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The HIPC initiative and its impact on health and education expenditures

*Guido Tubaldi**

ABSTRACT: In 1996 the IMF and World Bank launched the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. The initiative provided debt relief to all those countries characterized by high levels of debt and poor economic outcomes. This study aims to establish whether the debt cut freed up resources for expenditures in health and education. The author runs a regression of health and education expenditures on debt and on some institutional variables, which are included to control for the quality of institutions. Results show that these countries do not suffer from debt overhang since there is little correlation between debt — either as outstanding debt or as debt service — and spending in health and education. On the other hand, improvements in institutional quality increase the amount of funding allocated to these sectors, proving that institutions play a major role for the development of these poor countries.

Keywords: Debt Relief, HIPC, IMF, Governance, Corruption, Development Spending.

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Introduction

In recent years a debate over public debt in Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPCs)¹ and the right of creditors to collect it has divided public opinion. One side sees the external debt of Third World countries as odious since it imposes a burden on their potential development and economic growth, while the other believes that high levels of debt are just symptoms of bad policies and ineffective institutions ruling in the country. In economic terms we are witnessing a dispute between economists who support the debt overhang theory and believe debt is a major obstacle for the reduction of poverty and development in HIPCs,² and economists who attribute poor economic outcomes to the “absence of functional economic institutions that provide the foundation for profitable investments and growth.”³

According to Krugman if a debtor is at the stage where he will struggle to repay his debt then the creditor will have two choices: he can either finance the debt through more lending in hope that the country will repay it in the end, or he can forgive part of the debt

1 Note that “HIPCs” is hereby used to refer to the countries taking part in the initiative and “HIPC” to refer to the initiative itself.

2 Augustin Kwasi Fosu, “Implications of the External Debt-Servicing Constraint for Public Health Expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Oxford Development Studies* 36, no. 4 (2008): 363–77.

3 Serkan Arslanalp and Peter Blair Henry, “Debt Relief,” *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20, no. 1 (Winter, 2016): 207-220.

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so that it will be easier for the country to borrow money which can then be reinvested to generate profit to repay the debt.⁴ Both choices have a trade-off because of the moral hazard argument: there is no guarantee that the country will attempt to reduce existing levels of debt, or prevent new debt from reaching previous levels.⁵

When the IMF, World Bank, and African Development Fund launched both the HIPC initiative in 1996 and the complementary Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative (MDRI)⁶ in 2005 as debt relief initiatives for the cancellation of concessional debt owed by HIPCs (Figure 1), they did not consider the moral hazard involved. This debt relief program aimed to foster growth, generate debt sustainability in the long run and free up resources for spending in development (education and health).

While debt sustainability and the link between debt burden and growth have been thoroughly analyzed, relatively little empirical research has been conducted to address the correlation between debt, either as outstanding debt or as debt service, and expenditure in development.

I will use the latest data released by the IMF and the World Bank on the results achieved by the HIPC and MDRI initiatives to estimate any potential correlation between debt and development expenditure (Figure 2) in order to refute or validate the criticisms leveled at the initiatives on robust empirical grounds. It may be the case that the increase of spending in health and education is not correlated to the cut of debt but to an improvement in the institutional environment, which multilateral institutions demand in return for the debt cut. The contribution of my paper comes from including not only economic variables but also “institutional variables” when analysing the debt relief initiative. I will regress expenditure in health (or education) on both macroeconomic variables and variables such as corruption and democratic accountability. While the literature review will openly show that institutions play a major role when it comes to public expenditure, no study has empirically estimated the economic impact of these “institutional variables” in the context of debt relief. My study tries to fill this gap. I am also attempting to get the best fitting model (according to specific statistical techniques) in the context of the initiative, so that to put the basis, i.e. identify the variables, for future studies focused on the relation between debt and institutions.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. The introduction provides an overview on the HIPC initiative. The following section is a literature review on the topic, covering the main studies carried out to analyse whether this debt relief programme has achieved its goals or not. It will also present the views of economists on the role of debt overhang

4 Paul Krugman, “Financing vs. Forgiving a Debt Overhang,” *Journal of Development Economics* 29, no. 3 (1988): 253–68.

5 Rebecca Nelson, “Moral Hazard, Sovereign Default, and Debt Relief,” 2008.

6 The HIPC Initiative entailed coordinated action by multilateral organizations and governments to reduce to sustainable levels the external debt burdens of the most heavily indebted poor countries. The MDRI went further by providing full debt relief to free up additional resources to help these countries reach the Millennium Development Goals.

and the role of institutions related to the problem of debt and budget decisions. The third section will provide a framework to understand how governments allocate resources to debt and education. In the fourth section I will describe the dataset, specify the empirical model and outline the estimation method used. In the fifth section I will provide the reader with results. Finally, in the concluding section I will depict the conclusions of my research, looking at possible drawbacks which future studies will need to deal with.

HIPC Initiative

For decades, concessional lending has been a fundamental element of international support for underdeveloped countries who were not sufficiently creditworthy to attract commercial lending. Many countries built up large amounts of external public debt because of both global and domestic factors. Although concessional lending is characterized by lower interest rates and longer repayment periods than typical market loans, these countries have struggled to make repayments on their debt and have increased their stock to extremely high levels. Their ratios of net present value of external debt to GDP or to exports (most informative measures on the capacity of a country to repay its foreign debt) have dramatically increased during the 1980s and 1990s (Figure 3).

This incredibly large debt burden, combined with the cuts imposed on HIPC government's budget by the Bretton Woods Institutions in exchange for further loans, resulted in a decrease of expenditure in education and health.⁷ Debt service payments accounted for a high percentage of the budget spending preventing the financing of poverty reduction efforts. For example, in countries such as Ethiopia debt service payments accounted for 11% of the national GDP, which is equivalent to the spending on poverty reduction policies (Data from the IMF report on HIPC).

Once it became clear that these countries would be unable to repay their huge debts the IMF and World Bank, in the context of meeting the Millennium Development Goals⁸ (MDG), launched the HIPC initiative in 1996. In 1999 they lowered the initial conditions in order to allow more countries to be eligible to get debt relief. Originally the initiative aimed to cover 41 countries (mainly African) and to cut around \$120 billion of outstanding debt. As previously stated, there were three main targets: ensuring long term fiscal sustainability, fostering growth and freeing up resources for development expenditure. A country is considered to be eligible for debt relief if it meets the following conditions:

- It received concessional lending from the International Development association
- Debt burden indicators were above the following thresholds:⁹

7 Eduardo Lora and Mauricio Olivera, "Public Debt and Social Expenditure: Friends or Foes?" *Emerging Markets Review* 8, no. 4 (2007): 299–310.

8 The United Nations Millennium Development Goals are eight goals that all 189 UN Member States have agreed to try to achieve by the year 2015. The United Nations Millennium Declaration, signed in September 2000 commits world leaders to combat poverty, hunger, disease, illiteracy, environmental degradation, and discrimination against women.

9 These are the new thresholds established in 1999, after the previous ones were criticized for being not

- Export: 150% for the ratio of net present value (NPV) of outstanding debt over export
- Revenues: 250% for the ratio of NPV of outstanding debt over revenue
- It has a track record of reform and developed a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) program

Eligible countries can then reach the Decision Point (DP). At this point countries are asked to implement reforms included in both the PRSP and the PRGF, following the directives of the IMF. The peculiarity of these reforms is that they must have short term results. Bretton Woods institutions meet regularly in order to assess whether a country has met the requirements to step forward to the completion point (CP) at which stage the country receives debt relief. The required reforms include: introduction of demand restraints (controlling money supply and government deficit), exchange rate adjustments, liberalization of foreign trade and payments, development of private sector initiatives, and improvement of governance.

The success of the HIPC initiative, according to Scott and Rhodd¹⁰, relies on both the increased flexibility of the conditions and on the high opportunity cost (not having any cancellation of the outstanding debt) faced by HIPCs in case they refuse to take part in the initiative. Once a country has maintained macroeconomic stability, carried out structural reforms and met the economic targets, it can reach the last stage of the HIPC initiative and be entitled to complete debt forgiveness.

Literature review

This paper relates to the previous literature covering the relationship between sovereign debt, debt relief and government expenditure. I have expanded it to the wider literature about relations between public external debt and fiscal policy, from which we can infer some important conclusions on why the *debt overhang theory* and *liquidity constraints* may or may not affect spending in health and education. Since my paper goes beyond the simple relationship between debt and expenditure and also assesses the importance of institutions in the national budgetary decision, my literature review analyses the role they play in fiscal policy decisions.

Economic variables affecting expenditures in health and education

Debt overhang is defined by Krugman as “the presence of an existing, inherited debt sufficiently large that creditors do not expect with confidence to be fully repaid [...] because the expected present value of potential future resources transfer is less than its

applicable to most of the countries that would have benefitted from the initiative.

10 Gerald Scott and Rupert Rhodd, “Will Welfare in Sub-Saharan African Countries Increase After Debt Cancellation?” *Asian-African Journal of Economics and Econometrics* 11, no. 1 (2001): 43–54.

debt.”¹¹ Excessive debt may discourage governments to implement policy reforms since the perceived benefit from these improvements will go to debt service rather than to the poor through public service programmes. As Bird and Milne¹² argued, a quantitatively relevant stock of debt acts as a disincentive to economic reforms: the marginal benefit from an improvement in the economic situation would benefit creditors more than the country itself. Spending in education and health, where the outcomes are only visible in the medium to long term, are therefore highly discouraged.

At what level the outstanding stock of debt is going to generate a debt overhang problem is a disputed topic. Nguyen, Clements, and Bathacharya¹³ studied a database of 100 countries and found that the problem arises when the debt-GDP ratio is at 20%. Further research undertaken by Pattillo, Poirson and Ricci¹⁴ stated that the threshold changes across countries depending on their level of institutions and the quantity of aid received. Those countries that rely on bad policies and institutions have lower thresholds. It could be important to consider for our dataset, where countries score really low when it comes to institutional quality.

Chauvin and Kraay¹⁵ published the first real comprehensive evaluation of the effect of the HIPC initiative on expenditure in poverty reduction policies. Their paper is unique since in its regression it included an independent variable measuring the quantity of debt relieved, finding that there is no statistically significant correlation between debt relief and the share of education and health spending. The authors suggested that this may be due to the poor economic and institutional environment which prevented these countries from attaining all the benefits from the initiative. They do not exclude that the dataset available may affect their conclusions.

Most other studies on this topic have not used a variable for the amount of debt relief but simply correlated the amount of spending in education and health with the amount of debt, both as outstanding debt and debt service. Cassimon and Vaessen¹⁶ believe that debt service repayments are a more direct indicator of the resources soaked up by external obligations; if these countries spent so little in health and education it is only because of the interest paid on their debt. Fosu¹⁷ uses a database for African countries to study the

11 Krugman, “Financing vs. Forgiving a Debt Overhang.”

12 Graham Bird and Alistair Milne, “Debt Relief for Low Income Countries: Is It Effective and Efficient?” *The World Economy* 26, no. 1 (2003): 43–59.

13 Toan Quoc Nguyen, Benedict J. Clements, and Rina Bhattacharya, “External debt, public investment, and growth in low-income countries,” No. 3-249, International Monetary Fund, 2003.

14 Catherine Pattillo, Helene Poirson, and Luca Ricci, “External Debt and Growth,” Working paper. IMF, 2002, 69.

15 Nicolas Depetris Chauvin and Aart Kraay, “What Has 100 Billion Dollars Worth of Debt Relief Done for Low-Income Countries?” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2005.

16 Danny Cassimon and Bjorn Van Campenhout, “Aid Effectiveness, Debt Relief and Public Finance Response: Evidence from a Panel of HIPC Countries,” *Review of World Economics* 143, no. 4 (2007): 742-63.

17 Fosu, “Implications of the External Debt-servicing Constraint for Public Health Expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

correlation between debt service and public spending in the social sector between 1974-1995 (before the HIPC initiative took place). Their results show how the debt service burden affects the allocation of resources in health and education both more negatively and significantly than the size of public investment. In papers that mainly focused on the importance of international aid on spending decisions Cashel-Cordo and Craig¹⁸ and Outtara included the variable debt service in their regression and found that it is negatively correlated with spending in education and health even though the result is not statistically significant in Outtara.¹⁹

Beyond debt service repayment, the amount of outstanding debt can also influence the spending decision. Following Heller's idea of fiscal space: debt relief policy creates *fiscal space* since governments have more room to manoeuvre "for a desired purpose without any prejudice to the sustainability of a government's fiscal position." For this reason, other studies have included both debt service and amount of outstanding debt as explanatory variables to understand the composition of public expenditure.²⁰ Lora and Olivera looking at social expenditure in South America between 1985 and 2003, found that only the outstanding amount of debt influenced expenditures in poverty reduction policies. Supporting fiscal space theory, they asserted that outstanding debt reduces "the appetite for further indebtedness" and therefore, debt forgiveness or even more efficiently (for the debtor) debt default, increases social expenditures.²¹

Temah adopted a similar approach which looked at the impact of both outstanding debt relieved and debt service on the amount of spending in health, finding both valuables to be statistically significant. The peculiarity of the paper is that the regression included the dummy variable "decision point". It captured the effect of being at the stage where the country is implementing the policies agreed with international institutions on public expenditures. The author interpreted its coefficient as the effect that being under the economic control of international institutions had on fiscal decisions.²² International institutions somehow generate responsibility and put "economic strings" on the government.²³

The HIPC initiative followed the success achieved by the Brady plan in solving the Latin American debt crisis of the 1980s. Direct evidence on Latin American countries shows that debt service payments, more than the outstanding debt itself, reduces the

18 Peter Cashel-Cordo and Steven G. Craig, "The Public Sector Impact of International Resource Transfers," *Journal of Development Economics* 32, no. 1 (1990): 17-42.

19 Bazoumana Ouattara, "Aid, Debt and Fiscal Policies in Senegal," *Journal of International Development* 18, no. 8 (2006).

20 Peter S. Heller, "Understanding Fiscal Space," Working paper. IMF, 2005.

21 Eduardo Lora and Mauricio Olivera, "Public Debt and Social Expenditure: Friends or Foes?"

22 Tsafack Temah, *Does Debt Relief Increase Public Health Expenditure? Evidence from Sub-Saharan African HIPCs*, UN Economic Commission for Africa, 2009

23 Jubilee Debt Campaign UK, "Jubilee Debt Campaign UK," Accessed March 03, 2016, <https://jubileedebt.org.uk/>.

amount of investment and spending by the government²⁴. Kaminsky and Pereyra were the first to explain the debt crisis not only by debt overhang theory due to harsher conditions of debt financing, but also by bad policies and political mistakes committed by national governments. For the first time — as far as I am aware- institutions were considered an important factor in the context of debt relief.²⁵

In order to solve the debt crisis in South America different measures were implemented but only the Brady Plan, a debt relief program implemented by the American government, managed to put an end to the debt problem. Its success, combined with both the pressure to achieve the MDGs and the commonly supported idea that “*No civilised country should try to collect the debts of people that are dying of hunger and disease and poverty,*” led to the implementation of the HIPC initiative.²⁶ International institutions hoped that by reducing the debt burden which according to Sachs led these countries into the poverty trap, resources would be freed up to increase spending in health and education.²⁷

The possibility of looking at the South American debt crisis as a benchmark for what happened in HIPCs depends on whether we accept that *debt overhang* existed in HIPCs. Henry and Arslanalp refute the presence of the *debt overhang* problem arguing that huge outstanding debt is a symptom of bad institutions rather than the cause of poor economic outcomes such as low expenditure in education and health. They are fully convinced that there are no economic conditions that would allow the debt relief to work for HIPCs: “*Debt relief worked for the Brady countries. If all else were equal, it might be reasonable to expect debt relief efforts to produce similar results. The problem is that all else is not equal.*”²⁸ First, there is evidence that *net resource transfer* (NRT)²⁹ for HIPCs has always been in excess, contrary to what happened for South American countries during the 1980s³⁰. Second, HIPCs lack potential domestic and foreign investors towards which a debt relief initiative would be more efficient and worthy by leading them to invest in the country. Third, HIPCs do not seem to be expected to repay their debt, since the international community will continue to provide them with fresh assistance.³¹

24 Daniel Cohen, “The Sustainability of African Debt,” *Policy Research Working Papers*, 1999.

25 Graciela L. Kaminsky and Alfredo Pereira, “The Debt Crisis: Lessons of the 1980s for the 1990s,” *Journal of Development Economics* 50, no. 1 (1996): 1-24.

26 Jeffrey Sachs, in an interview with the Financial Times in 2004; Ricci Cordella, and Ruiz-Arranz, “Debt Overhang or Debt Irrelevance?” *IMF Staff Papers* 57, no. 1 (2009): 1-24

27 Jeffrey Sachs, “Resolving the Debt Crisis of Low-Income Countries,” *Brookings Papers on Economic Activity* 2002, no. 1 (2002): 257-86.

28 Arslanalp and Henry, “Debt Relief.”

29 NRT is simply the annual new inflow of capital minus the gross capital outflows and we can consider it as a measure of the available liquidity. For further details, look at: Arslanalp and Henry, “Debt Relief.”

30 Cordella and Ruiz-Arranz, “Debt Overhang or Debt Irrelevance?”

31 Catherine A. Pattillo, Helene Poirson Ward, and Luca A. Ricci, *External Debt and Growth*. Working paper, IMF, 2002, 69.

Institutional variables affecting expenditures in health and education

My intention is to expand on the research of Chaving and Kraay,³² Loru and Olivera,³³ Fosu³⁴ and Temah³⁵ by taking into account the role of institutions in the budgetary decision in the context of debt relief. As I previously wrote, Henry and Arslanalp believe that the HIPC's fail to meet their goals because of inadequate institutions that are not able to grasp the benefits coming from the initiative:³⁶ "a minimum level of institutional quality is required to reap the benefits coming from debt relief."³⁷ This idea found strong support in the research carried out by Mauro which concluded that corruption reduces the share of education spending³⁸. The same result was achieved by De La Croix and Delavallade who found that countries characterized by high levels of corruption tend to invest more in physical capital investments and housing than in health and education.³⁹ On the other hand, scholars the idea that the presence of corruption up to a certain level is a "necessary grease to lubricate the stiff wheels of rigid government."⁴⁰

Snyder and Yackovlev showed how high levels of democracy facilitate the growth of development spending.⁴¹ Similarly, Kraay and Nehru stated that "improvements in the policy and institutional environment can lower the likelihood of debt distress for any given level of debt burden."⁴² The same reasons induced Easterly to state that debt relief is ineffective for countries where the government showed "high discount-rate behaviour"; once debt will be forgiven, the country reacquires the capacity to borrow and the government recreates the same debt.⁴³ Following debt relief, the debtor may take advantage of the new positive situation to finance excessive expenditures with external debt with the expectation that multilateral institutions will undertake future debt cancellations. Debt relief acts as an incentive for the continuation of the bad policies that have led the countries to accumulate such high levels of debt, in most of the cases to the

32 Chauvin and Kraay, "What Has 100 Billion Dollars Worth of Debt Relief Done for Low-Income Countries?"

33 Eduardo Lora and Mauricio Olivera, "Public Debt and Social Expenditure: Friends or Foes?"

34 Fosu, "Implications of the External Debt-servicing Constraint for Public Health Expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa."

35 Temah, *Does Debt Relief Increase Public Health Expenditure?*

36 Arslanalp and Henry. "Debt Relief." 2006.

37 Elizabeth Asiedu, "Debt Relief and Institutional Reform: A Focus on Heavily Indebted Poor Countries," *The Quarterly Review of Economics and Finance* 43, no. 4 (2003): 614-26.

38 Paolo Mauro, "Corruption and the Composition of Government Expenditure," *Journal of Public Economics* 69, no. 2 (1998): 263-79.

39 David De la Croix and Clara Delavallade, "Growth, Public Investment and Corruption with failing Institutions," *Economics of Governance* 10, no. 3 (2008): 187-219.

40 Elisa Gamberoni, et al., "Is Corruption Efficiency-Enhancing? A Case Study of Nine Central and Eastern European Countries," *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 2016.

41 James Snyder and Irene Yackovlev, *Political and Economic Determinants of Changes in Government Spending on Social Protection Programs*, Master's thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2000.

42 Aart Kraay and Vikram Nehru. "When Is External Debt Sustainable?" *The World Bank Economic Review* 20, no. 3 (2006): 341-65.

43 William Easterly, "How Did Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Become Heavily Indebted? Reviewing Two Decades of Debt Relief," *World Development* 30, no. 10 (2002): 1677-696.

benefit of the elites and detriment of the population.⁴⁴ Moreover, as previously explained, better debt ratios coming from debt forgiveness are likely to increase the amount of money available⁴⁵ which, in the presence of inefficient or corrupt institutions, is not going to benefit the population. For this reason, institutions play a pivotal role as without wise, forward looking and efficient institutions, it is likely that this money is not going to increase the amount of spending in health and education. Chauvin and Kraay found that debt relief generates a bigger impact in countries with good institutions, although their study did not include any variable controlling for the level of corruption or the quality of political institutions⁴⁶. This argument led Collier to support the idea of *governance conditionality* where the amount of debt forgiven is conditional upon an improvement in institutional quality⁴⁷. It is partially what happened in the HIPC initiative where, at least at the decision point, countries had to follow the guidelines given to them by multilateral institutions. This *governance conditionality* was not immune from criticism coming from NGOs, activists and economists such as Stiglitz, who claimed that these developing countries were “blackmailed” by multilateral institutions as they gave up their sovereignty in exchange for debt forgiveness.⁴⁸

Theoretical framework

In this section I am going to outline the theoretical model describing how debt relief affects social spending in health and education. This model will lay the ground for the specification of the empirical framework which I will use to analyze the specific HIPC case. I am taking the work done by previous researchers, and complementing it with further theory which is relevant to my study.

Government allocation of resources among sectors

I am using the theoretical model developed by Fosu which – as far as I know – is the most comprehensive analysis on spending decisions in African countries.⁴⁹ This model analyses the allocation of resources among sectors subject to the government’s budget constraints. I am also developing it by analysing how variables affect each other, as in the case of debt service on aid.

44 Easterly. “How Did Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Become Heavily Indebted? Reviewing Two Decades of Debt Relief.”

45 Moral hazard issues would rise also among creditors; private investors in one country’s debt would be more and more willing to lend if they know that in whichever situation, multilateral institutions would step in and guarantee that the country is not going to default.

46 Chauvin and Kraay. “What Has 100 Billion Dollars Worth of Debt Relief Done for Low-Income Countries?”

47 Paul Collier, “Assisting Africa to Achieve Decisive Change,” *Swedish Economic Policy Review* 13 (2006): 169-97.

48 Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents*, (London: Penguin Books), 2002.

49 Fosu, “Implications of the External Debt-servicing Constraint for Public Health Expenditure in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

The government allocates its resources across J different sectors so that citizens can get services and maximize a social welfare utility function⁵⁰ $U(G_1, G_2, \dots, G_J)$. By maximizing the social utility function the government is also assumed to maximize the likelihood of remaining in power.

In this context we have a government maximizing the following social welfare quasi-concave utility function, by choosing how much to allocate among J different sectors.

$$(1) \quad U(G_1, G_2, \dots, G_j)$$

Subject to the government's budget constraints that explicitly states that government spending is equal to government revenues (R)

$$(2) \quad \sum_{i=1}^j G_i = R = T + A + N - D$$

Where T is tax revenue, A is aid, N is non-tax revenue and D is debt service repayments. All of these variables are assumed to be exogenously given. For HIPC's revenues must include Aid, since a vast literature show that a large part of aid is actually used for debt service repayments because of fungibility.⁵¹

We can write down the Lagrangian function as:

$$(3) \quad L = U(G_1, G_2, \dots, G_j) + \lambda[R - \sum_{i=1}^j G_i]$$

The first order conditions are:

$$(4) \quad \frac{\partial U}{\partial G_1} = \frac{\partial U}{\partial G_2} = \dots = \frac{\partial U}{\partial G_j}$$

$$(5) \quad \sum_{i=1}^j G_i = R = T + A + N + D$$

Equation (4) suggests that at the maximum, the marginal utility of increasing the expenditure on one sector is going to be equal to the marginal utility of increasing the expenditure in another sector. Assuming that both the strict quasi-concavity of the welfare utility function and the Karush-Kuhn-Tucker conditions are satisfied then the utility maximizing levels of G_j are going to be a function of R that is a function of all the other variables T, A, N, D (we cannot say more since we have not specified any utility function). Therefore, I can analyse how debt relief is going to affect the amount of G_j through changes in R.

50 Nobel-Prize winner Angus Deaton defines the social welfare utility as "a statistical aggregator that turns a distribution into a single number that provides an overall judgement on that distribution and that forces us to think coherently about welfare and its distribution." Angus Deaton, *The analysis of household surveys: a microeconomic approach to development policy*, (Washington: World Bank Publications, 1997).

51 Nancy Birdsall, Stijn Claessens, and Ishac Diwan, "Will HIPC Matter? The Debt Game and Donor Behaviour in Africa," WIDER Working Paper Series, World Institute for Development Economic Research (UNU-WIDER) 050 (2002).

$$(6) \quad G_j(R) = G_j(R(T, A, N, D))$$

Considering these as normal goods,⁵² then the partial effect of an increase in revenue on the expenditure decision sector j will be: $\frac{dG_j}{dR} > 0$. Since debt relief is going to affect D , by using the chain rule, we can also estimate the marginal effect of the debt service repayment D on G :

$$\text{As } R = T + A + N - D$$

$$(7) \quad \frac{dG_j}{dR} \frac{dR}{dD} < 0$$

For all sectors considered normal goods, an increase in debt servicing will decrease the amount of expenditure in each sector. This does not mean that the decrease would be linear and equal in all sectors. The share of expenditure in each sector will depend on the Government's Engel curve: how much a change in R will change the spending in health and education depends on the government's preferences. When a sector is seen as a luxury, a reduction in R will lead to a reduction in G that is bigger than the shrink in the budget.

The only inference we can make about a government's preferences comes from the literature which suggests that the quality of institutions and level of corruption in a state play a pivotal role. My paper in an empirical way will try to estimate how spending in health and education reacts to a debt relief.

I am further developing the previous model by adding the interaction between the variable D and the variable A , as it was suggested by the previous literature review. Powell supported the idea that given debt relief is guaranteed by the same institutions providing international aid, then debt forgiveness is going to crowd out resources from aid.⁵³ In contrast, Cordella et al. empirically found that there has been no crowding out. A becomes a function of D , even if we do not know whether it is a positive or negative function of D .⁵⁴

We can rewrite equation (6) as:

$$(8) \quad G_j [T, A(D), N, D]$$

And therefore recalculate the marginal effect of a change in D due to debt relief, on G :

$$(9) \quad \frac{dG_j}{dR} \frac{dR}{dD} + \frac{dG_j}{dR} \frac{dR}{dA} \frac{dA}{dD} \geq 0$$

Since we do not know what the sign of $\frac{dA}{dD}$ is, we cannot know the sign of the inequality. Considering this problem is going to be fundamental in case my research would not find

52 Property of demand is such that not all goods can be inferior, not all goods can be luxuries and not all goods can be necessities.

53 Robert Powell, "Debt Relief, Additionality, and Aid Allocation in Low Income Countries," *IMF Working Papers* 3, no. 175 (2003): 1.

54 Cordella and Ruiz-Arranz. "Debt Overhang or Debt Irrelevance?"

any correlation between expenditure and debt service and would not find any correlation between expenditure and aid. In that case, given inequality (9) I could hypothesize that debt forgiveness has crowded out resources from aid and therefore reduced total available revenues.

Empirical Model

In this section I describe and formulate the empirical model I am going to use in order to identify which variables have the strongest correlation with expenditure in health and education.

Significance of the study

The novelty of my research lies in its attempt to complement the usage of the independent variables commonly adopted in debt relief studies with independent variables measuring the quality of institutions. Most of the previous papers focusing on debt relief have just marginally mentioned the role of institutions, controlling for really basic variables. Other studies instead only look at institutions abstracting them from economic variables. My study will merge these two approaches and take advantage of the high specificity of variables included in the International Country Risk Guide (ICRG)⁵⁵ database. Due to problems in the dataset which has presented a major issue for other research too, my study cannot find definite results but can be seen as another guideline for future research focusing on the role of institutions in the debt dynamics. For this reason, I am going to show results from multiple regressions to provide the reader with information on which variables may be statistically significant in the context of debt relief.

Data

I am taking data ranging from 1996 to 2013, from a total of 26 countries (refer to figure 4) taking part in the HIPC initiative in order to run a pooled regression. Most of the data I am using comes from the World Bank database; the reasons for which stem from the natural advantage that the WB has in terms of data collection. The World Bank is one of the institutions forgiving the debt and it has to keep accurate records of the macroeconomic situation in order to evaluate whether a country should be processed through the DP and CP; therefore I am using their data. I decided to choose the following variables:

1. **Health expenditure** as a % of GDP
2. **Adjusted savings education expenditure** as a % of GNI:⁵⁶ Defined as the current operating expenditures in education, including wages and salaries and excluding

⁵⁵ The database come from the Political Risk Service group. From the 1980 it provides political risk analysis to international institutions, including the IMF.

⁵⁶ It is the best available variable for the total amount of resources spent on education.

capital investments in buildings and equipment

3. **Debt service** - sum of repayments and interests actually paid on long term public debt (as a % of exports).
4. **External debt stock** – public debt owed to non-residential (% of GNI).
5. **AID** – net ODA per capita.
6. **GNI** – gross national income converted to international dollars using purchasing power parity.

For what concerns the “institutional variables” I decided to use the ICRG database because of the high specificity of the variables that the database includes. Out of the 22 variables available I chose the following according to what the previously described literature review suggested:

7. **Government stability** – It is an assessment of both the government’s ability to carry out its declared programs, and its ability to stay in office (increasing from very unstable government scoring 0 to a maximum score of 12)
8. **Corruption**⁵⁷ – it is an assessment of the corruption level within the political system (level of corruption increases the higher the value taken by the variable corruption. It ranges from 0 to 6)
9. **Democratic accountability** – it is a measure of how responsive government is to its people (from 0 indicating no democracy to a maximum of 6)
10. **Bureaucracy quality** – institutional strength and quality of bureaucracy (the quality of bureaucracy increases from 0 to 4)

Empirical specification

To analyse the effect of debt relief on the government’s spending decisions, I am going to use a linear model to estimate the following pooled regression:

$$y_{i,t,j} = \alpha_{i,t} + \beta'_{i,t}x'_{i,t} + \gamma'_{i,t}z_{i,t} + \mu_{i,t}$$

Where the subscripts i and t stand for a country and a time t .

$y_{i,t,j}$ is the amount of spending in sector j

$x'_{i,t}$ is a vector of economic variables used when analysing debt relief

$\gamma'_{i,t}$ is a vector of variables controlling for institution quality, corruption

$\mu_{i,t}$ is the error term

Stepwise regression

Note that my economic conclusions on the initiative will exclusively be based on the

⁵⁷ For the sake of clarity, I modified the variable included in the dataset so that the higher the score of the variable corruption, the higher the level of corruption in the country. The original interpretation of the variable was the following: the lower the score of the variable corruption, the higher the corruption level in a country.

regression including all the “candidate” variables previously outlined. Nonetheless it is likely that this specification may be characterized by multicollinearity. This problem could arise because the dataset is characterized by independent variables expressed as a percentage of another independent variable and because some independent variables are strongly correlated between each other (such as debt service and amount of outstanding debt).

To deal with this problem and for the sake of completeness I will show results coming from multiple regressions. Therefore, my initial specification including all the “candidate” variables will undergo a stepwise regression process by backward elimination. I will remove variables one by one according to the Akaike Information Criterion (AIC).⁵⁸ Every time I will eliminate the variable causing the AIC to be the biggest till I formulate a specification characterized by the minimized AIC. Tables in the next chapter will show how the AIC decreases, starting from the initial model, through the intermediary regressions until I attain the best fitting model. These results must be considered by the reader as a further tool to understand which variables seem to matter the most in the context of the HIPC initiative, and should not be used to depict economic conclusions.

Once again, I want to highlight that the model has to reflect an economic hypothesis and not the other way round. For this reason, all my economic conclusions are drawn from the first column of the tables in the next chapter, since this column includes all the variables that both the economic theoretical model and the literature review suggest to consider.

Predictions

The impact of these covariates on the dependent variable has been widely acknowledged in the literature review and in the theoretical framework, but it is useful to give some additional remarks on their role in the context of my specification.

Debt service is the main variable of interest since debt relief is going to free up those resources initially used for debt repayments. As previously argued I expect a negative sign for its coefficient even if the magnitude depends on the Engel properties of the dependent variable. Some studies in the literature review tell us that spending in health and education is negatively affected by increases in debt servicing, which suggests that these sectors are seen as “luxuries” by the government. Controlling for the **external debt** stock is necessary in an attempt to grasp whether the previously described fiscal space problem exists in HIPCs. In this case, as I previously argued, high outstanding debt reduces the appetite for further indebtedness and I would witness a negative coefficient for this variable. At the same time, I could witness positive correlation between spending and external debt if the debt level is not high enough to induce governments to stop spending. It means that the government has, or at least believes is has, room to maneuver

⁵⁸ Look at the Appendix for an explanation of the AIC

to finance further spending through external debt.

Both the existing literature and theoretical framework included **aid** as a major component of the available budget. Any change in the influx of aid definitely has an impact on the amount of spending in each sector. Literature suggests that the higher the level of aid, the higher the spending in health and education. Therefore, we expect a positive sign for the coefficient of this variable. **GNI** is included as a control variable since previous studies found a correlation between GDP (GNI per capita in our data) and spending in health and education in developing countries. At the same time, I manage to control for those policies and reforms included in the PRSP that have a longer term impact, such as improving the economic and political environment, by using the variables included in .

In terms of the “institutional variables” I expect that a **stable government** will be forward looking, have a low discount rate and aim to maximise the utility of its citizens. I expect to see a positive correlation between a stable government and higher spending in health and education since a government that is likely to be in power for a longer period would invest more on these sectors whose positive outcomes are only visible in the medium to long term.

In the literature review I quoted studies that identified **corruption** as a major impediment to increases in health and education spending. Corruption alters the spending structure in favour of public services, defence and energy at the expense of education and health.⁵⁹ Overall, we would expect a negative correlation between expenditure in health or expenditure in education and corruption. We also know that, if present at low values, corruption may have a positive effect on specific dependent variables. Moreover, Méon and Weill found that corruption has a positive impact on economic efficiency in countries where institutions do not function properly (as the majority of HIPCs).⁶⁰ For this reason, I am going to include in my regression both a linear and a quadratic term of corruption. I expect the linear variable to capture the positive effect of corruption while the quadratic one is supposed to measure the negative effects. In this way I manage to identify the turning point of the correlation between corruption and spending on health and education.

The variable measuring **democratic accountability** measures the degree of constraint on the executive by the people. Bad governance, as defined as neglecting health and education expenditure, is less likely in the context of a democracy where these behaviours are “punished” through the vote. Therefore, in the context of the theoretical framework previously outlined, a government maximizing its probability of remaining in power would definitely pay more attention to the needs of its population. Among these needs, the literature review suggested that health and education are priorities. I would expect

59 Clara Delavallade, “Corruption and Distribution of Public Spending in Developing Countries,” *Journal of Economics and Finance* 30, no. 2 (2006): 222-39

60 Pierre-Guillaume Méon and Laurent Weill, “Is Corruption an Efficient Grease?” *World Development* 38, no. 3 (2010): 244-59.

a positive correlation between this variable and spending in health and education. The **quality of the bureaucracy** is also extremely important in the context of HIPC's where governments constantly change. A good level of bureaucracy would guarantee both a continuity in services and stability in the allocation of resources given the fact that these resources are financing projects such as the ones in health and education whose effects are seen in the long run. I expect a positive sign for the coefficient of this variable.

Results

For completeness and the benefit of future studies, the following tables show results from multiple regressions. I want to highlight again that the choice of the AIC is arbitrary, and is one of the many methods used to carry out model selection. Among the intentions of my study there is providing the best model fitting the HIPC initiative, given the introduction of these highly specific "institutional variables." Nonetheless my economic analysis of the estimates is focused on the first column only.

Regression of health on independent variables

	Health expenditures			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Gov. Stability	-0.136***	-0.139***	-0.143***	-0.134***
	(0.035)	(0.034)	(0.034)	(0.031)
Dem.Accountability	0.203***	0.222***	0.221***	0.218***
	(0.047)	(0.044)	(0.044)	(0.040)
ODA	0.005***	0.005***	0.005***	0.005***
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Corruption2	-0.205***	-0.202***	-0.207***	-0.195***
	(0.064)	(0.063)	(0.062)	(0.059)
Corruption	1.389***	1.358***	1.395***	1.359***
	(0.472)	(0.462)	(0.458)	(0.435)
Bureaucracy quality	0.311***	0.317***	0.318***	0.331***
	(0.064)	(0.062)	(0.062)	(0.057)
External Debt	-0.0005	-0.0004	-0.0005	
	(0.0004)	(0.0004)	(0.0003)	
GNI	0.000	0.000		
	(0.000)	(0.000)		
Debt Service	-0.002			
	(0.007)			
Constant	0.184	0.148	0.169	0.009
	(0.973)	(0.953)	(0.951)	(0.898)
Observations	331	344	344	400
R2	0.365	0.395	0.394	0.376
Adjusted R2	0.347	0.380	0.381	0.366
Residual Std. Error	0.921 (df = 321)	0.912 (df = 335)	0.911 (df = 336)	0.914 (df = 393)
F Statistic	20.480*** (df = 9; 321)	27.290*** (df = 8; 335)	31.180*** (df = 7; 336)	39.470*** (df = 6; 393)
AIC	-44.9	-54.7	-56.3	-56.3

Note: *=5% significance level, **=1%significance level, ***=0.1%significance level

Standard deviation in parenthesis just below the coefficient.

In the context of spending in health, I find that neither external debt nor debt service have any correlation with the dependent variable. This result is consistent with the one estimated by Chauvin and Kraay.⁶¹ It also confirms the hypothesis suggested by Henry and Arslanalp that this huge amount of debt is another poor economic outcome of these economies and not a cause of their low spending in health and education.⁶²

In addition GNI does not seem to be a relevant variable. The remaining variables are all statistically significant. The coefficient on ODA is in line with those obtained by previous studies indicating that the choice of including aid in the budget constraint was well motivated. ODA is probably one of the fundamental factors in determining expenditure in health and more generally in the fiscal decision. As predicted corruption has a positive effect at low levels and then I witness a negative effect at higher levels. The other “institutional variables” align with the predicted outcomes. The only striking result is the negative sign in front of the government stability coefficient. Except for issues in the dataset, a possible explanation for this is due to the description of the variable itself. The index I used, which measures the ability of the government to remain in power, probably fails to capture the fact that some African countries (Benin and Congo) are “stable” only because a military elite is ruling. This elite does not need to implement sound and long-term policies (such as investing in healthcare) in order to remain in power as they can use military force and violence to uphold their authority. The correlation between stability and health expenditure fails since the “stable” military elite lacks the incentive or need to attain citizens’ support through the implementation of wise and long-term policies.

Regression of education on independent variables

	Education expenditure	
	(1)	(2)
Dem.Accountability	0.105*	0.104*
	(0.059)	(0.059)
ODA	0.002*	0.002*
	(0.001)	(0.001)
External Debt	0.002***	0.002***
	(0.0005)	(0.0005)
Debt Service	0.013	0.014*
	(0.008)	(0.008)
Corruption2	-0.209**	-0.207**
	(0.081)	(0.080)
Corruption	1.535***	1.515**
	(0.591)	(0.587)
Bureaucracy quality	0.456***	0.455***

61 Chauvin and Kraay. “What Has 100 Billion Dollars Worth of Debt Relief Done for Low-Income Countries?”

62 Arslanalp and Henry. “Debt Relief.”

	(0.080)	(0.080)
GNI	0.000***	0.000***
	(0.000)	(0.000)
Gov. Stability	0.015	
	(0.044)	
Constant	-1.380	-1.195
	(1.219)	(1.087)
Observations	331	331
R2	0.250	0.250
Adjusted R2	0.229	0.231
Residual Std. Error	1.154 (df = 321)	1.152 (df = 322)
F Statistic	11.910*** (df = 9; 321)	13.420*** (df = 8; 322)
AIC	104	102

Note: *=5% significance level, **=1%significance level, ***=0.1%significance level

The results for the second specification show that external debt affects expenditure in education: the correlation is positive but the magnitude of the impact is really small. The positive sign may lead us to believe that these countries were not suffering from lack of fiscal space since part of the increase in spending is due to an increase in debt. As suggested by Pattillo et al., it may be the case that these HIPCs continue to spend as they are confident that nobody will stop financing their debt.⁶³ The coefficients for the “institutional variables” are significant and perfectly match with the predictions outlined in the fourth section. All the signs are coherent with what the theory suggested. Again, GNI and debt service are not relevant variables in the context of the HIPC initiative. The latter’s lack of significance (in both specifications) confirms the conclusion that Lora and Olivera found in the context of debt relief in South America: debt service does not prevent HIPCs from spending in poverty reducing policies.⁶⁴

Future development of the research and conclusions

My research presents possible caveats which are mainly related to the lack of precise data and the heterogeneity of the HIPCs’ respective economies. These drawbacks are both in the theoretical framework and estimation that I used.

A possible drawback of my research is the estimation and interpretation of the coefficient on “institutional” independent variables. In the context of a linear model, having variables that are continuous but taking values in a finite range may lead to a difficult interpretation of the estimated coefficient. A possible way of overcoming this problem is by using a dummy variable approach. Taking the example of corruption, we could use a dummy called “really high level of corruption” taking the value 1 for those countries whose corruption index is in the range 3-6 and taking the value 0 otherwise.

The HIPC initiative seems to be designed to be exploited by a regression discontinuity

63 Pattillo, Poirson and Ricci. *External Debt and Growth*. Working paper. IMF, 2002. 2002-069.

64 Lora and Olivera. “Public Debt and Social Expenditure: Friends or Foes?”

design (RDD). This quasi-experimental approach, in the presence of better data on African economics, could estimate the causal effect of debt on poverty-reduction expenditures by setting a cut-off when the country reaches the CP. Given countries reach the CP in different years, one could standardize the design by defining t as the time at which the CP is reached by each country, and $t-x$ and $t+x$ would be the previous and following years.

Data permitting, future development of this paper may study the direct impact of the debt relief on education and health. Realizing higher social expenditures is not a goal in itself since what really matters is that citizens are provided good services, and it may not be the case in the presence of inefficiencies. Therefore, future studies could regress mortality or literacy rates on the same independent variables I utilized in my research to understand how much citizens' lives improve after debt relief.

Through my research I tried to further analyse the relationship between debt and public expenditure. I analyzed the case of HIPC's since it stirs a fierce controversy among economists and because the design of the initiative seems perfect to be exploited for empirical purposes. My intention was to discern the effects of economic and "institutional variables" in order to understand whether the huge amount of debt is a cause of poverty or if it is merely another poor outcome characterizing these countries. I focused my analysis on both health and education spending separately, even though for the latter very little research has been carried out and data sources are a major problem.

The results achieved for both specifications are extremely interesting and confirm what other studies found. The correlation between debt and spending is either not relevant at all, or is not relevant enough to justify the perception that debt is preventing these countries from investing in health and education, as suggested by Chauvin and Kraay⁶⁵ and Henry and Arslanalp⁶⁶. Results show how "institutional variables" seem to play a pivotal role. Corruption is positive if present at low levels and negative if present at higher levels. A perfectly working democracy is another major factor increasing spending in health and education. My study also shows how international aid plays a major role in the budget allocated to these sectors; the suspected crowding out of international aid due to debt relief does not seem to happen since the variable aid (in the regression it is ODA) is always statistically significant. Debt relief is complementary to international aid, and not a substitute for it.

As we witnessed a rise in health and education spending over the last 20 years and since it does not seem to be correlated with the amount of public debt or with the debt service, one may believe that the HIPC initiative was unsuccessful. This conclusion would, however, be ungenerous since the programme was much more than a simple debt forgiveness programme; debt relief was guaranteed in exchange for economic and

65 Chauvin and Kraay. "What Has 100 Billion Dollars Worth of Debt Relief Done for Low-Income Countries?"

66 Arslanalp and Henry. "Debt Relief."

political reforms. The governance conditionality, happening through the implementation of reforms guaranteeing a better economic environment and more efficient institutions, is probably the main explanation for higher spending in health and education. My research suggests that if international institutions want these countries to get out of poverty (through the allocation of a higher share of their government budget to health and education), they should encourage political and economic reforms in these countries. Therefore, if debt relief was the price paid in order to push HIPC's to improve their economic environment and their institutions, then the initiative cannot be considered as a failure, rather as a success.

APPENDIX

Figure 1

Table 1. List of Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (As of end-September 2014)				
35 Post-Completion-Point HIPCs ^{1/}				
Alghanistan	Comoros	Guinea	Malawi	São Tomé and Príncipe
Benin	Congo, Dem. Rep. of	Guinea-Bissau	Mali	Senegal
Bolivia	Congo, Rep. of	Guyana	Mauritania	Sierra Leone
Burkina Faso	Côte d'Ivoire	Haiti	Mozambique	Tanzania
Burundi	Ethiopia	Honduras	Nicaragua	Togo
Cameroon	Gambia, The	Liberia	Niger	Uganda
Central African Republic	Ghana	Madagascar	Rwanda	Zambia
1 Interim HIPC ^{2/}				
Chad				
3 Pre-Decision-Point HIPCs ^{3/}				
Eritrea Somalia Sudan				

^{1/} Countries that have qualified for irrevocable debt relief under the HIPC Initiative.
^{2/} Countries that have reached decision point under the HIPC Initiative, but have not yet reached completion point.
^{3/} Countries that are eligible or potentially eligible and may wish to avail themselves of the HIPC Initiative and MDRI.

Figure 2

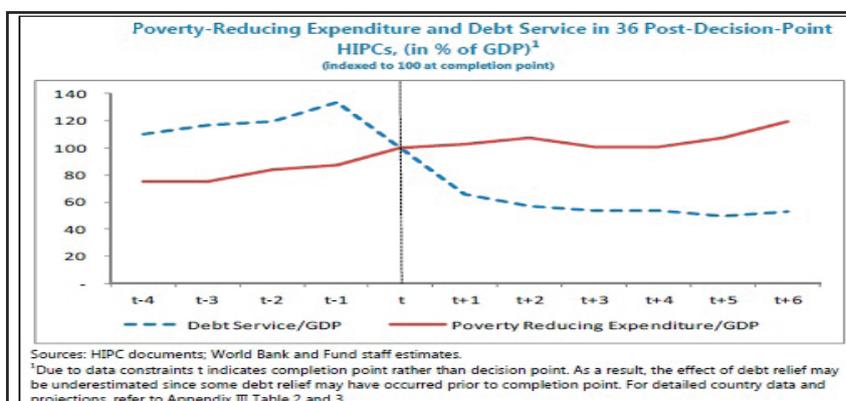


Figure 3

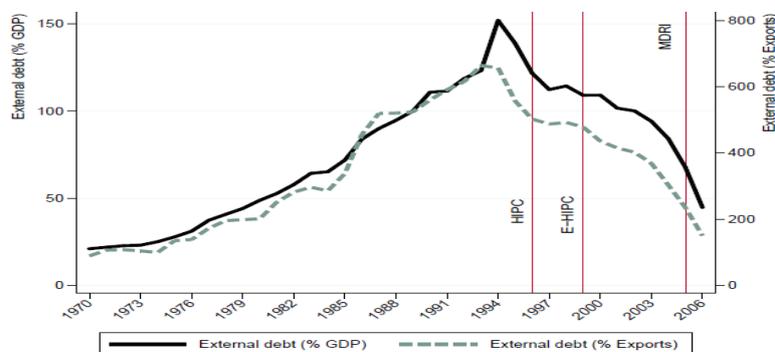


Figure 4

Countries			
Bolivia	Burkina Faso	Cameroon	Congo
Congo, DR	Cote d'Ivoire	Ethiopia	Gabon
Gambia	Ghana	Guinea	Guinea-Bissau
Guyana	Haiti	Honduras	Liberia
Madagascar	Malawi	Mali	Mozambique
Nicaragua	Niger	Sierra Leone	Togo
Uganda	Zambia		

Figure 5

	Descriptive statistics				
	N	Mean	S.d.	Min	Max
Health expenditure %GDP	400	2.5	1.1	0.04	5.9
Education expenditure (GNI)	361	3.3	1.2	1.3	8.2
Debt Service (%export)	331	9.2	8.8	0	72.9
External debt (%GNI)	344	109.5	150.0	0	1380.7
Net ODA per capita	450	64.0	53.0	0	406.9
Corruption	468	3.8	0.7	1.1	6
Bureaucracy quality	467	1.1	0.8	0	3
Democratic accountability	467	3.2	1.2	0	6
Government stability	461	8.4	1.6	2.9	11.5

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Voters' Sentiment and Propensity to Vote in The Wake of Internal Squabbling in Election Management Bodies: The Case of Ghana's Electoral Commission

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ABSTRACT: The paper explores the implications of the alleged administrative infractions at Ghana's Electoral Commission. We combine qualitative and quantitative approaches to address the issue as follows. First, we employ machine learning techniques to express the sentiment of Ghanaians towards the Commission using Facebook comments from different public sources. Second, we use data from an online survey to examine the propensity of Ghanaians to vote in future elections. The sentiment analysis allowed for the comparison of favourable, unfavourable and neutral Facebook comments and showed that 40 percent of comments were unfavourable whereas the neutral and favourable accounted for 27 and 33 percent respectively. However, the quantitative analysis showed that those respondents who see the Commission as the reason for the previous peaceful elections have a significant and positive propensity to vote in 2020 elections. Similarly, those respondents who see magnanimity of the Ghanaian as the reason for the many peaceful polls are more likely to vote in 2020 elections. It is worth noting, however, that the redeeming of the image of the Commission is imperative as the impasse has dwindled public faith in the Commission significantly.

Keywords: Ghana, Electoral Commission, Sentiment Analysis, Facebook, Perception, Voting.

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Introduction

Electoral Commissions around the world are not immune from election-related challenges in the delivery of freer and fairer elections,¹ which often defines economic growth and development trajectories as well as national security. Holding a genuine election in developing nations becomes a catalyst for improved economic policy and enhanced governance as such honest polls increase government accountability.² However, the domestic interest of competing parties in an election is a risk

1 Bishop, Sylvia, and Anke Hoeffler. 2014. *Free and Fair Elections – A New Database*. London: Center for the study of African Economies.

2 Chauvet, Lisa, and Paul Collier. 2008. *Elections and Economic Policy in Developing Countries*. Paris: Développement, Institutions et Mondialisation (DIAL).

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to a free and fair election. Moreover, that becomes a challenge to Electoral Commissions in pursuit of their mandate.³ Such problems are twofold: remote and immediate.

Elections are a competition of ideas, competition for power and control of resources, and a means to effect economic, social, political and cultural change. In such a convoluting environment, various kinds of methods are employed by interested parties to manipulate the process in their interest. The neutrality and competence of the referee—Electoral Commission—becomes an essential ingredient for diluting and foiling any overt or covert actions of competing parties.⁴ A strong and resourceful Commission often can avert threats of this kind. For instance, in advanced nations where state institutions are resourced and independent, Commissions work better at attenuating threats, including those relating to election organization. In developing countries, however, the challenges persist.⁵

The graveness of the problem in emerging democracies required urgent redress. Subsequently, significant attention was paid to this issue and the efforts have seemed to bear fruit as many emerging democracies are now able to stage elections with minimal threats from domestic sources.⁶ Ghana is one among several African states that have made strides in this direction.⁷ The independence and professionalism of the Electoral Commission have been acknowledged in many studies as a catalyst for credible election processes, despite occasional negligible errors.⁸ In fact, when one looks at percentage turnout as an indicator of trust and citizen participation in an electoral system, Ghana is seen as one of the best in comparison with Kenya, South Africa and Senegal (Figure 1.). These countries are considered to have a significant semblance of consolidated democratic rule in Africa.⁹ The strides in these countries are not ephemeral. They seem resilient enough to withstand significant setbacks.

3 Catt, Helena, Andrew Ellis, Michael Maley, Alan Wall, and Peter Wolf. 2014. *Election Management Design*. Stockholm: International IDEA.

4 Elklit, J., and A. Reynolds. 2002. "The Impact of Election Administration on the Legitimacy of Emerging Democracies: A New Comparative Politics Research Agenda." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 86-119. doi:10.1080/713999584.

5 Fukuyama, Francis. 2004. "The Imperative of State-Building." *Journal of Democracy* (The Johns Hopkins University Press.) Vol. 15 (2): 17-31. doi:10.1353/jod.2004.0026.

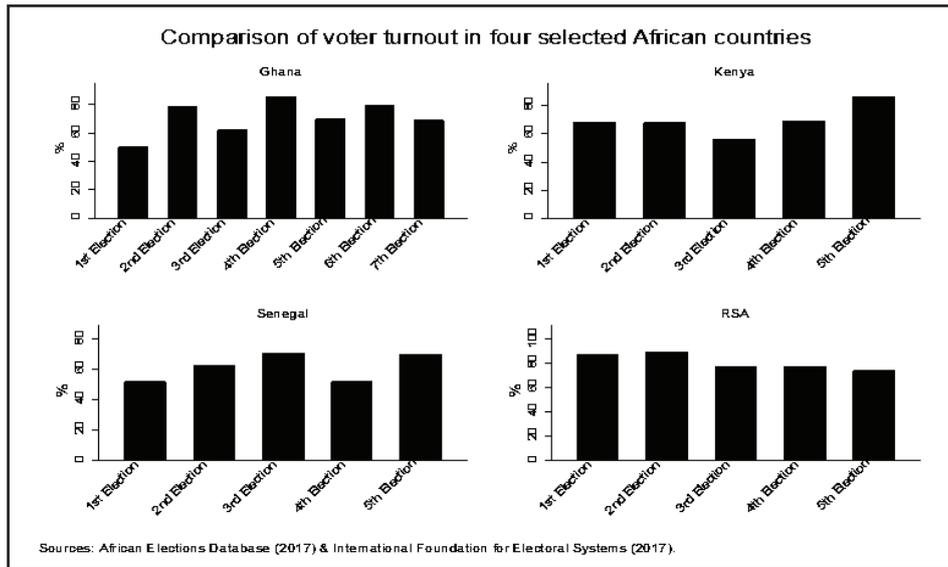
6 Darren, Kew. 2005. "Building Democracy in 21st Century Africa: Two Africas, One Solution." *Whitehead J. Dipl. & Int'l Rel.* 149-162.

7 Darren, Kew. 2005. "Building Democracy in 21st Century Africa: Two Africas, One Solution." *Whitehead J. Dipl. & Int'l Rel.* 149-162; Arthur, Peter. 2010. "Democratic consolidation in Ghana: the role and contribution of the media, civil society and state institutions." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 203-226. doi:10.1080/14662041003672510.

8 Whitfield, Lindsay. 2009. "'Change for a Better Ghana': Party Competition, Institutionalization and alternation in Ghana's 2008 Elections." *African Affairs* (Oxford University Press on behalf of Royal African Society) 621-641. doi:10.1093/afraf/adp056; Debrah, Emmanuel. 2011. "Measuring Governance Institutions' Success in Ghana: The Case of the Electoral Commission, 1993-2008." *African Studies* 25-45. doi:10.1080/00020184.2011.557573.

9 Darren, Kew. 2005. "Building Democracy in 21st Century Africa: Two Africas, One Solution." *Whitehead J. Dipl. & Int'l Rel.* 149-162.

Figure 1. Comparison of Voter Turnout in Selected African Countries (1992-2017)



Source: Authors

However, Ghana's Electoral Commission has recently come under a barrage of criticism over the administrative actions of its Commissioner. The criticism reached an apogee after some "Concerned Workers" of the Electoral Commission petitioned the Chief Justice of the Republic over possible constitutional breaches by the Commissioner.¹⁰ Through the petition, the group triggered the constitutional processes of investigation and possible impeachment of the Chairperson.¹¹ In the petition, the petitioners raised over twenty-seven concerns. They range from misconduct and disrespect to corruption and misuse of authority. The Chairperson in response to the petition challenged the motive of the petitioners. She subsequently laid blame on the two Deputy Commissioners whom the Chairperson alleges are behind the petition.¹²

The fury called into question the Commission's credibility and ability to rally the country for future elections that will be acceptable to the Ghanaian populace. Perception of rot points to a total breakdown of governance systems and one that potentially affects the work of the commission as a neutral, independent and credible body. The Commission's credibility in our view is threatened by the fact that the fury is emanating from within the Commission. However, the internal wrangling which affects the credibility of election commissions, and for that matter, its future election-related activities such as the organization of credible polls, is seldom studied. Many of the cited studies concentrate much on the establishment of the credibility traits of elections (whether the results were

10 Joy FM. 2017. *MyJoyonline*. 22 July. <http://www.myjoyonline.com/politics/2017/July-22nd/full-text-charlotte-osei-fires-back-with-27-point-response-to-impeachment-petition.php>.

11 Daily Graphic. 2017. "Remove EC boss from office - Concerned workers petition President." *Remove EC boss from office - Concerned workers petition President*. Edited by Joe Okyere. Accra, Accra, 20 July. <http://www.graphic.com.gh/news/general-news/remove-ec-boss-from-office-concerned-workers-petition-president.html>.

12 Joy FM. 2017. *MyJoyonline*. 22 July. <http://www.myjoyonline.com/politics/2017/July-22nd/full-text-charlotte-osei-fires-back-with-27-point-response-to-impeachment-petition.php>.

free and fair).¹³ Undeniably, such studies are essential as they indirectly provide a sort of a measure of the credibility of the election-organizing institutions.

We, however, cite a few studies that have been carried out concerning the institution of election management,¹⁴ despite their enormous contribution to a credible election process. Our work seeks to empirically investigate the opinions of people of voting age in Ghana about the Electoral Commission and the unfolding events at the Commission. We pose the following the two questions: a) What has been the reaction of Ghanaians towards the happenings at the Electoral Commission? b) To what extent would the happenings and people's perceptions of election affect the propensity to participate in future elections?

We aim to contribute to the literature on contributors of a credible or dis-credible election, especially in emerging democracies through a multifaceted approach. Our approach of using different methods and varied data types is to lessen the quality of data challenges faced in such empirical studies. Our paper utilizes a unique combination of various analytical tools, including machine learning technique for the understanding of peoples' sentiments and regression method for the study of the propensity of voting in future elections.

The remainder of this paper is organized as follows. First, we review relevant literature on the subject. Second, we outline a description of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches the study adopts. Third, we present and discuss results of the sentiment analysis and regression model. Finally, we offer some conclusions and implications of the study.

Brief Review of Relevant Literature

Electoral Commissions

The trichotomy of the Electoral Commission (EC) is organized in the following form: i) bureaucrat approach, where a clearly defined agency within the government structure is responsible for the election process, ii) judicial approach, where the judicial arm of government is made to supervise elections, and finally, iii) the expert approach, where the responsibility of running the electoral system is assigned to independent individuals. Five cardinal factors need to be considered when analyzing the activities of Electoral Commissions, namely, a) EC organizational structure, b) independence from political

13 Bishop, Sylvia, and Anke Hoeffler. 2014. *Free and Fair Elections – A New Database*. London: Center for the study of African Economies.

14 Debrah, Emmanuel. 2004. "The Politics of Elections: Opposition and Incumbency in Ghana's 2000 Elections." *Africa Insight* Vol.34(2/3) : 3-15. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/ai.v34i2.22397> AJOL African Journals Online; Whitfield, Lindsay. 2009. "'Change for a Better Ghana': Party Competition, Institutionalization and alternation in Ghana's 2008 Elections." *African Affairs* (Oxford University Press on behalf of Royal African Society) 621–641. doi:10.1093/afraf/adp056.; Debrah, Emmanuel. 2011. "Measuring Governance Institutions' Success in Ghana: The Case of the Electoral Commission, 1993–2008." *African Studies* 25-45. doi:10.1080/00020184.2011.557573.

forces, c) Internal EC motivation, d) EC staff motivation, and e) EC transparency.¹⁵ The Electoral Commission's impact on the quality and credibility of an election hinge on the above factors.

As such, in-depth analysis of these factors is a prerequisite to understanding Electoral Commissions. The effectiveness and credibility of the Electoral Commission is anchored on the strong independence of the Commission. They are also closely linked to the institutional legacies of each country as well as the political negotiations capabilities of the Commission.¹⁶ Other studies have confirmed that the Electoral Commissions themselves also have a positive impact on election credibility.¹⁷

Electoral Commission of Ghana under the 4th Republican Constitution

The 4th Republican Constitution birthed many important independent bodies after many years of political turmoil that engulfed Ghana. One critical institution of such is the Electoral Commission. The Commission like many others was envisioned and deliberately crafted to strengthen Ghana's return to democratic rule after several years of military rule.¹⁸ A characteristic feature of the various military regimes was the suspension of the constitution and the subsequent dismantling of the independent constitutional bodies. Elections were also rarely held during such periods. The long epoch of inactivity on the part of these institutions gradually declined. It, therefore, did not come as a surprise to many when the resuscitation of the Electoral Commission, just like many others, became a painful process.¹⁹

The evolution and the establishment of the Commission did not come easy. Its conception was one full of confusion, weak transparency in the selection of Commissioners, ill-preparedness, and without proper systematic structures.²⁰ Certainly, amidst such a convoluting setting, the Commission did not gain complete Ghanaian acceptance as many opposition elements raised countless flaws in the structure of the Commission.²¹

15 Elklit, J., and A. Reynolds. 2002. "The Impact of Election Administration on the Legitimacy of Emerging Democracies: A New Comparative Politics Research Agenda." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 86-119. doi:10.1080/713999584.

16 Mozaffar, Shaheen. 2002. "Patterns of Electoral Governance in Africa's Emerging Democracies." *International Political Science Review* (International Political Science Association) 85-101.

17 Hartlyn, Jonathan, Jennifer McCoy, and Thomas M. Mustillo. 2008. "Electoral Governance Matters." *Comparative Political Studies* (SAGE Publications Inc) 73-94. doi:10.1177/0010414007301701; Hamberg, Stephan, and Aaron Erlich. 2013. *Electoral Management Bodies and the Quality of Elections in sub-Saharan Africa between 1990 and 2010*. Chicago: Prepared for delivery at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

18 Alidu, Seidu M. 2014. "Party Politics and Electoral Malpractice in Ghana's Election 2012." *Journal of Scientific Research & Reports* 1450-1464.

19 Gyimah-Boadi, E. 1999. *The Self-restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*. Edited by Andreas Schedler, Larry Jay Diamond and Marc F. Plattner. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

20 Gyimah-Boadi, E., and Theo Yakah. 2012. *Ghana: The Limits of External Democracy Assistance*. Helsinki: UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER).

21 Gyimah-Boadi, E. 1999. *The Self-restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*. Edited by Andreas Schedler, Larry Jay Diamond and Marc F. Plattner. Colorado: Lynne Rienner

The Commission started as the Interim National Electoral Commission (INEC), which organized the district level elections held in 1988 and 1989 and subsequently the 1992 presidential elections. The INEC was dissolved to pave the way for the constitutional and rightful enshrinement of the Commission under the 1992 Constitution.

Article 43 of the Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and the Electoral Commission Act of 1993 gave the legal backing to the Commission.²² The independence of the Commission was envisioned and enshrined in the Constitution. The Commission is insulated from Executive powers, although the President who heads the executive arm of government appoints the Commissioners. The President does so in consultation with the Council of State. The procedure contained in article 70 of the 1992 Constitution is the rule for the selection of Commissioners. The Commission since has become the foundation of Ghana's multi-party democracy. It has since played a significant role in making Ghana the beacon of democracy and political stability in Africa. A Chairperson heads the Commission with two deputy Chairpersons and four other Commissioners. Each of the Commissioners is guaranteed tenure of office. The Commission has within the last 25 years organized seven Presidential and Parliamentary elections, all deemed as free and fair, albeit the findings reveal that most elections in Africa considered as free are not necessarily fair.²³ Ghana's success at elections is a not a blip, especially since many polls are often chaotic in Africa.

Challenges of the EC under the 4th Republic

The Commission has its problems, and here we look at the issues from a more general perspective. The discussions cover the entirety of the life of the Commission. The first challenge has to do with the weak electoral institutionalization setup of the EC after several years of inactivity.²⁴ The required systematic structures for holding credible elections did not exist for the 1992 election. The interim arrangements put in place by the INEC also did not meet the expectation of many Ghanaians.²⁵ There was no national consensus on the provisional measures for the 1992 elections despite the persistent push by local and International organisations for early elections.²⁶ The citizens at that time had grown tired of the Military and were up in arms demanding a freer society.²⁷ International

Publishers.

22 Government of Ghana. 1992. *The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana*. Accra: Government of Ghana.

23 Bishop, Sylvia, and Anke Hoeffler. 2014. *Free and Fair Elections – A New Database*. London: Center for the study of African Economies.

24 Gyimah-Boadi, E., and Theo Yakah. 2012. *Ghana: The Limits of External Democracy Assistance*. Helsinki: UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER).

25 Gyimah-Boadi, E. 1999. *The Self-restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*. Edited by Andreas Schedler, Larry Jay Diamond and Marc F. Plattner. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

26 Boafo-Arthur, Kwame. 2008. *Democracy and stability in West Africa; The Ghanaian Experience*. Uppsala: Universitetstryckeriet, Uppsala 2008.

27 Gyimah-Boadi, E., and Theo Yakah. 2012. *Ghana: The Limits of External Democracy Assistance*. Helsinki: UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER).

pressure was also at an apogee. Development Partners (DPs) tied assistance to Ghana's unalloyed return to democratic rule.²⁸ The Military government's lackadaisical attitude towards institutionalization frustrated and fractured the Commission right from the onset. The Military government's solitary exercise of selecting Commissioners exacerbated the mistrust.²⁹ Concerns raised about the process did not compel the regime to pause and reflect on them. They were simply not heeded, and the 1992 election went on as planned. Before the 1992 election, the Commission had by all intents and purposes gone rusty after several years of inactivity and could not stage a top performer election. It lacked both the hard and soft resources needed for such a pivotal election.³⁰

The funding insufficiency of the Commission has long been a massive challenge. In the early periods of the formation of the Commission, it was evident that the Commission required much more financial resources to address the institutional problems if the Commission was to become credible. The government did not have enough resources for such a purpose. DPs offered significant support from technical, logistical and financial standpoint, which turned out to be a crucial step towards the path of reorientation and positioning of the Commission to become a credible election supervising organization.³¹ The DPs support made the Commission flamboyant as it attracted brilliant staff who helped to build the institution's image. In the subsequent elections that followed in 1996, 2000 and 2004 (presidential & parliamentary), all polls saw steady improvements. Unfortunately, the high level of trust plummeted, especially after the 2008 general elections. A series of scandals kept rocking the institution and people's confidence waned, especially after the 2012 Supreme Court hearing of the disputed Presidential result petition was brought against the Commission by the then opposition, NPP.³²

Another challenge had to do with the 2012 election court case. To some, the court case only illustrated the resilience of Ghana's electoral system to election disputes. In as much as we share this view, we also think that it presented a new and unfamiliar challenge to the Electoral Commission. The resort to judicial redress suggested a deep mistrust in the internal dispute resolution mechanism of the Commission.³³ The case inflicted

28 Dietrich, Simone, and Joseph Wright. 2015. "Foreign Aid Allocation Tactics and Democratic Change in Africa." *Journal of Politics* 77 (1): 216-234. doi:doi.org/10.1086/678976.

29 Gyimah-Boadi, E. 1999. *The Self-restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*. Edited by Andreas Schedler, Larry Jay Diamond and Marc F. Plattner. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

30 Gyimah-Boadi, E. 1999. *The Self-restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*. Edited by Andreas Schedler, Larry Jay Diamond and Marc F. Plattner. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

31 Gyimah-Boadi, E., and Theo Yakah. 2012. *Ghana: The Limits of External Democracy Assistance*. Helsinki: UNU World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER).

32 Alidu, Seidu M. 2014. "Party Politics and Electoral Malpractice in Ghana's Election 2012." *Journal of Scientific Research & Reports* 1450-1464.

33 Saskia, Brechenmacher. 2016. "Ghana's Vaunted Electoral Process Under Stress." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Web Site*. 1 December. <http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/12/01/ghana-s-vaunted-electoral-process-under-stress-pub-66307>.

a weighty dent on the Commission's credibility.³⁴ Though for a long time, people had misgivings about the Commission, none could bring an evidentially colossal case against the Commission.³⁵

The court case exposed the Commission and made clear the institutional weakness of the Commission. It was feared the conduct of the Commission and the court hearing could affect future elections unless substantial reforms at the Commission were made, especially after the open discussions on many of the malpractices that took place during the 2012 election.³⁶

The last challenge relates to electoral fraud allegations. Electoral fraud of different types has been reported since the 1992 elections. The Commission's open admission to many of them including; administrative and transpositional errors and use of non-permanent staffs during the 2012 court hearing legitimized the perception of many citizens concerning allegations of fraud during past elections. The perception of fraud makes it hard for people to accept election outcomes.³⁷ This is one of the most important challenges to all election Commissions around the world.

Recent Developments at the EC

Following the Supreme Court ruling on the 2012 Election Case, the interest of Ghanaians in the activities of the Commission grew significantly. In 2015, when then-Chairperson Dr. Kwadwo Afari Gyan retired, many saw an excellent opportunity to carry out the needed reform proposed by the Supreme Court and Civil Society Organisation (CSOs). To many, the appointment of the new Commissioner was to be a litmus test of how ready the country was to ensure total independence from the Commission. Different interpretations of Article 70 (2) were offered.³⁸ On May 18, 2015, a private citizen, Mr. Dela Sky, filed a petition to the Supreme Court seeking the right interpretation of Article 70 and the role of the President as an appointing authority.³⁹ The hearing of the Supreme Court on the matter was not concluded when the President announced a substantive Chairperson on

34 Kelly, Bob, and R. B. Bening. 2013. "The Ghanaian elections of 2012." *Review of African Political Economy* 475-484.

35 Gyimah-Boadi, E. 1999. *The Self-restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*. Edited by Andreas Schedler, Larry Jay Diamond and Marc F. Plattner. Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.

36 Alidu, Seidu M. 2014. "Party Politics and Electoral Malpractice in Ghana's Election 2012." *Journal of Scientific Research & Reports* 1450-1464.

37 Alidu, Seidu M. 2014. "Party Politics and Electoral Malpractice in Ghana's Election 2012." *Journal of Scientific Research & Reports* 1450-1464.

38 Mensah, Eugene Kwadwo. 2015. *Why the recent appointment of EC Chairperson by the President was unconstitutional*. Accra: Graphic Communications Group Limited. , 14 August. <http://www.graphic.com.gh/features/features/why-the-recent-appointment-of-ec-chairperson-by-the-president-was-unconstitutional-by-prof-kwadwo-mensah.html>.

39 CitiFM. 2015. *Richard Dela Sky petitions Supreme Court over EC Chair appointment*. Accra: Citi FM, 18 May. <http://citifmonline.com/2015/05/18/richard-dela-sky-petitions-supreme-court-over-ec-chair-appointment/>.

June 25, 2015.⁴⁰

The first test for the new Chairperson was the sixth District level elections in 2015, which, originally were to be held in 2014 before being postponed.⁴¹ The disarrayed way the district assembly elections were organized increased misgivings about the competence, impartiality, and credibility of the Commission to supervise free and fair 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary elections. Almost all the opposition parties had qualms about the Commission. The disqualification of thirteen candidates⁴² and the subsequent readmission of the three candidates Dr. Papa Kwasi Nduom (candidate for the Progressive Peoples' Party), Dr. Edward Mahama (of the National Convention Party) and Nana Konadu Agyeman-Rawlings (of the National Democratic Party)⁴³ stoked the debate over the competence of the Chairperson. People's trust in the Commission to guarantee a free and fair election had waned and now required the vigilance of the political parties.

Various professional bodies, including the Ghana Bar Association, Association of Chartered Accountants, National Graduate Teachers Association, and several others indicated their willingness to assist the Commission pro bono on aspects of the Commission's job that required their services.⁴⁴ The election was completed, and the results declared. The alertness of the parties, CSOs, International Observer Groups, and most importantly, the magnanimity of the Ghanaian again enabled the Commission to deliver a reasonably free and fair election that was accepted by all.

Methodology

Data

Data for the paper is drawn from different sources for both the qualitative and quantitative approaches adopted. With the qualitative approach, we used the petition filed by the "Concerned Staff" of the EC (July 19, 2017), as well as the response note of the Chairperson (July 22, 2017) for the text mining. Still under the qualitative approach, we used data from the public Facebook pages of media houses, pressure groups and political figures for sentiment analysis. We chose these public pages due in part to their global representativeness and the diversity of their followers, which allows for easy replicability

40 Government of Ghana. 2015. *Charlotte Osei Appointed New EC Chairperson*. Accra, 26 June. <http://www.ghana.gov.gh/index.php/news/1523-charlotte-osei-appointed-new-ec-chairperson>.

41 Osam, Efua Idan. 2015. "citifmonline.com." *citifmonline.com*. 19 June. <http://citifmonline.com/2015/06/19/ec-to-hold-district-assembly-elections-on-september-1/>; Gadugah, Nathan. 2015. "Myjoyonline.com." *Myjoyonline.com*. 3 October. <http://www.myjoyonline.com/politics/2015/march-10th/ec-wastes-317m-on-botched-assembly-elections-needs-90m-to-conduct-new-one.php>.

42 Citi FM. 2016. *2016 Polls: Full list of disqualified presidential aspirants*. Accra: Citifmonline.com, 10 October. <http://citifmonline.com/2016/10/10/2016-polls-full-list-of-disqualified-presidential-aspirants/>.

43 CitiFM. 2015. *Richard Dela Sky petitions Supreme Court over EC Chair appointment*. Accra: Citi FM, 18 May. <http://citifmonline.com/2015/05/18/richard-dela-sky-petitions-supreme-court-over-ec-chair-appointment/>.

44 Kwakofi, Edwin. 2016. "citifmonline.com." *citifmonline.com*. 3 January. <http://citifmonline.com/2016/01/03/assist-ec-in-2016-elections-gba-to-members/>.

of the study. Similarly important is the fact that the pages were outside the domain of the authors. The next criteria for selection had to do purely with the number of posts and comments about the issue being addressed. In other words, pages with a massive amount of comments on the subject were included in the sample. Facebook public pages, occupyghana, myjoyonline, JoyNewsonTV, citifmonline, graphiconline, and Nana Akufo Addo were analyzed [Table A1.].

Subsequently, we extracted all the posts and corresponding comments on these pages and sifted out those that were very specific to the Electoral Commission. The information was collected from July 19 to August 30, 2017. During this period, the matter had gained public interest. The sequential report of the issue is indicated in [Table A2.]. The analyzed information includes 7,680 comments in total.

Regarding the quantitative approach, we used data from an online survey that we administered following the petition. The questionnaires were sent via email, and about 150 responses were received. The respondents for the survey were selected using the convenience or accessibility sampling technique. We used this approach for ease and proximity purposes. Certainly, our sample is not representative of the voter population of Ghana who are also internet users. However, a combination of the survey results and qualitative approach allows us, to some extent, to have some insights into the situation at the Commission.

Qualitative approach

Here, we borrow some machine learning techniques to summarize and analyze the data gathered from the Facebook public pages mentioned above. First, we subject the petition and the response note to text mining. The text mining algorithm allows for summarizing the key features of the petition. It enables a proper understanding of appropriateness or inappropriateness of the language used by both sides (EC chair and concerned workers).

Second, we employed Naïve Bayes (NB) Classifier to predict the patterns of sentiments expressed through the Facebook comments. This algorithm performed excellently in text or sentiment categorization.⁴⁵ It allows for the classification of the sentiments as either neutral, unfavourable or favourable. The method is built on the notion of conditional probability using the Bayes rules. Conditional probability is a probable outcome which allows for flipping of the conditions in a much more convenient way. The Bayes formula is considered the basis for learning about unknown distribution and classification of data.⁴⁶ The Bayes formula is given as follows:

$$(1) \quad P(C = c_k | X = x) = P(C = c_k) \times \frac{P(X=x|C=c_k)}{P(X)}$$

45 Lewis, David D. 1998. *Naive (Bayes) at Forty: The Independence Assumption in Information Retrieval*. New Jersey: AT&T Labs -- Research. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BFb0026666>.

46 Lin, Yi. 2002. "Support Vector Machines and the Bayes Rule in Classification." Edited by Mannila, Ramakrishnan Fayyad. *Data Mining and Knowledge Discovery* (University of Wisconsin) 259-275.

$$(2) \quad P^{NB}(C = c_k | X = x) = \frac{P(C=c_k) (\prod_{i=1}^m P(H_i|C)^{N_i(f)})}{P(X)}$$

Where $H_i \{H_1, \dots, H_m\}$ is a predefined set of m features that can appear in a comment; $N_i(f)$ is the number of times H_i occurs in a comment f , which is represented by the comment vector $(\vec{f} = (N_1(f), \dots, N_m(f)))$. The predictive accuracy of the machine learning technique of Naïve Bayes has been estimated at over 85 percent.⁴⁷

Quantitative approach

The second part of our paper is quantitative analysis. The analysis is twofold: a) descriptive statistics and b) regression analysis using Probit. The probit model along with the logit model have been widely employed when dealing with variables that take one of only two possible values representing yes or no, or more generally success or failure. This regression analysis helps identify the perception-related factors that could affect the propensity to vote in the 2020 Ghanaian elections in the wake of the challenges the commission is faced with. The simplified probit model is then given as:

$$y_i = x\beta + \varepsilon, \quad \varepsilon \sim (0, \sigma^2)$$

Where y_i represents the propensity of voting in 2020 election (1=yes and 0=no), x is a vector of explanatory variables used to predict the propensity to vote (x_{1i}, \dots, x_{ki}), β is the parameter of interest and ε is the error term.

Results and discussion

Qualitative analysis

The qualitative analysis is divided into two parts: (i) looking at the petition and response notes, and (ii) sentiment analysis using data gathered from Facebook.

Summary of petition and response

We employed basic text mining techniques to segment the text in a manner that enabled us to judge the temperament as well as the choice of words by the parties in this matter. We did this to measure the emotional expressions of people through text or word choice(s). Emotions are a better gauge of understanding people's feelings and often give accurate results when compared with direct observations.

We begin the analysis by examining the accuracy of Zipf's law, which requires a relationship between the rank of a word and the frequency with which it is used to be negative. We plotted the rank of words of the text and compared them with their frequencies and found out that they are consistent with Zipf's law (Figure 2). Then, we conducted a corpus analysis and presented the visual representation of the word frequencies (Wordcloud). We

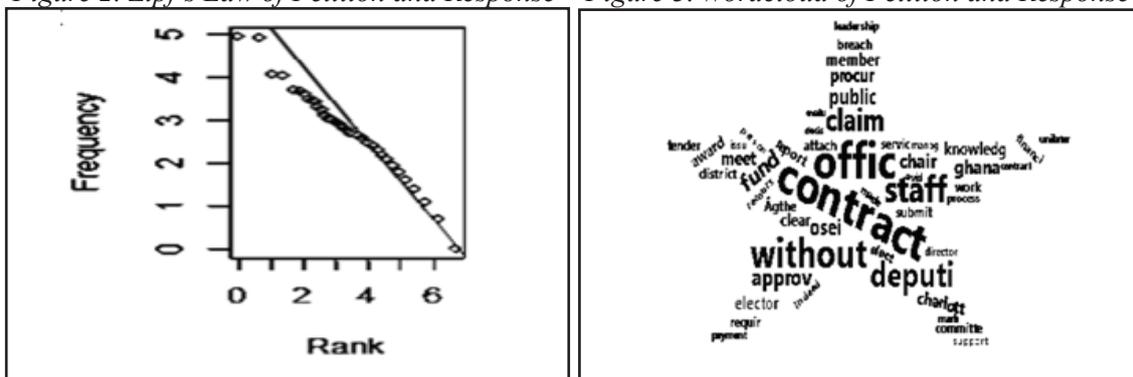
47 Ortigosa, Alvaro, José M. Martín, and Rosa M. Carro. 2013. "Sentiment analysis in Facebook and its application to e-learning." *Computers in Human Behavior* 527–541. www.elsevier.com/locate/comphumbeh.

noticed that despite the serious nature of the issue, both the petitioners and respondents did exhibit lots of decorousness in the expression of their emotion. Among the important words frequently used are [“contract”, “office”, “staff”, “claim” and “fund”]. The word “Contract” was the most frequently used in the text (Figure 3).

We managed to identify under which context each frequent word is used, and we found that the contention has much to do with contract management and administration at the Commission. We can infer that the Commission’s predicaments have more to do with contract administration, which shows that the EC’s organizational structure and internal motivation are not functioning at their best. We again noticed the uncoordinated and weak checks and balances in contract management at the Commission.

We, therefore, postulate that the petition was engendered by these technical individuals who could no longer sit and watch the Commissioner sidestep administrative structures in the performance of key financial transactions. This inference is supported by the many allegations by the concerned workers about overwhelming breaches of administrative processes and procedures especially regarding contract administration by the Commissioner. Also, the Commissioner herself, through her response, gave a whisker of life to this position when she claimed that her Deputies had engaged in financial crimes in the performance of their duties.

Figure 2. Zipf's Law of Petition and Response Figure 3. Wordcloud of Petition and Response



Source: Authors

Sentiment Analysis with Facebook feed

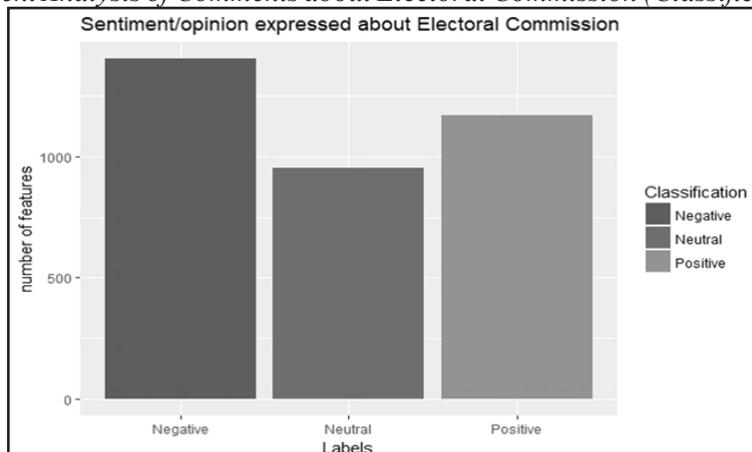
We amalgamated various comments retrieved from the selected page into one data frame. We then carried out sentiment analysis to know the sentiment of Ghanaian Facebook users towards the matter. It is our submission that the views and opinions expressed in these pages were free from prejudice, especially from the pages of myjoyonline and citifmonline – both are privately owned broadcasting houses. Both myjoyonline and citifmonline had the most comments. The information was highly representative according to Zipf’s law (Figure 4a). Stories posted on the pages used for the analysis are open source and could be commented on by any individual regardless of geography.

Having established the conformity and consistency of the data, corpus analysis was

interest. Overall, about 1500 comments were unfavourable about the Chairperson, with about 1200 comments being favourable and about 900 being neutral (Figure 5).

Also, we extracted the regular features from the classifier to shed more light on the reasons assigned for the various sentiments and in the following we present such results.

Figure 5 Sentiment Analysis of Comments about Electoral Commission (Classification by polarity)



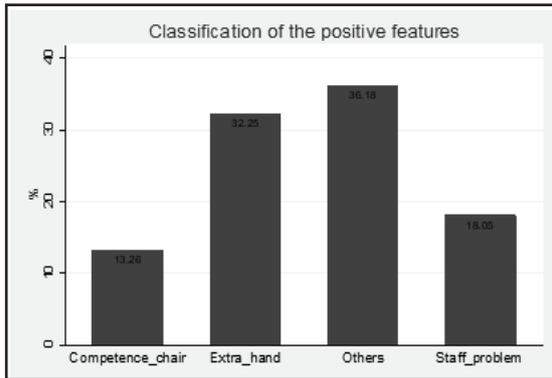
Source: Authors

The positive features reflected much of the perceived competence of the Chairperson, with a significant proportion of the people attributing the happenings to extra-hands. Many also held the notion that the staff, especially the two Deputy Chairpersons of the Commission are responsible for the troubles of the Commission. On the negative features, many felt the Chairperson was unfit to lead the Commission as the revelations of rot under her leadership are legendary. Some asked whether the Chairperson would have made the revelations if the petition had not been filled. Others just opined that the Chairperson's removal was to become a good omen for the Commission, especially since the Chairperson has lost the trust of the staff.

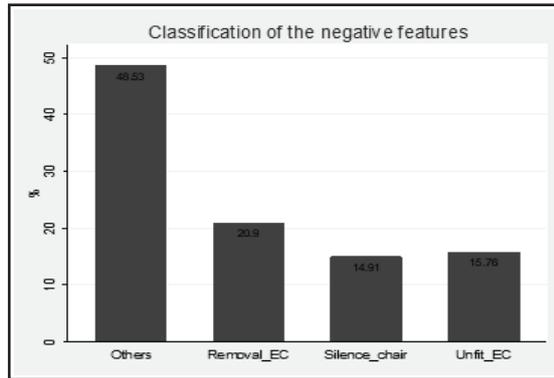
Again, though a significant number of comments were not directly related to whether the Chairperson must stay or not, they offered the most insightful and perhaps the most audacious commentary on the issue. Many of them were of the view that the laws of Ghana must be allowed to work and find a solution to the problem. The Constitution of the Republic and the Electoral Commission Act, both recognized the possibility of a situation such as this one, and procedures have been outlined to deal with them. Moreover, the matter is now traversing the corridors of the laws. What also caught our attention was the "woman factor." A significant portion of the neutral features attributed the happenings to a clash of two powerful women who just cannot coexist (the chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson). Others also felt the Chairperson is facing all the challenges because she is a woman. They expressed the point that if the Chairperson were a male, the matter would have been dead long ago.

Figure 6: Disaggregation of Sentiments about the Chairperson

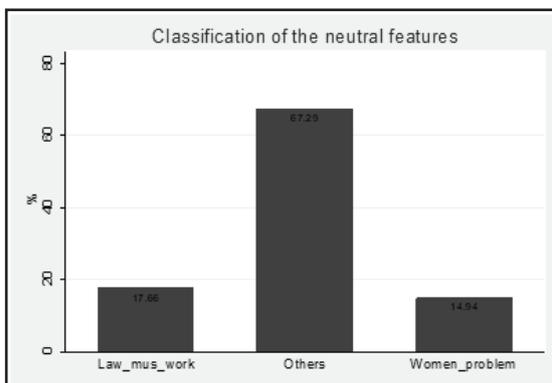
Positive features



Negative features



Neutral features



Source: Authors

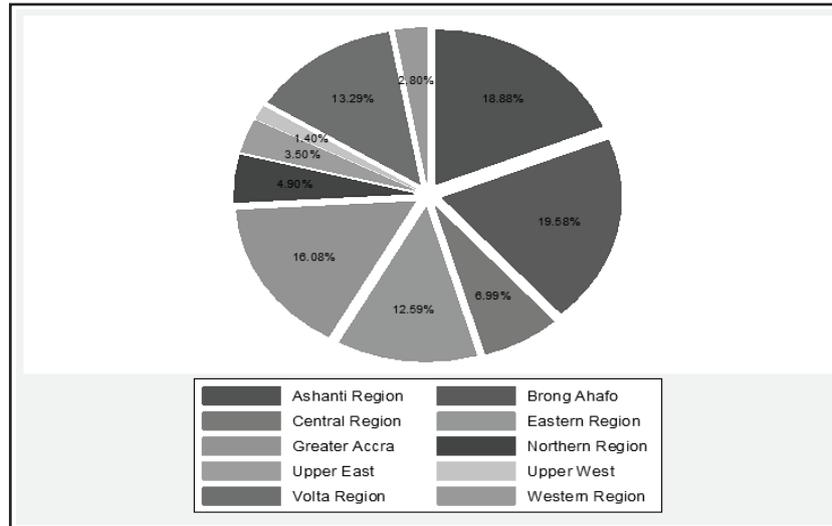
Quantitative analysis

4.2.1. Descriptive statistics

In what follows we show the results of the descriptive statistics using the responses gathered from the online survey. The respondents to the survey come from different parts of the country with Brong-Ahafo and Ashanti Regions having the highest representation of 19.6 percent and 18.9 percent respectively. The region with the lowest representation is the Upper West with only 1.4 percent.

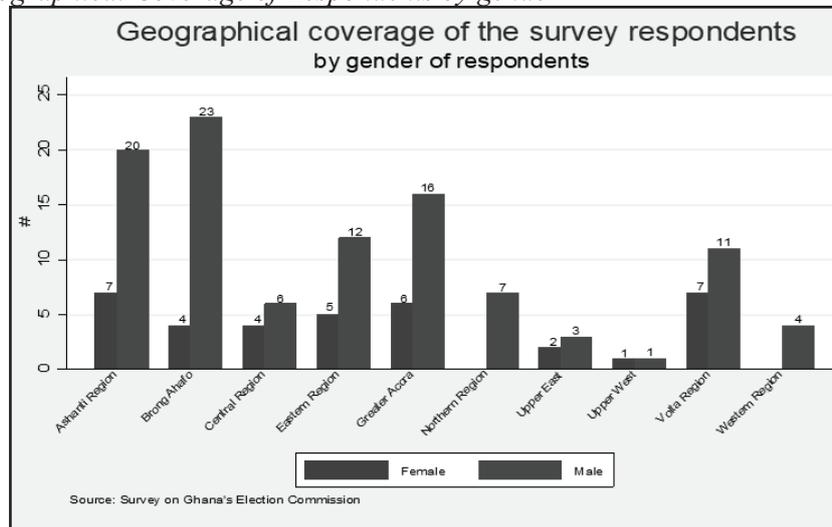
Regarding gender, the Volta and Ashanti Regions had the highest female respondents. Females represented 27 percent of the total responses (See chart 2.). The Western and Northern Regions each had no females participating in the survey. In all the regions, male respondents were higher than females. Despite the non-representability of the data of the voters who are also internet users, we conjecture the low female participation in the survey is attributable to the general disinterest of females in politics despite frantic efforts to encourage participation across the country.

Chart 1. Distribution of Respondents by Home Region



Source: Authors

Chart 2. Geographical Coverage of Respondents by gender



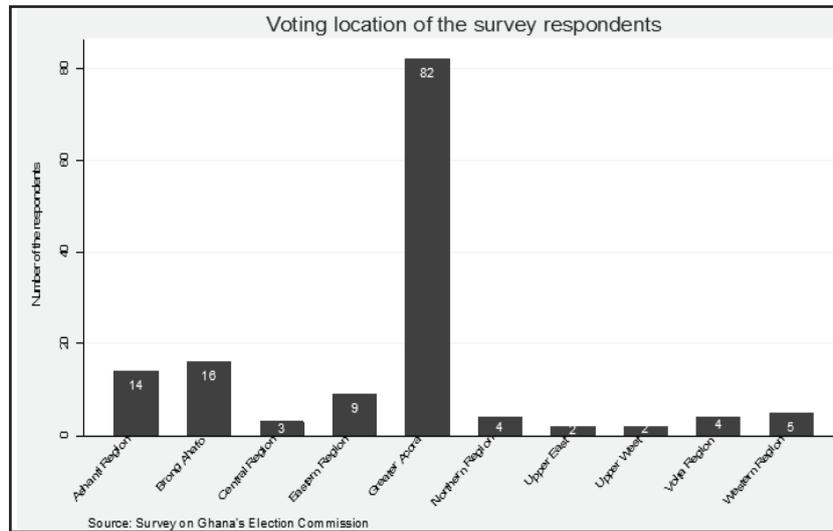
Source: Authors

Although most of the respondents come from Brong-Ahafo and Ashanti Region, some 58 percent of them exercise their franchise in the Greater Accra Region (chart 3). An indication that most of the respondents live or undertake their vocation in Greater Accra Region, the capital of Ghana. This development reflects the fact that most of the respondents are from the working class (see chart 4.) who have less interest in seeking the mandate of their constituents in the future and so turn to vote in areas where they work rather than the region of their birth. It is also instructive to point out that many of the respondents are working class people who have less likeliness to partake in active politics. They are interested in the political stability of the country so that they can ply their various vocations.

Most of the respondents were within the category of the first stage to the second stage of tertiary education. About 40 percent had the second stage of tertiary education degrees

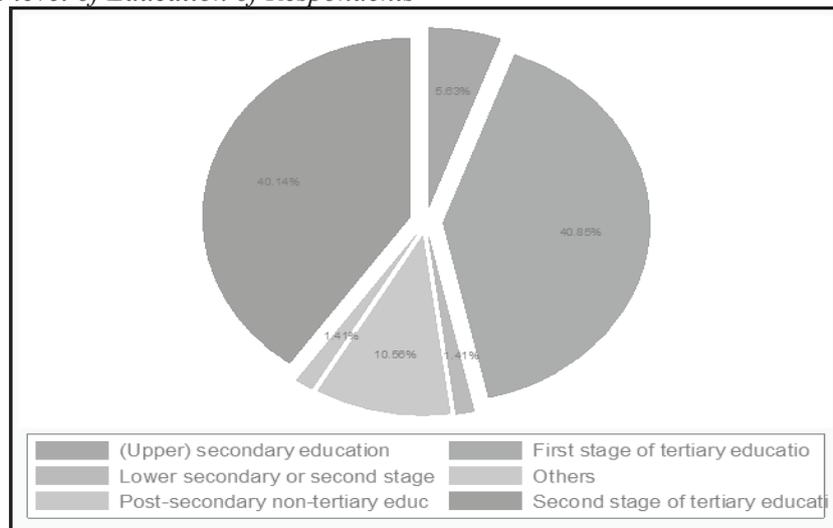
while 41 percent had the first stage of tertiary education qualification. The two categories together constituted 81 percent of the total respondents.

Chart 3. Voting Location of Respondents



Source: Authors

Chart 4. The level of Education of Respondents



Source: Authors

Regression results

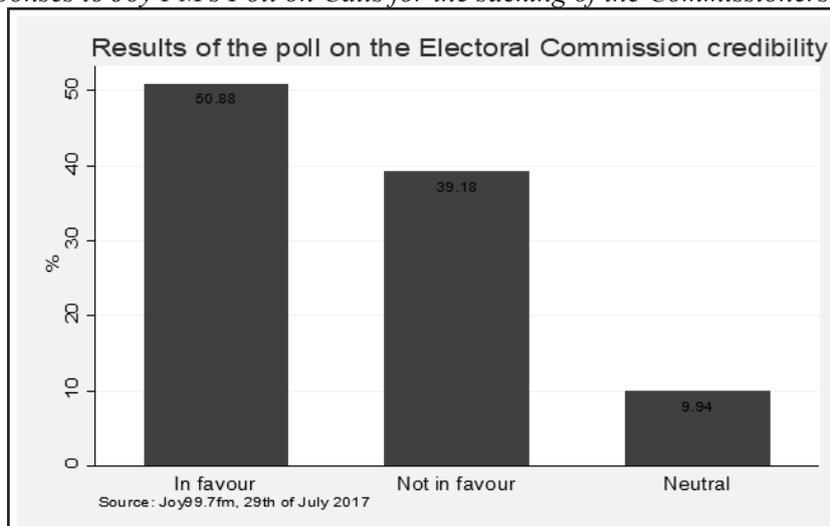
The results show that those respondents (42 responses) who see the Commission (the Institution) as the reason for the many peaceful elections have a significant and positive propensity to vote in the 2020 elections (Table 1). Their view of the Commission is one that is well established and difficult for the desires of any or all the Commissioners to override the choice of Ghanaians in any election. The established protocols of the Institution are laborious enough that they could not be substituted with the interest of the Commissioners. The involvement of the key parties, especially the political parties through the Inter-Party Advisory Committee (IPAC) in all levels of decision-making, has been extremely helpful

in boosting the transparency and trust of people in the Commission. There are occasions, however, when the IPAC recommendations are completely ignored.

From the results, those respondents who consider the Commission as the reason for the many peaceful elections are defiant in their resolve in participating in the future elections. This result confirms the importance of the Electoral Commission to the election process in Ghana. Many respondents believe that the Commission could still hold a fair election for which reason they are willing to vote in such future elections. The result is consistent with that of many studies which have established the relevance of the Election Commission to hold credible elections.

Also, our analysis of Joy FM polls from July, 29 2017, on the question “Has the leadership conflict at the Electoral Commission eroded your confidence in the commission’s credibility and do you support civil society calls for the Chairperson and her two deputies to step aside?” indicates that though many participants in the survey called for the sacking of the Chairperson, they were equally confident in the Commission to hold a credible election [see chart below]. The result suggests that confidence of the Ghanaians in the Commission has not waned in the wake of happenings in the Commission.

Chart 5. Responses to Joy FM's Poll on Calls for the sacking of the Commissioners



Source: Authors

However, it is instructive to note that in the specific question about the 2016 elections and the conduct of the Commission before, during and after the election, 106 respondents indicated their dissatisfaction with the Commission. The propensity of these respondents to vote in future elections is slim, as indicated by the negative coefficient. It may seem that our analysis of the Commission as the reason for many peaceful elections under the 4th Republican Constitution is in aberrance with the responses here. It needs mentioning that firstly, the responses received for both questions are not identical and secondly, the questions are different in direction. While one is more introspective, the other is more specific. The introspectiveness of the question shed light on the positive propensity to vote since the country had enjoyed many past elections deemed credible.

Scanning through Table 1, we find that the magnanimity of the Ghanaian is another factor which was very significant in the regression. The Ghanaian is perceived to be hospitable and peace loving. Though this view is perceptive and subjective, our results seem to establish that there lies some truth in this perception. In fact, those respondents who see the magnanimity of the Ghanaian as a reason for the many peaceful election processes indicated likeliness to vote in the 2020 elections. It seems, therefore, that the respondents, many of whom are apolitical, are committed to the country, hence their willingness to participate in future elections. Many of them are corporate people, and a peaceful country is more favourable for their trade. Also, there are no such findings in the literature that suggest the involvement of the high-end educated middle class in political upheavals in Ghana. Economic considerations are their prime concern and anything that heightens economic cost is bad for their businesses.

The authors acknowledge the limited value of the regression results due to several drawbacks, including the selection bias or non-randomness of the sample. However, the fact that the results appear consistent with those from the sentiment analysis gives us room to believe they are representative of some segment of Ghanaian voters, especially the social media users. In fact, no election in any part of the world is impermeable as infractions do occur occasionally. Many of the variables were statistically insignificant, and we do not discuss them. We, however, wish to indicate that they are still relevant in fully appreciating and explaining election-related works.

Conclusions

The paper looks at the implications of the standoff that has embroiled Ghana's Electoral Commission on its credibility from the viewpoint of internet users. The results show that the propensity to participate in future elections in Ghana is still high and the trust in the Commission seems not attenuated despite the strong reservations about the conduct and behaviour of the Commissioners.

The paper has confirmed many findings of the relevance of Election Management Body in the staging of free and fair elections. We have demonstrated through our sentiment analysis the reverence people attach to constitutionally established bodies and their willingness to protect them from perceived political interference. The study also shows the readiness of the people to purge the Election Commissioners who are found culpable of the laws of the country in the discharge of their duties. They are equally ready to allow the procedurally enshrined structures to work in addressing charges brought against such persons. Such indication of trust in the systems of the country is good for the deepening of good governance and the further shoring up of the credibility of the election system.

It is also evident that many targeted people do not see elections as the end and therefore are magnanimous in conduct before, during and after elections. There are defined structures by the laws of Ghana in addressing election-related concerns. The systems have often

been swift in attending to the concerns of different parties. The trust in the systems has ensured that people do not act on their own.

We acknowledge the shortcomings of our methods. However, our results from the sentiment analysis and regression model collaborate with each other and bear consistent results, which allow us to make meaningful insights. We, however, wish to indicate that the methods could be improved for a more accurate result. For instance, incorporating replies to comments would increase the data set for sentiment analysis, and that would precisely improve the quality of the results from sentiment analysis. Moreover, improvement in the identification of the subject of interest in each comment would enable the full utilization of unsupervised machine learning algorithms rather than semi-supervised, which turned out to be a time-consuming approach.

Preserving the credible election process is the most crucial function the Commission must strive to achieve. As the survey result indicated, over 80 percent of the respondents stated that they would not accept an election process superintended by “alleged” corrupt Commissioners. It thus indicates the importance of Commissioners to a credible election process. Commissioners must be above reproach with no dent to their persons. A credible election is a function of trust people have in the organizing institution and its processes.

Also, although in a general sense, there was a favourable sentiment expressed in both the text mining and the Facebook sentiment analysis, the unfavourable comments cannot be ignored—more so when they constitute a significant number. There is the need for a paradigm shift from the old ways that the Commission has been conducting its business and for conscious efforts at warming itself towards the public. This is critical, especially since trust is the most fundamental requirement of any credible Election Management Body.

Implications

Inasmuch as the selection of the Commissioners is a constitutional matter, we do not make much commentary about it. We, however, hope that the lessons from these findings guide our public discourse concerning the selection of Commissioners into public institutions. In that regard, we opine that the selection of future Chairpersons should be emphasised more on competence and must be on competitive basis rather than the mere constitutional right of the President. An open advert should be made to the general Ghanaians, applicants screened by a competent body, preferably the Council of States, and shortlisted persons should then be forwarded to the Presidency. The selection of apolitical and competent Commissioners in such an open and transparent manner would potentially boost the confidence of citizens in the electoral commission and thus further stimulate the trust of people in the Commission in the delivery of competent services.

Second, we wish to indicate that it is never our intention to prejudice or stampede the on-going investigations under the auspices of the Chief Justice into the matter. We,

however, would like to indicate that the sentiments of Ghanaians (Facebook users) are important on a matter as delicate as this. The opinions/sentiments expressed by Ghanaians online probably are not scientific nor logical, but they represent the views of many Facebook users who also represent some segment of the voting population. Since election credibility is about opinion, it is critical that such expressed opinion counts in matters relating to the Commission.

We also think that there are implications of the study for the dispute resolution mechanism of the Commission and it is proposed that a duly constituted dispute resolution system be instituted for the Commission with membership drawn from the Parliament of Ghana, the Council of States, the National Peace Council and IPAC to look into conflicts among the Commissioners when they arise. A duly constituted and functioning dispute resolution Committee will be an excellent ground for resolving occasional conflicts among Commissioners before they degenerate into serious problems.

APPENDIX

Table 1: Determinants of certainty of voting in 2020 election

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	Coef.	Std. Err.	P>z	Coef.	Std. Err.	P>z
	Model 1	Model 2		Model 2		
Gender (1=female)	0.090	0.313	0.774	0.349	0.344	0.311
Age 18-24 yrs (1=yes)	-0.035	0.736	0.962	0.349	0.344	0.311
Age 25-32 yrs (1=yes)	-0.554	0.299	0.064	-0.162	0.772	0.833
Age 33-60 yrs (1=yes)	0	(omitted)		-0.589	0.330	0.074
(Upper) secondary education (1=yes)	-0.142	0.580	0.806	0	(omitted)	
First stage of tertiary education (1=yes)	0.540	0.306	0.078	0.021	0.602	0.972
Other levels (1=yes)	0.283	0.475	0.550	0.433	0.335	0.196
Second stage of tertiary education (1=yes)	0	(omitted)		0.421	0.566	0.457
Satisfaction with the supervision in previous election (1=yes)	0.072	0.297	0.808	0	(omitted)	
Importance of the commission to all the election processes (1=yes)	-0.679	0.353	0.054	0.114	0.320	0.721
Support call for a strong, united and competent EC to lead future elections (1=sure)	-0.720	0.608	0.236	-0.885	0.396	0.025
Commission as the reason for the many peaceful elections (1=True)	0.915	0.382	0.017	-0.713	0.638	0.264
Magnanimity of the Ghanaian as reason for the peace elections in Ghana (1=True)	0.592	0.316	0.061	0.883	0.428	0.039
Influence of the appointing authority of the Commissioners on EC (1=true)	0.113	0.285	0.693	0.606	0.352	0.085
Acceptance of election results declared by "alleged" corrupt EC (1=yes)	0.298	0.426	0.484	-0.023	0.306	0.939
Independence of the Election Commission (1=necessary)	0.072	0.397	0.856	0.450	0.460	0.328
Support any individual wishing to purge the current commission through (1=yes)	1.032	0.348	0.003	0.207	0.434	0.634
Brong Ahafo				1.218	0.400	0.002
Eastern Region				0.485	0.710	0.494
Greater Accra				-0.018	0.736	0.981
Northern Region				-0.233	0.472	0.621
Upper West				-0.121	0.891	0.892
Western Region				0.143	1.165	0.903
Constant	0.200	0.739	0.786	0.409	0.929	0.660
				0.164	0.910	0.857

Table A.1: Data Sources for Sentiment Analysis

Public Pages	Description	No. of Followers as of 1/09/17	Selection	Reason for selection or non-selection
Citi 97.3 FM	Media House	1,056,077	Selected	Had significant postings on the Electoral Commission
JoyNewsonTV	Media House	704,426	Selected	Had significant postings on the Electoral Commission
Joy 99.7 FM	Media House	1,029,422	Selected	Had significant postings on the Electoral Commission
Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo	Politician	1,613,383	Selected	Had significant postings on the Electoral Commission
OccupyGhana	Pressure Group	51,362	Selected	Had significant postings on the Electoral Commission
Daily Graphic	Media House	870,163	Selected	Had significant postings on the Electoral Commission
Peace 104.3 FM	Media House	126,435	Not Selected	They had few or no posting on the Electoral Commission matter
Starr FM 103.5	Media House	7,621	Not Selected	They had few or no posting on the Electoral Commission matter
CDD-Ghana - Ghana Center for Democratic Development	Think Tank	21,819	Not Selected	They had few or no posting on the Electoral Commission matter
Adom 106.3 FM	Media House	569,131	Not Selected	They had few or no posting on the Electoral Commission matter
Nhyira 104.5 FM	Media House	611,745	Not Selected	They had few or no posting on the Electoral Commission matter
Imani Center for Policy & Education	Think Tank	36,057	Not Selected	They had few or no posting on the Electoral Commission matter

Table A .2: Situational Report

Action	Date
Concerned Staff filed petition to the President	19/07/2017
The presidency receives the petition	19/07/2017
The chairperson response to the petition	22/07/2017
Presidency forward the petition to Chief Justice	26/07/2017
Petition against the Deputy Commissioners filed with the Presidency	25/07/2017
Presidency forward Petition to CJ	28/07/2017
CJ initiate investigative procedures	19/12/2017

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Risk, Pre-crime and Counterterrorism: Assessing Pakistan's Approach

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ABSTRACT: There is a gradual global shift in understanding counterterrorism from a risk management perspective. It takes into account the idea of Risk Society and can explain diverse practices adopted by states, particularly after September 11, 2001, in tackling terrorism. The resultant birth of a culture of fear dictates deviation in the aim of national security strategies from ensuring justice to safety through pre-emption. The Western states have of late increasingly stressed the need to eliminate the threat of terrorism as their top priority. Surprisingly, though, there is a dearth of certain crucial states in the prevalent discourse, which, despite being disadvantaged in the wake of developmental challenges, have encompassed congruent transformations. This paper aims to analyse whether Pakistan's security and counterterrorism initiatives match those states that continue to invoke the primary interest of scholars and researchers around the globe. Such analysis retains the lens of risk management as a mode of governance in countering terrorism.

Keywords: Risk, Counter-Terrorism, Proportionality, Challenges, Appraisal, Policy.

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Introduction

The September 11 attacks have proved to be instrumental in revolutionising the global security architecture in numberless ways. States continue to exhibit a diversity of responses in addressing the single cause of tackling terrorism. Despite individual efforts, the globalised nature of the threat of terrorism has erected collaborative structures and a comprehensive mechanism in waging a war, though not in the classical sense. As a result, an amorphous framework conspicuously seeks to strengthen itself on the basis of practices established in the past, and aspires to tackle futuristic probabilities.

The developed Western states, with reasonable resources and politically mature institutions, respond assertively to threats emanating from terrorism or militancy. It seems a bit overstretched to judge states confronted with developmental challenges for insufficiency to promise comparable security dividends. Understandably, with basic thrust on hurdles like poverty alleviation, education, clean drinking water or energy access, sparing even basic minimum resources can be daunting and cumbersome. Moreover, many young democracies are still struggling to attain a surefooted character of encapsulating peoples' aspirations, and generate institutional values representative of the will of citizens. Regretfully, many such fledgling democracies find their inhabitants a degree removed from government business, which directly results in failure to generate

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an integrated push for strategic ownership of policy imperatives. These states, residing at the lowest end of the developmental spectrum, act or seem to be acting as antithetical agents to the democratic forces. Naturally, they are a poor choice for comparison with post-industrial developed nations. Such states face instability, which manifests itself in conflict, terrorism and kleptocracy. The resultant isolated citizenry, in many cases, requires assistance and intervention by the developed states for arresting emerging threats.

Countries like Pakistan, however, find themselves in a unique middle position between the two opposing ends of the developmental and security spectrum of states. Even though their progress leaves much room for improvement, they act in consonance with the developed states, and indicate equal expression of urgent global concerns. A comparison of measures, strategies and practices adopted by Pakistan and the West should prove useful in determining Pakistan's emulation capacity and may in turn predict the future trajectory for other states struggling to overcome development challenges as well as security threats.

Contemporary CT and Risk Perspectives of the Western States

Prevention of terrorism is incessantly becoming vague and intangible. The war against terrorists does not entail a classical confrontation with an identifiable and formidable enemy in some predefined arena. Without undermining the significance of rhetoric, the actual spectacle of measures against terrorism makes both prevention as well as action essentially an exercise in risk management, aimed at countering the so called new terrorism in a very utilitarian sense and without moral considerations. Utilization of war jargon has made it possible for states to resort to the use of military force for the neutralization of threats emanating from terrorist networks. Such application of force is not necessarily prudent, and may likely to be counterproductive vis-à-vis utilization of police and intelligence agencies.¹ Nevertheless, such an open-ended struggle with unforeseeable and incalculable material gains lures permanence in the contemporary security realm. Beck's original framework of risk society predates the contemporary counterterrorism measures, but it assists in gauging current predominant strategies to counter terrorism from the risk perspective with reliable accuracy.

The current counterterrorism paradigm is distinct in its peculiarity from the already established criminal justice system. This risk-based securitization, through global diffusion, does not only facilitate a security apparatus but also rejuvenates political imperatives in acknowledging a culture of uncertainty and fear. The resulting voluntary and calculated governance through terrorism (or more precisely, risk prevention) satisfies the practical

¹ Yee-Kuang Heng, "Unravelling the 'War' on Terrorism: A Risk-Management Exercise in War Clothing?" *Security Dialogue* 33, no. 2 (2002): 234.

need for the responsibility to control. The need to account for the ethical component is superseded by the fear of the known unknown. Avoiding harm dulls the traditional debates about freedom and justice, which are relegated to less urgent criminal prosecutions and considerations. In the wake of political expediencies, risks are attributed to identities for distinctive categorization and profiling, resulting unavoidably in the otherness of outsiders. Invocation of consequent leverage to gain precautionary momentum erodes the obligation to protect fundamental rights by denigrating caution in the exercise of state power, even if on the basis of risk value alone.² The veracity of Foucauldian insights regarding the internalization power of discourses is exemplified by how the environment of risk is understood, owned, and, consequently, gives license to preemptory measures.

The application of counterterrorism measures through a risk management perspective leads to governance and politics of fear. In such a context, arbitrariness and swiftness of response delineates the locus of the major Western states, or so does the research literature indicate. With such an edge, security institutions can initiate actions merely based on suspicion alone, without the need of formal charge, prosecution or evidence. In other words, a shift is being witnessed today from the post-crime ideal of impartiality inherent in the criminal justice system to a pre-crime concept of national security that retains a politically charged character.³ It can be argued that the very nature of terrorism itself elucidates a pre-emptive aspect, allowing it greater exclusivity from the cautiously calculated ambit of the judiciary. It is obvious that ethico-legal stresses will surface but that may, in the future, result in bringing the executive and judiciary closer for the effective management of terrorist threats by building fresh foundations of peace, security and justice systems. In the current circumstances, nevertheless, a fledgling hybrid system seems to regulate the legal processes in the security domain, deriving structural elements from the traditional criminal justice system in the quest for suitable decisions, albeit hurried ones.

The increasingly integrated and connected nature of the world renders local threats dangerous for the entire globe. Latent in the term “national security” is a conceptual compromise, justifying that it is essentially global security by another name. Beck’s description of the cosmopolitan outlook, where “national spaces have become denationalized” and the “national is no longer national, just as the international is no longer international,” is prophetically close to what current variations exhibit.⁴

2 Gabe Mythen and Sandra Walklate, “Terrorism, Risk and International Security: The Perils of Asking ‘What If?’” *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 2-3 (2008): 229.

3 Jude McCulloch and Sharon Pickering, “Pre-Crime and Counter-terrorism: Imagining Future Crime in the ‘War on Terror’,” *The British Journal of Criminology*, 9, no. 5 (2009): 633-640.

4 Ulrich Beck, “The Terrorist Threat: World Risk Society Revisited,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 19, no. 4 (2002): 53.

Pakistan's CT Approach & Congruence with the West

The evolution of diverse states around the globe has been distinct. The expansive literature on state evolution and democracy mostly derives standards from the West or the aged states because they are considered politically mature and fair examples of human emancipation. In the context of counterterrorism and security after September 11, the United States and United Kingdom occupy the central role in the breadth of discourse, followed by other allies like Australia. With the exception of a limited number of focused studies, catering to distinct factors and variables, most of the scholarly accounts do not take into account the nuances and approaches of counterterrorism measures and strategies of major players in the global fight against terrorism. One example is Pakistan, which, despite having been labelled as the major non-NATO ally and having suffered a shockingly large number of casualties as a result of terrorism, remains far from the interest and purview of researchers and scholars. One result of such apathy is the birth of flawed assumptions and scholarly distance in the research arena of otherwise exhaustive collaboration on the ground.⁵

For the purpose of this paper, Pakistan's counterterrorism approach can be compared with four main issues related to the West: whether actions by Pakistan fit the risk management perspective; whether there are arbitrary arrangements for fighting terrorists and militants in Pakistan; whether there has been a generation of "othered" groups through the attribution of risk identity by Pakistani state institutions; and whether the gap between the traditional criminal justice system and the penal apparatus for terrorists is prominent. In the case these measures are met, the hypothesis that the stresses and strains felt by the West are not alien to other countries will be strengthened. It shall also question the assumption of Mythen & Walklate that the post-industrial developed nations prioritize terrorist risks more exhaustively or feel resultant consequences more seriously, as compared to states that are struggling to achieve developmental dividends.⁶

Granted that a state is serious in fighting the canker of terrorism, fundamentalism, radicalization and militancy, it has to take into account the fact that the neutralization of threats (that have not yet occurred and may occur in future) is the only way a large number of people can be prevented from suffering. Moreover, this recognition presupposes that the criminal system that penalizes criminals is reactive and, consequently, preventive in nature. Pakistan's fight against terrorism, emanating from Afghanistan, the bordering tribal regions and hostile elements, has internalised the risk management perspective in a comprehensive and swift manner. The reason is the frequency of the attacks, which are mostly carried out by either suicide-bombers or *fidayeen*.⁷ As Heng points out, one

5 There is an extensive arrangement of cooperation between states fighting terrorism as far as actual field activities are concerned. They range from joint operations, intelligence sharing, provision of logistics and infrastructure, as well as concessions for the common goal.

6 Mythen and Walklate, "Terrorism, Risk and International Security," 229.

7 Fidayeen attacks are carried out in the name of religion in light of the distorted ideologies of the groups, which include any tactic that ultimately results in a terrorist killing himself.

indication of risk management on the classical foundations (manifesting itself in practical terms on the counterterrorism front) is the deployment of military force by states, as opposed to the propriety of the utilization of police led by intelligence agencies.⁸ Almost all the major operations against the terrorists are of necessity carried out by the military in order to manage the threat of the possible future occurrence of a terrorist attack, locally or globally.⁹ Intelligence is utilised for effective operations whereas policing, in numerous instances, continues to perform the routine role of managing crime. In addition, certain specialized units for CT operations that have been raised may, gradually, assist the civilian operational forces on the ground in a comparable manner in the future. Such arrangements are in line with actions taken from the risk management perspective in the major states fighting terrorism at home and abroad.

It is of equal importance to see how the discourse of the traditional documents is now being reinterpreted in the wake of emergent contemporary requirements. The security services in Pakistan are responsible for identification and the neutralization of threats to the security of the state as they were during the colonial times. The same arcane ambits are opulent with actionable flexibility to yield required meaning from risk perspective in a contemporary setting.

If the recurring feature of risk governance for terrorism is putting in place arbitrary structures and arrangements, often in conflict with the constitutional fundamentals protected through the judiciary, Pakistan has certainly put in place such measures. These measures not only strengthen the security agencies, acting on the basis of intelligence, to detain individuals for extended durations but they also grant an excuse for the absence of evidence and formal charge against the detainees. Para 3(2) of the Protection of Pakistan Ordinance 2014, for example, states that the responsible civil or armed forces “may detain any enemy alien, combatant enemy, or any person connected or reasonably believed to be connected in commission of” an act under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997.¹⁰ Such measures are numerous and are characteristic of transformations that have occurred as a result of a rhetorical war against terrorism around the globe, especially in the West.

Clearly, one can see the supremacy of the avoidance of negative consequence as the primary impetus of the security measures. This has resulted in the generation of narratives that, in consonance with a constructivist paradigm, regulate the daily life of Pakistani citizens. Such a threat-rich atmosphere has also resulted in the strict delineation of identities and the growth of group or ethnic sentiments previously unknown. One obvious outcome is the assertive provincialism within the state and growing suspicion

8 Heng, “Unravelling the ‘War’ on Terrorism,” 234.

9 “General James Mattis, US Secretary of Defence Called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Qamar Javed Bajwa at GHQ Today,” Pakistan Army, accessed December 16, 2017 <https://www.pakistanarmy.gov.pk/awpreview/pDetails.aspx?pType=PressRelease&pID=1310>.

10 “Protection of Pakistan Ordinance (PPO),” Islamabad: National Assembly Pakistan, promulgated January 22, 2014.

of groups and classes of individuals. Just as there has been an increase in Islamophobia in the US and UK after the September 11 attacks, in Pakistan too a few Pashtuns (ethnic categorization of residents of tribal areas bordering Afghanistan and Pakistan) mistakenly claim to be the “othered” ones who allegedly carry with them the risk identity wherever they go.¹¹ Such ethnic profiling naturally poses strains on their acceptability in other parts of the state, and a resultant grudge against the rest of the citizens.¹²

The final indicator for assessing the congruence of risk-based transformative shifts relates to the issue of governmentality and requires tracing a widening gap between the traditional criminal justice system and arbitrary penal mechanisms in the absence of conclusive evidence. The ethical component, in the wake of the magnitude of damage as a result of any likely terrorist incident, has replaced political expediency in Pakistan. The “What If” component, despite the ideal need for its political inspection, has resulted in the establishment of military courts, distinct from the constitutional traditional judicial system. The attack on Army Public School in Peshawar in December 2014, which left more than 140 children dead, acted as a catalyst to put in place military tribunals through constitutional amendment.¹³ The pretext of the establishment of such tribunals highlighted the insufficiency of the regular judicial system as it requires evidence, prosecution, witnesses and laws in place. Previously, most of the militants and terrorists remained successful in getting acquittal, after adjudication that lingered for years. Military tribunals, by squeezing the time for the finalization of cases, and by awarding capital punishments, without the need for formal judicial processes, have indicated that the need to reduce the risk of terrorism weighs more than ethical or constitutional limits, especially when the yoke of bureaucratic and judicial tradition is heavy for quick reformation.

Conclusion

As examined above, Pakistan, despite acute resource constraints and developmental and energy challenges, has followed the trajectory of the developed West. This questions the hypothesis of Mythen & Walklate about the more serious impact of terrorism on the West or the advanced states.¹⁴ The existence of these measures in Pakistan gives strength to the

11 This is the result of Post 9/11 shift in security and CT strategy, as well as the utilization of risk narrative to explain terrorism by the politician. Pashtuns are regarded as an honest, hardworking and honourable race.

12 Frud Behzan and Daud Khattak, “Pashtuns Allege Persecution As Pakistan Wages Antiterrorism Battle,” accessed December 16, 2017, <https://www.rferl.org/a/pakistani-pashtun-persecution-antiterrorism/28341173.html>.

13 Maria Kari, “No Sunset for Pakistan’s Secret Military Courts,” *The Diplomat*, accessed December 15, 2017, <https://thediplomat.com/2017/04/no-sunset-for-pakistans-secret-military-courts/>.

14 There is disproportionate mismatch of the assumed seriousness of damage of less number of lives in the West as opposed to the daily killings of individuals in the less privileged and developed world. It may seem like a prejudiced assessment by ordinary application of reason. The origins of many terrorist acts may also in actuality lie with the misadventures of the West.

idea that the global risk society is increasingly connected and is run by congruent logic because the results and outcome of threats affect the entire globe, without any regard to geographical considerations. Like the Game Theory inverted, the climate of not knowing enough and then not knowing about not knowing enough has affected the way the security apparatus deals with threats.

Terrorism will remain a major security preoccupation for many years to come. The impetus is on finding the best approach in dealing with the diverse nature of terrorist groups. The importance of considering terrorism as war is prudent in cases where tactics adopted by terrorists include guerrilla activities as well, or where they form sufficient strength to confront the state forces openly.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the current nascent arrangement in dealing with terrorism should ultimately result in a harmonious coexistence of different state institutions, working under clear provisions, in line with constitutions, fundamental human rights and ethical obligations. By achieving effective state coordination, both the developing as well as developed world can reinforce each other in the common pursuit of global peace.

¹⁵ Brenda Lutz and James Lutz, "Terrorism" in *Contemporary Security Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2016), 307.

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A Tinted Politics of Memory: Anniversaries Caught between Political Camps in Taiwan in 2017

*Simon Preker**

ABSTRACT: Thirty years after Taiwan lifted martial law in 1987, Taiwanese society today is open to a re-evaluation of its authoritarian past. Following the beginning of the Tsai presidency in 2016, Taiwan's quest for a national identity has become more perceivable in its memory culture. The year 2017 marked the 70th anniversary of the February 28 Incident as well as the 80th anniversary of the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War. Questions of whether and how to commemorate the 1937 Marco Polo Bridge Incident, as well as the search for historical equivalences are overshadowed by the two large political camps and their respective allies. Third parties such as the CCP or Japan also offer conflicting narratives and seek to influence Taiwan's historiography, which will ultimately shape Taiwan's future. More than just vying for the prerogative of the interpretation of memory, these issues also led to a more fundamental question: What should be considered Taiwanese history?

Keywords: Taiwan, February 28 Incident, Marco Polo Bridge Incident, Politics of Commemoration, National Identity, Chthonic, Tsai Ing-wen.

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After Qing China's defeat in the First Sino-Japanese War in 1895, Taiwan fell under Japanese rule. Japan began numerous imperialist policies, focusing primarily on infrastructure and construction, but also education. Starting in 1937, "Japanization" efforts intensified under the slogan *Kōminka*. Following the Japanese surrender in World War II, the island became part of the Republic of China (ROC) after 50 years of Japanese rule in October 1945. In 1946 the civil war between Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang (KMT) and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) of Mao Zedong continued. At the same time, the KMT rulers of Taiwan encountered difficult circumstances. Japanese colonialism had been met with benevolence by many Taiwanese and its results posed a great challenge to the new Chinese administrators. After all, Taiwanese by large had fought for the Japanese Empire and not for the ROC in the war. Up to 1945, the Chinese language had played a much less important role than Japanese. Other languages such as Minnan (today sometimes referred to as "Taiwanese"), Hakka and aboriginal languages further complicated the Sinicization efforts of Chiang's ROC. Last but not least, many Taiwanese were angered by the privileged treatment of newcomers from the Chinese

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mainland.

About one and a half year later, the tensions escalated. On February 27, 1947, one person was killed in a fight regarding monopoly regulations. The KMT authorities refused to deal with the case properly and Taipei's people rebelled. The same night, martial law and a curfew were declared. The next day, an island-wide uprising gained momentum. Also, Chinese civilians, who just recently had moved to Taiwan, fell victim to the violence of the rebelling Taiwanese. These newcomers were often targeted for random reasons, such as their lack of command of indigenous languages or Japanese. The insurgency was crushed with utter force by Governor Chen Yi (KMT). Chiang Kai-shek suspected his communist civil war enemies behind the uprising. On March 7, mainland KMT troops disembarked close to Taipei. The following military operation continued until May 12 and resulted, according to official estimates, in 18,000 to 28,000 deaths.¹

With the KMT's defeat on the mainland and the proclamation of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, Taiwan became the last fortress of "Free China." At the same time, public discussion of the February 28 Incident, usually abbreviated as *228-Shibian* (228-Incident) was a taboo. The following "White Terror" of Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo (who after his father's death ruled the country until 1988) led to the persecution of an estimated 140,000 Taiwanese accused of dissident activities. More than 3,000 were killed, their deaths hardly acknowledged.

July 2017 marked the 30th anniversary of the lifting of martial law in 1987. Over decades, the KMT framed the 228-Incident as orchestrated by communists or ethnic extremists.² The beginning of democratization allowed a critical approach towards the 228-Incident and the "White Terror." The director Hou Hsiao-hsien cinematically discussed the 228-Incident in his 1989 movie *A City of Sadness*. The first public apology by then President Lee Teng-hui for the incident followed in 1995. Lee was the first Taiwan-born president, who in his youth had lived through the education system installed by the Japanese. While the two Chiang's clearly saw themselves as keepers of a Chinese tradition and a common Chinese cause, Lee's presidency (1988-2000) in general paved the way for a new separatist Taiwan Strait-policy.

As a key figurehead of democratization, Lee is held in high esteem, in particular by critics of the KMT-rule. Born in 1923, Lee was a short-time member of the Communist Party at around the time of the 228-Incident. His role in the 1947 uprising is disputed. Lee left the KMT in 2001 and now, despite his old age, serves as a father figure for the separatist currents in Taiwan's political landscape, the so called "green camp." This camp consists of a number of movements, organizations and political parties, all demanding a stronger political, cultural, and economic independence from the PRC. Taiwan's current

1 Chen Fang-ming, "Time for a new 228 Incident report." *The Taipei Times*, February 27, 2017, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2017/02/27/2003665769/2>.

2 Mo Yan-chih, "Remembering 228: Ghosts of the past are yet to be laid to rest," *The Taipei Times*, February 28, 2006, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/print/2006/02/28/2003295019>.

president, Tsai Ing-wen, and her Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) are also part of the “green camp.” Opposed to them is the “blue camp,” consisting of the KMT and other organizations and parties who don’t support independence and, in some cases, even favor a political unification with China under the PRC’s “One Country, Two Systems”-policy.

These two camps dominate the politics of commemoration in recent decades. In 1997, February 28 was declared a national holiday. The presidency of the DPP-politician Chen Shui-bian (2000-2008) continued Lee’s separatist direction. At the same time, the struggle around the narrative revolving the event intensified further. Memorial sites were built,³ even politicians of the KMT (for the first time being in the role of opposition) expressed regrets and apologized. Since 2006, flags are raised at half-mast on February 28 and even after its return to power under the presidency of Ma Ying-jeou (2008-2016), the KMT by large did not openly obstruct the re-negotiation of Taiwan’s authoritarian past. However, other groups and parties of the blue camp and their supporters keep the controversy going by downplaying the incident and defending Chiang and his policies.⁴

With the return of the DPP to power in May 2016, the 228-Incident became the focus of a green-nationalist commemoration policy. The focus on the domestic event of 1947 outweighs the traditional blue-nationalist commemoration of the Second Sino-Japanese War. A good example is the so-called Marco Polo Bridge Incident. July 7, 2017, marked the 80th anniversary of an important escalation of the war when KMT troops clashed with Japanese forces close to Beijing in 1937.

Traditionally, July 7 was an important memorial day in Taiwan. Japan’s post-war role as an important ally for Taiwan, however, always overshadowed the rush of victory. In 2015, President Ma Ying-jeou stressed that neither he nor the festivities intended to convey anti-Japanese evocations.⁵ The same year, Japan had criticized the ROC air force for the historic paint job on its F-16 and Indigenous Defense Fighters displaying a design based on the Flying Tigers, a group of Sino-American fighter squads during World War II. On the planes’ fuselages, Japanese flags were used as kill marks.⁶ Apparently as a consequence, the memorial festivities of July 7 carefully avoided a common term for the Second Sino-Japanese War: *Kangzhan* (War of Resistance). To further protect himself against criticism, Ma avoided the dichotomy of pro- and anti-Japanese and referred to himself as Japanese-friendly.⁷ On a 2017 memorial conference hosted by the KMT, Ma again chose clement words. According to Ma, the commemoration was by no means an expression of anti-

3 Taipei 228 Memorial Museum [台北二二八紀念館], “關於紀念館,” last modified May 4, 2015, <http://228memorialmuseum.gov.taipei/ct.asp?xItem=1651473&ctNode=38985&mp=11900A>.

4 The Taipei Times, “Editorial: Working together to find the truth.” *The Taipei Times*, February 27, 2018, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2018/02/27/2003688322>

5 Pingguo Ribao [蘋果日報], “馬英九：我是友日派,” *HK Apple Daily*, July 7, 2015, <http://hk.apple.nextmedia.com/realtime/china/20150707/53941184>.

6 Deutsche Welle. “台湾纪念抗战 ‘异见’ ‘多,’” last modified July 4, 2015, <http://www.dw.com/zh/台湾纪念抗战异见多/a-18561050?&zhongwen=simp>.

7 Pingguo Ribao [蘋果日報], “馬英九：我是友日派.”

Japanese sentiment, but an acknowledgment of martyrs. He expressed hopes for an end of hatred between the two peoples.⁸ This clearly can be read as a commitment to a Chinese perspective on the war and the ROC as the main force of resistance against Japan in Asia.

Figure 1. Campaign logo of the Taiwanese Ministry of Defense for the 80th anniversary of the Marco Polo Bridge Incident



Source: Zhengzhan Zixun Fuwu Wang 政戰資訊服務網. “全民國防教育最新公告-七七抗戰80週年紀念圖徽.” May 12, 2017. <http://gpwd.mnd.gov.tw/Publish.aspx?cnid=107&p=4762>(Last accessed: 2017-07-10)

Ministry’s Office for Political Warfare proclaimed a detailed program with eleven points. The headline heroically called for “loyalty till death” and “a noble spirit which never perishes”. A closer look reveals: The several months long campaign covered different plans, ranging from special coverage to the production of 5,000 memory pins.¹⁰ However, the campaign hardly bears any political weight. International attention apparently is, unlike in the presentation of the 228-Incident, not part of the campaign’s objectives.

The Tsai government’s transitional justice approach, which primarily aims at evaluating the 228-Incident and the “White Terror” it entailed, helps the DPP and its allies to delegitimize the KMT as well as to dispose of the Chiangs and their political legacy. In this context one comes across the term *qu-Jiang-hua*, which can be roughly translated as “De-Chiang-ization.” The traditional narrative, which praised Chiang Kai-shek’s heroism in the Chinese resistance against Japan, does not fit into this agenda. Chiang fought the war with reckless and questionable means. In June 1938, he ordered the detonation of the Yellow River dams in a covert operation in order to slow down the Japanese advance. An estimated number of 800,000 casualties involving almost exclusively Chinese people were the result of the devastating floods and hunger that followed this desperate tactic. Its strategic effect is disputed up to this day.

8 Lin Sihui [林思慧], “馬英九:紀念七七事變非仇日·是感念先烈先賢奉獻犧牲,” *Ming Zhoukan* [鏡週刊], July 7, 2017, <https://www.mirrormedia.mg/story/20170707inv002>.

9 Junshi Lishi Wenwuguan [軍事歷史文物館], “「國防部軍事媒體特展」訂106年7月7日1200時開展,歡迎各界參觀,” last modified June 29, 2017, <http://museum.mnd.gov.tw/Publish.aspx?cnid=1424&p=74195&Level=1>.

10 Zhengzhan Zixun Fuwu Wang [政戰資訊服務網], “全民國防教育最新公告·國防部「碧血丹心,浩氣長存」紀念七七抗戰80週年整體文宣綱要計畫,” Political Warfare Bureau, last modified May 12, 2017, <http://gpwd.mnd.gov.tw/Publish.aspx?cnid=107&p=4762>.

However, when Chiang's statues are scrawled on, defaced, damaged or thrown over nationwide every February in an annual (yet illegal) ritual, which started a few years ago, this does not happen because of the horrific casualties of Chiang's reign in China proper. The vandalizers, mostly supporters of the radical green camp, try to remind Taiwan of Chiang's post-war "White Terror." In addition to this revisionist historical argument, the defacing of Chiang ironically further aims at distancing Taiwan from Chiang's former archenemies and the greatest threat for Taiwan's sovereignty, the CCP of the Chinese mainland. In 2018, former President Ma personally doubted Chiang's role as mastermind in the 228-Incident's violent crackdown. Ma called for more historical research on the event.¹¹ What remains unclear is how much of this aims at a problematic restoration of Chiang's reputation as the KMT's figurehead and savior of China, whether this is appeasement to the PRC, and how much of it is actually a justified warning in face of an ideological overemphasis of the crackdown.

The fact that Taiwan's current government pays little to no importance to the July 7 anniversary is not a big surprise. The date marks the conflict between troops of the Japanese Empire and the KMT on the Chinese mainland—not in Taiwan. This however evokes dismay on the other side of the Taiwan Strait. The PRC's Office for Taiwan Affairs of the State Council proclaimed in May 2017 that this neglect of history equaled a betrayal.¹² The decision not to host any official festivities is justifiably seen as part of a larger *qu-Zhongguo-hua* (De-Sinization) in Taiwan, led and pursued by the DPP and its supporters.¹³ The differences between a "De-Chiang-ization" and a "De-Sinization" are intentionally kept fuzzy.

At the same time, Chinese demands for a shared commemoration is heavily shaped by CCP narratives. In this context, it is striking how Chinese officials simplify facts for their agenda: Just like the 228-Incident, the Marco Polo Bridge Incident is often referred to as *77-Shibian* (77-Incident). In more recent reactions over the last year, Beijing replaced this term with the term *77-Kangzhan* (77-War of Resistance). This is probably no coincidence but aims at stressing common struggle and sacrifice. Beijing willingly ignored that Taiwan, unlike the ROC, in 1937 did not fight on China's but on Japan's side.

If Taiwan now turns its back to this part of history, this entails further implications. First, Taiwan's historiographical discourse will be dyed in a heavier red, nationalistic tone through the PRC, especially outside of Taiwan. The instrumentalization of geriatric KMT veterans in the PRC's victory parade on 2nd September 2015 on the occasion of 70th anniversary of Japan's defeat and the end of World War II is just one odd example for

11 Stacy Hsu, "228 Remembered: Ma urges more efforts to uncover truth." *The Taipei Times*, March 1, 2018, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2018/03/01/2003688472>.

12 Cai Minzi [蔡敏姿], "台停辦抗戰80周年紀念 • 國台辦. 意味背叛," *Lianhe Xinwen Wang* [聯合新聞網], May 10, 2017, <https://udn.com/news/story/7331/2454532>.

13 Zheng Zhonglan [鄭仲嵐]. "「七七事變」80週年 • 兩岸依舊「不同調」," *BBC*, July 7, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/zhongwen/trad/chinese-news-40529237>.

this.¹⁴ On July 6 in 2017, Taiwan's Minister of the Mainland Affairs Council, Katherine Chang, issued a sharp warning in regard to such a politicization of the PRC.¹⁵ The question which party—Mao's PRC and Chiang's KMT since late 1936 were formally allies in their struggle against Japan—can claim how much of the credit for the Chinese victory in World War II regularly sparks controversy. On July 6, 2017, the retired general, prominent KMT politician and former Taiwanese Prime Minister Hau Pei-tsun angered many observers with ambiguous remarks at a conference hosted by and in the PRC. Born 1919 in China, Hau fought during the war himself and embodies the old blue guard. Their often pro-Chinese views are highly welcome by the CCP. For their trips to the PRC, a common term surfaced in Chinese language coverage: *tuijiang fu Zhong* (retired generals journeying to China). When Hau was interviewed by the BBC in 2015, he presented a classic KMT perspective that the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek were to be credited with 95 percent of China's war efforts against Japan. In front of his Chinese hosts in 2017, Hau bowed to the CCP's narrative of a shared and mutual struggle of the whole Chinese people. He remarkably presented this view as an academically and ideologically neutral position.¹⁶

The memory revolving around the 228-Incident is also of concern for PRC historiography. J. Michel Cole displays the half-hearted Chinese attempts to commemorate and academically discuss the events as an attempt to approach the DPP and win sympathies in Taiwan.¹⁷ Yet, since the Taiwanese insurgents of 1947 also erratically deployed violence against the Chinese newcomers, the 228-Incident also offers an interpretation in which the Chinese and the KMT ultimately could be read as victims.

The new historiographical emphasis in Taiwan on the other hand resonates with a generally increasing pro-Japanese climate. The supposedly benevolent Japanese rule over the island is often mystified and conveniently levered against the Chinese legacy. This climate allows a revisionist re-balancing of some historic events as well as political and geostrategic interests. The aged Lee Tung-hui is often criticized for his remarks, not only by circles in proximity to the KMT, but also from the PRC.¹⁸

The young blooded pro-independence movement as well as the 2014 occupation of the Legislative Yuan contributed to the rise of a number of new and interesting political

14 Xu Jianhong [許劍虹], “唯一到北京看閱兵的台灣抗戰老兵,” *Zhongguo Shibao* [中國時報], March 31, 2016, <http://www.chinatimes.com/realtimenews/20160331006967-260417>.

15 Ziyou Shibao [自由時報], “退將赴中紀念七七・陸委會：應注意言行及社會觀感,” last modified July 6, 2017, <http://m.ltn.com.tw/news/politics/breakingnews/2123473>.

16 Huang Qijia [黃麒珈], “赴中出席抗戰學術研討會！郝柏村。研究抗戰要站在全中華民族立場” *Fengchuanmei* [風傳媒], last modified July 6, 2017, <http://www.storm.mg/article/294696>.

17 Cole, J. Michael, “China to ‘Commemorate’ Taiwan’s 228 Massacre,” *Taiwan Sentinel*, February 9, 2017, <https://sentinel.tw/china-228-massacre/>.

18 For example, in September 2002, Lee claimed that the uninhibited but disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands—claimed by the PRC, Taiwan, and Japan—belonged to Japan. See: Okinawa Times [沖繩タイムス], “沖繩の海図（64）・メッセージ復帰30年,” last modified September 24, 2002, <http://web.archive.org/web/20021026180419/www.okinawatimes.co.jp/spe/kaizu20020924.html>.

and cultural actors. One of them: the metal band Chthonic. They glorified the role of pro-Japanese forces in World War II in their 2011 concept album *Takasago Army*. In 2014, they dedicated a ballad to the events and the aftermath of the 228-Incident called *Defenders of Bú-Tik Palace*. Freddy Lim, the lead singer of the band, was previously chairman of Amnesty International Taiwan and co-founded the New Power Party (NPP) in 2015, a progressive party associated with the green camp and popular among young people. Lim is now a Member of the Legislative Yuan and an outspoken independence supporter. The DPP cooperated with the NPP in the 2016 elections. A few years ago, Lim's band Chthonic toured under the slogan "UNlimited Taiwan", a statement in the highly charged question of a renewed UN membership of Taiwan.¹⁹ Lim and his band support the Dalai Lama as well as the Tibetan Government in Exile and wave their flag on their concerts. In Japan, this anti-CCP and anti-KMT activism is occasionally welcomed by revisionists, eager to re-negotiate the Japanese role in World War II.

Decades of colonialism and authoritarian one-party rule are constantly being negotiated—with few common ground.²⁰ Just like the question of how Taiwan should be defined—an ethnically Chinese competition and model for the PRC (an increasingly unlikely option) or as a citizenship-based independent nation—the 228-Incident has not yet found a distinct reference point. This carries the risk of inappropriate and disproportional comparisons. The Taipei 228-Memorial, for example, on the one hand acknowledges the almost impossible task to draw clear comparisons. Yet, in the so-called "Human Rights Forest", one of the exhibition rooms, it only offers three model references: the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, the Osaka International Peace Center, as well as the Jewish Museum in Berlin. Even though the Osaka International Peace Center made headlines due to its presentation of Japanese war victims,²¹ the institutions are less remarkable than the choice of historical reference. The comparison with the Jewish Museum in Berlin²² (as well as common references to Nazi history) clearly suggests a scale of the 228-Incident, which can hardly be justified with historical evidence.

Freddy Lim and his band further exploit this parallel. In the music video to their song *Supreme Pain for the Tyrant* of the 2013 album *Bú-Tik* they equate the KMT with the German Nazi Party. With about one million views on YouTube, the video is set in 1930s Shanghai, at a time when in fact close relations between Nazi Germany and the KMT

19 The UN General Assembly Resolution 2758, passed on 25 October 1971, recognized the PRC as "the only legitimate representative of China to the United Nations" and expelled "the representatives Chiang Kai-shek from the place which they unlawfully occupy at the United Nations." Since only the ROC and not a yet to be found Taiwanese nation state was expelled from the UN, one might argue that Taiwan, in fact, never was a member of the UN.

20 Jeremy Oliver, "How to Achieve Transitional Justice in Taiwan," *Taiwan Sentinel*, January 16, 2017, <https://sentinel.tw/transitional-justice-taiwan/>.

21 Philip Seaton, "The Nationalist Assault on Japan's Local Peace Museums. The Conversion of Peace Osaka," *The Asia-Pacific Journal*, July 27, 2015. <http://apjpf.org/2015/13/30/Philip-Seaton/4348.html>.

22 It is remarkable that the primary reference is Berlin's Jewish Museum (which in parts also deals with the Shoah), but not Berlin's Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe.

existed. The song's lyrics glorify an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Chiang Kai-shek's son and political successor Chiang Ching-kuo in New York in 1970.²³ The video ends in a gory violent showoff, in which the band members slay the Nazis and the KMT bigwigs.

Figure 2: Screenshot (01:14) from the music of Supreme Pain for the Tyrant²⁴



As a matter of fact, the violent 1989 events in the PRC probably offer a more appropriate reference. Traditionally, the anniversary of the bloody crackdown of the Chinese democracy movement was a welcome opportunity to commemorate what remains a strict taboo in the PRC. In recent years the Taiwanese interest has—especially in contrast to large commemoration activities in Hong Kong—faded. Yet, in 2017, President Tsai commented in a Facebook post on June 4 that China could learn from Taiwan and explicitly compared the Taiwanese discussion around the 228-Incident with China's Tian'anmen-taboo.²⁵

While self-righteous lectures from Beijing seem out of place, justified criticisms of Taiwan's politically charged commemoration culture do not become less right simply because they are shared by the CCP. However, at the same time, Taiwan should not bow to red-nationalist narratives from the PRC. In 2018 large parts of the green and the blue camp at least found common ground by expressing hopes for more historical research. Yet, the Act on Promoting Transitional Justice, passed on December 5 2017, has not shown much effect. On the one hand, concerns about the nine-member independent committee to further reevaluate the 228-Incident being led by political motives in the face of an increasingly aggressive Taiwan-policy by Beijing's leaders seem legitimate. However, when on February 28, 2018, protestors defiled Chiang's sarcophagus with red paint, voices from the blue camp blamed the Transitional Justice Act and the social divide it apparently had deepened in a political red herring.²⁶

It is evident that the sovereignty over interpreting certain events prior and after 1945

23 Chthonic [閃靈], "Behind the scene of Supreme Pain for the Tyrant 破夜斬MV幕後故事," YouTube, last modified June 6, 2013. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b81Ql9eipSs>.

24 Chthonic [閃靈], "CHTHONIC — Supreme Pain for the Tyrant — Official Video | 閃靈 破夜斬." YouTube, last modified June 10, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4jYsu5-TJQ8>.

25 Tsai Ing-wen [蔡英文], "Facebook post, untitled," accessed: 2017-07-10, <https://www.facebook.com/tsaiingwen/posts/10154308350681065>.

26 Sean Lin, "KMT cries foul over defilement of Chiang's tomb," *The Taipei Times*, March 2, 2018, <http://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2018/03/02/2003688531>.

is willingly given away in culture and politics due to a fading interest in Chinese affairs. On July 7, President Tsai in her only tweet that day sent her best wishes in Japanese to Northern Kyūshū because the Japanese island had been struck by disastrous rain falls. She called Japan an “important neighbor and friend of Taiwan”.²⁷ The outrage of patriotic Chinese internet users was guaranteed and followed immediately. It was also no coincidence that on February 28, 2018, a new group was formed under the name *The Island of Joy and Happiness Coalition*. It was joined by the two former Presidents Lee Teng-hui and Chen Shui-bian as well as Freddy Lim’s NPP. The coalition’s primary goal is to push for a referendum on Taiwanese independence (which they hope to hold on April 7, 2019 – the 30th anniversary of the 1989 self-immolation of the democracy activist Cheng Nan-jung).²⁸ A closer and more critical look at the complex history of Taiwan, in the 20th century in particular, is crucial to grasp the instrumentalization through the parties involved. History in East Asia to a large extent determines the national identity of some of the most powerful nations in the world.

27 Tsai Ing-wen, “Tweet, untitled,” July 7, 2017, <https://twitter.com/iingwen/status/883285944878551040>.

28 Chen Wei-han, “Group urges independence referendum,” *The Taipei Times*, March 1, 2018, <http://www.taipetimes.com/News/front/archives/2018/03/01/2003688460>.

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Five Limitations: Political Science Applied to The Non-West

*Kaori Crystal Sueyoshi**

ABSTRACT: That political science tends to fall short when applied to the non-West is writ large to academics in the field. Patterns emerge when documenting past failures of political science and international relations theory (IRT) in the global periphery. These patterns can be categorized into the five limitations suggested in this paper: western bias, historical amnesia, scope, willful othering, and political ontology. Ranging from questions of methodology to the nature of the field overall, the five limitations of political science when applied to the non-West illuminate origins to shortcomings in major theories. Understanding these limitations motivates a sharpened lens for adapting theories towards superior robustness.

Keywords: International Relations Theory, Political Science, Critical Theory, Non-Western Theory, Political Methodology, Political Philosophy.

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Introduction

Readers of this paper are likely no stranger to the general concept of political science. In fact, most are likely to be scholars of some degree on the subject. It is thus no secret that political science is inchoate in achieving unconditional and universal applicability, particularly outside of the Western canon.

This paper examines five limitations that engender the well-known weaknesses of political science as it is applied in the non-West. The term “theory” connotes the practice of developing principles based on identifiably common aspects between distinct circumstances or observations. In doing so, theory corrupts when the underlying observations contain errors. These errors are categorized into five types of limitations, summarized below:

1. *Western Bias* – An error of selection bias
2. *Historical Amnesia* – An error of omitted data
3. *Scope* – A question of relevance
4. *Willful Othering* – An error of a false imaginary
5. *Political Ontology* – A reflection of underlying assumptions

In examining the errors of western bias and historical amnesia, this paper identifies

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shortcomings in theories of the modern state, as it is a central unit of analysis for international relations theory. Whether state formation is a normatively desirable outcome is not a question for this paper. It then compares the applicability of modernization theory in how it was used to describe the non-West. Finally, it considers the philosophical underpinnings of political science as a harbinger of inaccuracies.

This paper does not assert the monocausality of why any of the theories discussed does not apply in non-Western contexts. Any of the five means may interweave with any of the others. The first four means are issues of methodology. The last one is of ontology.

Assumptions

While there is some debate, political science is broadly defined as the branch of knowledge surrounding the mechanisms of government and the scientific analysis of political activity and behavior. Its subject matter covers the function of power; the exchange, ownership, and transactions transferred through power. The discipline follows methodological and epistemological approaches of the material sciences, with the collection of empirical data to test upon formed hypotheses.

In initiating this examination, it becomes imperative to develop a definition of the “West.” The “West,” as a standalone and arguably problematic phrase, for the purposes of this paper refers to Europe and North America. This paper assumes the possibility of a “non-West” in contemporary society. A Gramscian perspective could imply that due to the extensiveness of hegemonic Western societies, a “non-Western” context possibly no longer exists.

This paper assumes a definition of theory as a generalization of facts, recognizing that even within the Western canon there exist epistemological distinctions between European and American theory. Theory is “about abstracting away from the day-to-day events in an attempt to find patterns and group events together into sets and classes of things.”¹ Robustness is a qualifying tenet for powerful theory, and to achieve this, a small set of facts and observations must align for a causal pattern to form principles that can explain a much wider set of cases. It is in this quest for robustness – the attempt to find universal and timeless theory – that we begin to see the faults of Western bias and historical amnesia.

Western Bias

A normative foundation to international relations theories is the concept of the modern state. According to the Weberian conceptualization, the defining characteristic of statehood is the possession of a monopoly over the legitimate use of physical force. Importantly, the modern state extends domination of a territory and all of its inhabitants. Where the

1 Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, “Why is there no non-Western international relations theory? An introduction,” *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 7, no. 3 (2007): 287–312

state is the sole actor with legitimate use of force, non-state actors can enact illegitimate violence. From the perspective of Charles Tilly, the definition of the modern state abides by the concept that “war makes the state and the state makes war.”² The theory came to be known as the predatory theory of the state, as Tilly compared these four functions to the structure of protection rackets by organized criminal organizations. Faced with material scarcity and high population density that exacerbated the threat of war, European kings expropriated resources from rural areas for defense purposes, centralizing to eventually form the modern state.

The Weberian concept of the modern state remains noticeably unfulfilled by the political landscape of postcolonial Africa. The concept of the authoritative “state” differs from the realities of Africa such that states in Africa are often labeled as deviant, weak, or fragile. This paper is disinterested in depicting the continent of Africa in a monolithic sense; it will abstract patterns as a foil to the Weberian concept of the state. Contrary to the Weberian definition, the African state does not necessarily claim monopoly of the legitimate use of force. Postcolonial statehood in Africa did not reproduce the Westphalian system of Europe. Instead, African states represent a fragmented collection of sub-state actors representing varying nationalities and ethnicities, many of which operate substantial mechanisms of violence.³ One explanation offers that “the central issue has always resided in the fact that the African state – as imposed by European colonial powers – was artificial...the drawing of colonial borders neglected to take into account the national and ethnic divisions on the ground.”⁴ The assiduous use of violence by sub-state actors appears in the vicissitudes of civil strife; to name just a few, one could look at the history of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Angola, Liberia, or Somalia. Contemporary “states” of Africa are shaped upon impositions of arbitrarily drawn borderlines generated by the colonial powers at the table of the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. Thus, the Weberian characterization of the state was able to prevail in Western modalities but is not a replicable theory in this non-Western context.

Discordance between Weber and Tilly’s theories and statehood in Africa is a case of *Western bias*. Weber’s theory of legitimacy was built upon examples from European history, namely Great Britain. Tilly’s theory rested upon observations of the consolidation and expropriation of land, resources, and means of violence in the transition from European feudalism to the rise of modern states. Because the underlying observations pertained to the West, the predictive capability fell short when applied to Africa. Western bias, in this analysis, can be compared to a circumstance of selective data. From a methodological

2 Charles Tilly, “War Making and State Making as Organized Crime,” in *Bringing the State Back In* ed. Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 169–91.

3 Abou Jeng, *Peacebuilding in the African Union: Law, Philosophy and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

4 Assis Malaquias, “Reformulating International Relations Theory: African Insights and Challenges” in *Africa’s Challenge to International Relations Theory* (2001), 11-28.

approach, selection bias causes distortion in results. Of note, Weber is explicit about the bias in his writing; with statements such as the “city state... is peculiar to the Occident,” “the constitutional state...is indigenous only to the Occident,” and that it is “only in the Occident that we find...professional politician in the service of powers other than the princes.”⁵ Weber makes valuable comparisons to other regions of the world, including China and India; however, the theory is pithy on the description of Africa, and ultimately focuses on Western history for the emergence of the modern state.

Western bias alone need not constitute the entirety of why a theory does not apply in non-Western contexts. That Weber and Tilly’s approaches show Western bias error does not undermine the legitimacy of their theories overall. Synthesized with other concepts such as geopolitics, the reality of African states may be better understood. Herbst offers an explanation discussed in the next section. Certainly, there is more to be said about African statehood beyond an issue of Western bias in political science. Nonetheless, the centrality of Western history used for Western theory demonstrates an error of selective data.

Relatedly, language barriers may exacerbate the tendency for Western bias. Effective contextualization in one part demands a widened lens in historical renderings. In another, it may demand that historical renderings (and their interpretation) engender from a local perspective. That much of political science takes place in the lingua franca of English precludes theory from other languages.

Historical Amnesia

“Theory is always for someone and for some purpose”

- Robert Cox

In observing the aforementioned configurations of African statehood, Jeffrey Herbst proposed a theory of state formation in Africa. Herbst argues that the structural conditions of state formation in Europe were deficient in Africa. In comparison to Europe and its high population density, there was less of a demand for the formation of property rights in Africa. It was not land but labor (people) that were scarce in low-density regions of Africa. This impeded the need for state institutions in the fashion of Europe. Additionally, during the colonial period, there was little external threat to conflict between colonial powers in Africa. Following independence, colonial boundaries were reinforced from the international sphere, namely the Berlin Conference and the United Nations. Thus, this was another disincentive to institutional development according to Tilly’s concept of the role of the state as war making. Herbst concludes with the policy recommendation that the international forum should allow for and encourage the disintegration of the current African states, in favor of smaller states that better represent domestically recognized

5 Max Weber, “Politics as a Vocation,” in *Essays in Sociology*, ed. Howard Garth and Cynthia Mills (New York: Macmillan, 1946), 26-45.

boundaries of states.

Critics of Herbst's assessment point to his de-emphasis of the impact of European imperialism and colonialism on hindered state formation in Africa. Herbst's focus of analysis is on factors that supersede what he describes the "few decades" of colonial rule, stating "it was impossible for Europeans to have changed 'everything.'"⁶ That the project of colonialism could be limited to a "few decades" is a bold claim, and projects ignorance regarding the effects of the Atlantic slave trade that had been in operation for hundreds of years prior to the Berlin Conference of 1884-85. Patrick Manning argued that the slave trade alone was a destabilizing variable in the development of state institutions, and that "with the allure of imported goods and the brutality of capture, slave traders broke down barriers isolating Africans in their communities. Merchants and warlords spread the tentacles of their influence into almost every corner of the continent. By the nineteenth century, much of the continent was militarized; great kingdoms and powerful warlords rose and fell, their fate linked to fluctuations in the slave trade."⁷ Problematically, Herbst also concludes that "most territory in Africa was not actually physically conquered but ceded more or less legitimately by African rulers," in contradiction to historical accounts of violent plunder and conquest.

Herbst's errors are a case of what this paper considers *historical amnesia*. Western political science has practiced historical amnesia from an institutional and methodological standpoint. Historical amnesia can be considered an error of omitted data. Similar to Western bias, historical amnesia distorts the underlying data that forms theories. That Herbst omitted the influences of imperialism would encourage readers to practice caution in accepting the policy proposal of smaller states for a more peaceful Africa. Perhaps such a solution would still fail to disentangle Africa from the reaches of European imperialism.

Historical amnesia in the case of Herbst was a methodological error, but the error exists for the discipline of international relations at an institutional level. In *White World Order Black Power Politics*, Robert Vitalis uncovers that international relations in the United States began as a study of race relations, a finding that comes as a surprise given that most scholarship taught at universities hardly covers this fact.⁸ He asserts that the field of international relations in the United States was borne of the motivation to secure White supremacy on a global scale. Where Jim Crow laws assured dominance of Whites in the domestic sphere, American scholarship became concerned with strategies to prevent a global race conflict in the face of emerging development and globalization. While such scholarship started as an unabashed study of maintaining White supremacy,

6 Jeffrey Herbst, *States and Power in Africa: Comparative Lessons in Authority and Control* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt7rrtj>.

7 Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental and African Slave Trades* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

8 Robert Vitalis, *White world order, black power politics: the birth of American international relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2017).

the language began to shift towards perceivably raceless contracts such as international security in parallel to the growing discomfort of Americans towards racist language. Cold War fears also diluted concern from race relations towards security studies between the bipolar powers. Yet Vitalis considers the shift a matter of tone or syntax, not content. Vitalis details the theories of an impressive array of Black intellectuals who produced theory relating to this phenomenon, despite exile from the preeminent universities that at the time would educate but not hire Black scholars. Dubbed the Howard School after the preeminent Historically Black College (HBCU) where they concentrated, these intellectuals theorized that international relations was not merely study of race relations but more so a substantiation of racism.

This historical retelling unhinges the validity of international relations theory overall. If original motivations aimed to conjure strategies to control the non-Western and non-White, thus embracing international inequalities, what legitimacy remains for unbiased research on power relations in international theory? A general condemnation of international relations theory will not be dissected in this paper. However, the motivations behind historical amnesia illuminate an institutional backdrop for why methodological errors may occur in producing theory that does not apply to the non-West.

Scope

Foundational neorealist Kenneth Waltz stated in his main work on international relations that “it would be...ridiculous to construct a theory of international politics on Malaysia and Costa Rica... A general theory of international politics is necessarily based on the great powers.”⁹ This underlines the question of scope: it was not necessarily the intention for some political science theories, even those of international relations, to explain all aspects of international interactions. For varieties of realism, the emphasis is on the imperatives of the “great powers”; thus, theories become tenuous or sparse when applied to anything in the global periphery, including lesser-developed countries (LDCs).

The appeal of neorealism is found in its parsimonious, detached and scientific telling of world history; that a relatively simplistic approach can be taken to find patterns in international relations. Waltz made no claim to explain every unit of historical event, and the theory duly does not do so. Political science, for some cases, does not work in non-Western contexts because it intentionally removes the non-West from the scope of study.

9 Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Waveland Press, 1979).

Willful Othering

“The West’s authorship of IR theory is a hegemonic practice which closes out other possible readings/writings of world politics. As a product of Modernity, Western IR theory therefore rests on the necessary marginalization of...other non-Western sites of knowledge.”

- Kevin C. Dunn

Descriptions of the non-West as the aberrant “other” have been deployed as a method to explain away outcomes that stray from the predictions of Western political science. Regarding deviations from modernization theory in Asia, explanations have been drawn from the notion of oriental despotism. Oriental despotism and its offspring suggest Asia and its people are predisposed or more likely to accept authoritarian modes of governance. With origins in texts as foundational to political science as Aristotle’s *Politics*, oriental despotism has influenced theories across time and ideologies – including Marx’s “Asiatic mode of production” and Weber’s “Sultanism.”¹⁰ Karl Wittfogel’s now-contested summation of such a theory is found in his book, *Oriental Despotism*.¹¹ For Wittfogel and his followers, the Asian region’s dependence on large-scale irrigation systems required efficient management and centralized control, which in turn required a chronically weak civil society and thus an environment conducive to authoritarianism. In adopting this position, theories maintain veracity by distancing the possibilities of application in Asia – an issue of willful othering. Willful othering can be considered a sort of intentional historical amnesia. Through methods like oriental despotism, willful othering reduces causal thinking to culturist perspectives that can prevent reconciliatory theorizing of a more accurate gradation.

As an example, in the latter portion of the 20th century, the Middle East seemed ready to fulfill the conditions of economic advancement necessary for democracy to flourish. Puzzled by the persistence of authoritarianism in the Middle East, some discourse pointed to oriental despotism to explain the deficit of democracies.¹² In this argument, the Middle East warded off the implementation of democratic rule and upheld authoritarianism through cultural means. This pathway of economic development, combined with authoritarianism, was unpredicted by the followers of the variant of democratization theory that considered the structures of the West as the final idealized outcome. Critics of the oriental despotism argument note the survey evidence pointing to support for democracy in Middle Eastern states.¹³ Oriental despotism, on one hand a case for cultural sensitivity, also exhibits reductionist tendencies that disallow accurate depictions of behavior. The willful othering

10 Rolando Minuti, “Oriental Despotism” in: *European History Online (EGO)* (Mainz: Leibniz Institute of European History (IEG), 2012). URL: <http://www.ieg-ego.eu/minutir-2012-en>

11 Karl Wittfogel, *Oriental despotism a comparative study of total power* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981).

12 Raymond Hinnebusch, “Authoritarian persistence, democratization theory and the Middle East: An overview and critique” in *Democratization* 22, no. 2 (2006): 373-395.

13 Mark Tessler, “Islam and Democracy in the Middle East: the Impact of Religious Orientations on Attitudes toward Democratization in Four Arab Countries,” *Comparative Politics* 34, no. 3 (2002): 337–54.

of non-Western cultures asserts a set of inaccurate facts that become foundational to inaccurate theory.

Political Ontology

“No political analysis has ever been ontologically neutral.”

- Colin Hay

A debate overall exists on whether the social world can be explained through the material sciences. Some argue this question is outside of the scope of political science. However, in examining why certain theories continue to fail in non-Western contexts, it is worthwhile to conduct a limited discussion on political ontology. Political ontology refers to the “the sorts of social entities whose consistent existence analysts can reasonably assume.”¹⁴ Choices made in political ontology will logically antecede the choices in epistemology and methodology. Ontological debates surround underlying assumptions to theories, such as the individual-group relationship and the structure-agency relationship.

Ontological assumptions, based on some level of consensus on these debates, make possible the naturalist attempts to explain the social world. As an example, in the debate of individual-group relationship, perhaps it is a case of over-exerting Western conceptualizations of the individual that brings political science to a reliance on some (light) consensus towards the idea that society is an aggregate of its individually motivated actors. It is possible to imagine that these relationships, given their origins in Western philosophical thought, underpin overall the fragility of political science theories when applied universally.

Concluding Remarks

The errors stipulated in this paper do not demand or normatively expect an end to Western contributions to IR, nor do they undermine the overall quality of contributions of Western origin. As alluded to before, the theorists discussed above have addressed the non-West in more than a handful of capacities. And of course, palpable is the irony of this paper itself being written in English for a largely Western audience.

Ethnic conflict, racial tensions, and mass shifts in global migration patterns result from an era of hyper globalization. In the ever-shifting power balances of the West and the rest, political science comes under increasing pressure to strengthen the robustness of theories to apply soundly in non-Western contexts. Towards this horizon, theorists may sharpen their analysis by considering the aforementioned five limitations upon which political science fails when placed adjacent to the Western canon.

¹⁴ Robert E. Goodin and Charles Tilly, *The Oxford Handbook of Contextual Political Analysis*, ed. R. E Goodin and C. Tilly. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) 3-32.

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