little research has been conducted on the subject in Wa. The purpose of this research is to explore the relationship between alcohol consumption and conflicts where alcohol consumption is on the increase. A quantitative research design is used to collect data from both primary and secondary sources for analysis using sphinx IQ software. Some questionnaires were used for data collection. The results show that alcohol consumption is associated with religious conflicts. It is suggested that consumers should adopt simplicity and moderation habits, while manufacturers and sellers should provide quality products and a sustainable sensitization to reduce alcohol abuse and conflictual situations.

Keywords: Alcohol consumption, religious conflicts, Christians, Muslims, Traditionalists.

INTRODUCTION

Alcohol is used as a beverage in normal daily activities across the world (Bazié, 2011 ; Nassè, 2018). It is also used in some religious activities as well as social functions (Dumbili, 2013 ; Porter, 2013 ; Nassè et al., 2019). In fact the alcohol industry has become one of the largest sectors of production in the world. However, research has shown that alcohol consumption has diverse effects on consumers, including conflicts. Research on alcohol consumption and conflicts has been done in many parts of the world including Africa (Valentine et al., 2010 ; Amankwaa et al., 2012 ; Dery & Diedong, 2014 ; Nassè et al. 2016). Ghana is one of the most alcohol consuming country in the West African region, after Nigeria and Ivory Coast (Ritchie & Roser, 2020). This is an indication that alcohol plays a very important role in the lives of the people in Ghana. While alcohol consumption may be widespread, certain factors such as culture, distance and time might moderate its prevalence rate in society (Adoma & Darko, 2020). Much of the literature on the effects of alcohol is dedicated to other effects of the substance. However, there is emerging literature that confirms some relationship between alcohol consumption and violent conflicts in intimate relationships (Murphy et al., 2005, Dery & Diedong 2014). There is not much work done on alcohol consumption and conflicts in the context of Wa. In the same vein, no work has concurrently shown one's level of alcohol consumption on religious conflicts. In addition, there is no a clear policy by governmental authorities, sellers and manufacturer that helps to minimize or eradicate alcohol related conflicts in the religious scenery. This research is to fill these research gaps.

Thus, the main objective of this research is to examine the association between alcohol consumption and religious conflicts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Economic Theory of Consumption

These theorists argument state that consumers purachase decisions, and consumption decisions rely on some economic criteria (Ouédraogo, 2007), Kitchathorn (2009), Nassè (2019). Thus, some economic criteria such as the purchasing power, the consumer income also take into consideration that some emotional factors may affect consumption. In reality, the institution of the private property state with the emergence of entrepreneurial capitalism and free market systems has led to a natural imposition of economic class realism that regulates individual taste, purchasing power, purchasing decisions and choices.

The Research Concepts

The research aims to define the concepts that are in line with the topic.

The Concept of Conflict

The concept of conflict has been defined by several authors. In the western context, Goodhand and Hume (2009) have defined conflict as a disagreement resulting from individuals or groups that differ in behavior, beliefs, and values or in needs. The concept of conflict as approached by Goodhand and Hume is limited by the fact that it does not involve the violent aspect of conflict, but it rather shows conflict to be a mere disagreement. In the African context, Nasse et al. (2016) have approached the concept of conflict in a religious environment, as a misunderstanding between individuals and groups due to a given misbehavior that affect a given religious community or group. The concept of conflict as approached by Nasse et al. (2016) depicts the social violence aspect of conflict and that is why recommendations have drawn the attention of political authorities and managers to help prevent these conflicts. In Ghana, Awedoba (2012) has defined the concept of conflict as a relationship between two or more parties centered on differences, disagreement and some issues of common interest or concern.

Alcohol Consumption

Alcohol consumption problems are a global phenomenon, and its nature is very complex. The predisposition to alcohol abuse differs significantly from one distinct person to another and from one country to another. Alcohol consumption is contingent on the accessibility of alcohol, the nation's guidelines related to alcohol, the country's social and cultural background, religious tradition and its economics situation (Chen, & Yin, 2008).

The pervasiveness of alcohol dependency also differs from one ethnic or traditional group to another (Chen, & Yin, 2008). For instance, in Ghana some ethnic groups and religious groups consume alcohol whilst others do not consume it. It is clear that natural disasters, religious conflicts, ethnic conflicts as well as political disputes do have made it impossible for some people to assess some opportunities in many countries.

For Amankwaa, Reed, and Owens (2012), alcohol consumption is the intake of industrial alcoholic beverages. In Africa and particularly in West Africa, it is agreed by the research of Nassè et al. (2016) that the concept of alcohol consumption is also the drinking of industrial alcoholic drinks. Still, in the context of Burkina Faso, Bazié (2011) has approached the concept of alcohol consumption to be the drinking of traditional alcoholic beverages, in his study on understanding communication in the traditional environment, and the sociocultural characteristics of different ethnic groups.

Research Hypotheses

From the literature review above the alternative hypothesis and the null hypothesis have been constructed as follows :

- **H_a** : There is a relationship between alcohol consumption and religious conflicts.
- **H_o** : There is not a relationship between alcohol consumption and religious conflicts.

Research Model

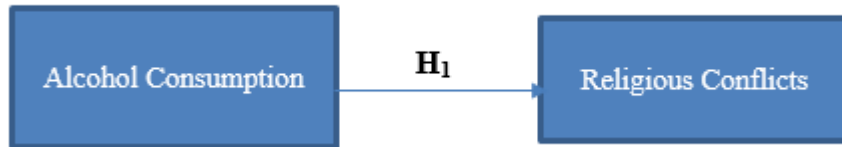


Figure 1-Research Model
(Source: adapted from Nassè, 2019)

MATERIALS AND METHOD

Epistemological Posture

This is quantitative research focused on postpositivist posture.

Research Procedures

The quantitative sampling strategy consists of using a random sampling technique combined with the snowballing technique due to a lack of time and an insufficiency of resources. The questionnaire is pre-tested with the consumers of alcoholic beverages. This first test is done on a sample of 10 respondents. The pre-test results are used to draft a final version of the questionnaire. The designed questionnaire is administered again to the consumers.

This sample is a subset of the studied population. To set the sample size, the following mathematic formula is used: $n = (p) (1-p) / (e / Z)^2$, where p represents the selected proportion of an attribute, for example gender. Here, assuming 50-50 female to male ratio, $p=0.50$ or 50%; e represents the level of precision or accuracy set for this research, here 5%, and Z is the number related to the degree of confidence, and in this case $Z=1.96$ or 95% confidence (Ganassali, 2009: 51; Hejase and Hejase, 2013: 231). Then, in this case, the formula becomes: $n = (0.5 \times (1-0.5)) / (e / 1.96)^2 = 0.25 / (e / 1.96)^2$.

The number of people to interview for a maximum error of 6.0%, then is $n = 0.25 / (0.06 / 1.96)^2 = 267$ people. A sample of 267 people is enough for a 6-point error estimate. Once the sample is determined, data collection is done through a questionnaire on a paper and it is filled by alcohol consumers. The total number of respondents is 308. Research context. The country where the research is conducted is Ghana. The research area includes the city of Wa.

Research Participants

Participants are Christian, Muslim, and Traditional who consume alcohol, and who have consumed alcohol for at least two years. They are considered using the following criteria that include age, sex, religion, educational level, marital status, occupation, and social class. First, the age of participants ranges from 18 to 45 years old and above. Second, the gender of the

participants includes men and women. Third, the educational level of participants includes illiterates, and those with primary school, secondary school or university levels.

Research Context

The research is carried out in the main regional city of Upper West that is Wa. The research period is two and half years. It has started before the covid-19 crisis, and as it has continued during the covid-19 crisis.

Data Analysis

In this research, the quantitative data is analysed using the quantitative version of Sphinx IQ. The quantitative data is computed into the quantitative version of Sphinx IQ and then the statistical data such as descriptive statistics and correlations are generated.

Ethical Implications

In this research, there are some ethical measures to be taken into account as what is normal to be considered for a scientific research (Creswell, 2009). In this research in order to increase participation, respondents are not requested to give their names, and information given by the respondents is kept confidential (Nassè, 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.

The statistical data about the different respondents is summarized in Table 1

Table 1: Statistical data of the respondents

Religious affiliation	Number of respondents	Percentage
Christians	224	72.7%
Muslims	12	3.9%
Traditionalists	72	23.4%
Total	308	100%

Alcohol Consumption and Religious Conflicts

Table 2: Relationships between 'Alcohol consumption' and 'Religious conflicts'

Variable crossing	Results
"Alcohol consumption" and "Religious conflicts"	$p = < 0.01$; 108.67 ; dof = 11. The relationship is very significant.

(Source : fieldwork, 2019)

- H_a : There is an association between alcohol consumption and religious conflicts.
- H_o : There is not an association between alcohol consumption and religious conflicts.

For the hypothesis testing, the correlation between the variable 'Alcohol consumption' and 'Religious conflicts' is the method used. The p-value $p = < 0.01$, the Chi-square value $\chi^2 = 108.67$, and the degree of freedom $dof = 11$ are found to be significant (as indicated on the above Table 1). Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is confirmed.

- H_a : There is an association between alcohol consumption and religious conflicts.

DICUSSION OF THE RESULTS

Alcohol Consumption and Religious Conflicts

Some researchers underline in their studies the relationships between alcohol consumption and religious conflicts in different context (Murphy & al., 2005; Nassè, 2019; Nassè, Ouédraogo & Diop, 2016) with influence of some factors such as extreme poverty, business relationships, culture with Christian respondents. The present research depicts the same relationship between alcohol consumption and religious conflicts in the Ghanaian context with a particular concern on Christians, Muslims and Animists. Observation has shown that in the Ghanaian context the weight of Christian beliefs and Islamic beliefs affect both tradition and the consumption of alcohol. These religious beliefs are strengthened by some strong moral values that are strongly inculcated through education in school (Nassè, 2020).

The covid-19 crisis has some sensitive effects on consumption (Davis, 2021), on alcohol consumption and thus, on religious conflicts. The observation is that with crisis some consumers have been in desperation and they drink a lot of alcohol to forget their daily challenges what enhance conflictual situations and especially household conflicts and religious conflicts.

CONCLUSION

The present research shows that alcohol consumption influences religious conflicts in a particular context.

Contributions

There are some conceptual contributions that enrich the literature as the constructs of alcohol consumption and religious conflicts are redefined in a specific context. In terms of theoretical contributions, it also enriches the cultural theories on consumption in a new context, where there is a combination of multiple factors that moderate alcohol consumption.

In terms of managerial contributions, it is imperative for manufacturers to have a responsible advertising policy towards alcohol consumers by recommending moderation and simplicity in their consumption habits. Manufacturers and sellers should provide quality products to consumers, in addition to sustainable and responsible sensitization campaigns that takes into account their health concern. It is clear that consumers that are healthy can still purchase and consume alcohol. However, consumers with health-related problems might not purchase and might not consume alcohol beverages what could reduce income for manufacturers. It is also good for religious leaders to sensitize consumers to have responsible and ethical consumption habits.

FUTURE RESEARCH

Research observations have shown that there is less ethical concern in terms of consumption, thus, it is necessary to investigate ethical issues and consumption habits in the West African context

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OTHER STATISTICAL DETAILS

Table 2: Respondents' age

Age	Number of respondents	Percentage
10 - 25 years old	83	26.9%
26-35 years old	129	41.9%
36- 45 years old	84	27.3%
46- and above	12	3.9%
Total	308	100%

(Source : fieldwork, 2019)

Table 3: Respondents' profession

Profession	Number of respondents	Percentage
Public employee	06	1.9%
Private employee	230	74.7%
unemployed	72	23.4%
Total	308	100%

(Source : fieldwork, 2019)

Table 4: Respondents' social status

Social status	Number of respondents	Percentage
Very poor	6	1.9%
Poor	147	47.7%
Rich	149	48.4%
Very rich	6	1.9%
Total	308	100%

(Source : fieldwork, 2019)

Table 5: Respondents' gender

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage
Female	29	09.4%
Male	279	90.6%
Total	308	100%

(Source : fieldwork, 2019)

Table 6: Respondents' marital status

Marital status	Number of respondents	Percentage
Single	141	45.8%
Engaged	68	22.1%
Married	93	30.2%
Divorced	06	1.9%
Total	308	100%

(Source : fieldwork, 2019)

Table 5: Respondents' level of education

Level of education	Number of respondents	Percentage
Illiterate	79	25.6%
Primary school	60	19.5%
Secondary school	95	30.8%
University	74	24%
Total	308	100%

(Source : fieldwork, 2019)

Table 6: Respondents' level of education

Residence	Number of respondents	Percentage
Wa town	302	98.1%
Other areas	06	1.9%
Total	308	100%

(Source : fieldwork, 2019)

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